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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Southampton Education School

**Primary teachers in times of change: Engaging with the primary Modern  
Foreign Language Initiative in England**

by

**Alexandra Woodgate-Jones**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2015



# **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

## **ABSTRACT**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Southampton Education School

Doctor of Philosophy

### **PRIMARY TEACHERS IN TIMES OF CHANGE: ENGAGING WITH THE PRIMARY MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE INITIATIVE IN ENGLAND** by Alexandra Woodgate-Jones

In February 2002 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published a new policy statement on language learning which outlined the UK government's intention to introduce modern foreign languages into all primary schools for children aged 7-11 by 2010. One of the approaches advocated was for primary teachers to teach the subject (albeit with some additional training and curricular guidance). Therefore primary teachers were facing change and reform if they were to implement this policy. The study explored individual primary teachers' responses to incorporating primary modern foreign languages (PMFLs) and themes and patterns in the relationships between the implementation of the PMFL initiative, school culture, and teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The key research questions were: How do headteachers, PMFL coordinators and class teachers feel about the PMFL initiative? How are they responding to the need for change? Do they feel equipped to implement the initiative and what are their motivations, concerns and constraints?

The research was designed to be largely qualitative in nature and a case study approach was adopted. The case studies were intended to be theory seeking and grounded theory approaches were adopted. Headteachers, class teachers and PMFL coordinators from six primary schools in the south of England participated in an initial round of interviews and after preliminary analysis, two case study schools provided the context for more extensive data gathering.

Several key themes emerged from the analysis of the findings: the unmanageable number of initiatives combined with the rise of accountability led to schools and teachers implementing the PMFL initiative hurriedly and with little time dedicated to its introduction. The low status of PMFLs compared with the core subjects of English and Maths meant that the importance placed on teachers' subject knowledge was downplayed. This resulted in some teachers trying to teach French with insufficient subject knowledge. The type and appropriateness of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) available is also questioned. There was a lack of recognition in schools that individual teachers would benefit from different types of CPD. In some cases this led to teachers not making progress with their subject knowledge either in terms of competence or confidence. The high level of compliance amongst teachers was striking and this led to questions over their sense of professionalism and identity. The thesis culminates in a call for a forum (which is currently lacking in England) for teachers to voice their concerns and in a conclusion that more consultation with teachers is needed before initiatives become statutory.



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# Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

I, Alexandra Woodgate-Jones declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

**Thesis title: Primary teachers in times of change: Engaging with the primary modern foreign language initiative in England**

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

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## **Abbreviations used**

AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELL	Early Language Learning
GTC	General Teaching Council
INSET	IN-Service Training
IWB	Interactive whiteboard
KS1	Key Stage 1 (ages 4-7)/ KS2 Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11)
LA	Local Authority
MLPS	Modern Languages in Primary Schools
NfER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NLaS	National Languages Strategy
NLNS	National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PD	Professional Development
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PMFLs	Primary Modern Foreign Languages
PSHE	Personal Social and Health Education
PPA	Planning Preparation and Assessment
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SATS	Standard Assessment Tests
TA	Teaching Assistant
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the context of the study and provides an overview of the research undertaken and the key research questions underpinning it. It also introduces the researcher and outlines the direction and structure of the thesis as a whole.

### 1.1 General context

In England and Wales changes and innovations in the educational system since the 1970s have been rapid and relentless (they include the introduction of a subject-by-subject and stage-by-stage National Curriculum, the introduction of age related attainment targets, a standardised system of testing, a new public examination system and in primary schools new teaching methods such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Primary Strategy). All these initiatives have been imposed on schools and teachers with little consultation with those who are charged with their implementation:

The British case of multiple, mandated change is perhaps an extreme one. It is extreme in its frantic pace, in the immense scope of its influence, and in the wide sweep of its legislative power. More than anything, however, it is extreme in the disrespect and disregard that reformers have shown for teachers themselves. (Hargreaves 1994a: 6)

In February 2002 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published a new policy statement on language learning (DfES 2002) which outlined the government's strategy for modern foreign languages (MFLs) over the next decade. One of its ambitions was to offer all primary school children the entitlement to study a modern foreign language by 2010. One of the approaches advocated was for the primary class teachers themselves to teach the subject which meant that primary class teachers were again facing change and reform if they were to implement this policy.

According to Vandenberghe (2002) there are many indications that reforms do not always have the expected impact due to individual teacher factors as well as school level factors. He suggests that it is more likely that teachers (along with the school structure and school context) shape policy more than the other way round. Reform and change inevitably bring with them a period of uncertainty (Reio 2005) and how individual teachers deal with this will impact on the success of the implementation of any initiative. The study reported here investigates individuals' responses to incorporating MFLs into primary schools and explores themes and patterns in the relationships between the implementation of the PMFL initiative, school culture, and teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

## **1.2 The research and the researcher**

I adhere to the view of a 'social reality which stresses the importance of the subjective experiences of individuals in the creation of the social world' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004: 7). This belief, combined with the aims of the research, naturally led to my taking an interpretive position in this research as it was the perceptions and reactions of the individual teachers involved that was of greatest interest to me rather than a search for an 'objective truth'. My key research questions were: How do headteachers, PMFL coordinators and primary teachers feel about the PMFL initiative? How are they responding to the need for change? Do they feel equipped to implement the initiative and what are their motivations, concerns and constraints? These in turn, led me to seek to better understand the complexities and influences of the setting and to enable the evidence to lead the direction of the study; hence I identified two case study schools as the foci. In this way I sought to become familiar with the relevant contexts as well as get to know the individual teachers better.

The main drivers of this study were twofold. As a teacher who completed an undergraduate degree in MFLs and who lived and worked abroad for several years, I am enthusiastic about teaching and learning languages and I am keen to see them taught successfully in schools. At the outset I was unsure whether primary schools would be the most appropriate places to achieve successful language learning. This was due partly to research into how children learn languages and the contested belief that children learn languages more quickly than older students and also to a concern over a potential lack of expertise in primary schools. In my role as the coordinator of the primary French specialism on a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme I attended numerous meetings run by the government organisation then called the Training and Development Agency (TDA), into how the initiative could be implemented into all primary schools. The emphasis was generally on how the generalist class teacher with little or no expertise in MFLs could teach the subject as long as they were enthusiastic. It appeared that a willingness to give it a try was the key determining factor in the potential success of the initiative. This downplaying of subject knowledge interested me and I was very keen to find out what practising primary teachers felt.

The other motivation for this research came from a concern that primary class teachers were once again being expected to implement a change in the curriculum without consultation or apparent respect for their views. As a former primary teacher myself I could imagine how the expectation to teach an additional subject, in an already overcrowded curriculum with a potential lack of subject knowledge, could undermine one's sense of professionalism. I was

therefore keen to explore whether the PMFL initiative could be successful and at what cost to the teachers themselves.

My own experience as both a language learner/teacher and a primary teacher could clearly be an advantage in terms of having a prior understanding of the issues and the context, but it could also lead me to prejudge situations without sufficient evidence. With this in mind I would need to get a sense of what teachers were feeling and thinking before exploring these in more depth in their lived context, thereby beginning a dialogue between the perceptions of teachers and myself. Simons (2009) explores the idea that in case study research the researcher him/herself is the main instrument for gathering data, interpreting it and reporting it, and therefore the self needs to be transparent and its impact carefully monitored. In this way, the subjectivity and prior experience of the researcher is not necessarily a problem and can be argued to be essential for the researcher to fully understand and interpret the case. My own position and experience and the impact this could have on the research process is discussed in greater depth in the methodology chapter.

The focus on the teachers' responses makes this study different to many other studies into PMFLs which focus primarily on the effectiveness of the children's learning through different approaches. When the research began I was tempted to try to discover whether a particular school culture or approach to training was more effective in implementing the initiative than another; however I very quickly realised that this evaluative angle was not as important to me as the teachers' feelings and reactions to being expected to teach PMFLs. There would be occasions during the study when it was appropriate to highlight a teacher's subject knowledge when it affected their approach, but the principle aim of the research was to explore the teachers' reactions to the initiative itself. My priority at the outset of this work was to give the teachers a voice throughout the research and so the direction my study took depended on the responses they gave.

### **1.3 Timing of the research**

The fieldwork took place at a critical point in the development of MFLs in primary schools. The Labour government had invested time and money in long term preparations for the introduction of PMFLs which were on the verge of being given statutory status, to be named in the new Primary Curriculum due to be implemented in 2011. The majority of schools had just begun to engage with the initiative and were planning how to include languages as part of the taught primary curriculum but since then a general election in 2010 heralded the beginning of a period of uncertainty. The newly elected coalition government rejected the new primary

curriculum which would have included statutory PMFLs and this was followed by several years of doubt. The recently published new curriculum to be implemented from September 2014 has since made foreign languages (but not necessarily modern ones) compulsory in Key Stage 2. In summary, the political situation changed significantly from the inception of the research to its completion, but importantly at the start there was momentum and a belief that PMFLs were indeed “here to stay”.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis moves forward with a literature review exploring the issues relating to teacher professionalism, the process of change, the history of MFLs in primary education and the role of professional development. The next chapter explores methodological issues and this is followed by an outline of key findings from the initial phases of the research. The two case study schools are then presented and findings analysed and this is followed by a discussion of the main findings. The conclusion then summarises the key issues and implications and recommendations are presented. A short postscript brings the study up to date and highlights its relevance to current policy.

## **Chapter 2: Literature and Policy Review**

In this chapter I set the scene for my research initially through tracking recent policy initiatives and educational reforms in the primary education system in England. This leads on to a discussion of how teachers are trained to deliver these initiatives and consideration of the effectiveness of different models of Professional Development (PD). I go on to discuss the research evidence supporting the process of change in general and then narrow the focus from the national level to school level and finally down to the level of the individual teacher. This discussion leads to the final section of this chapter which concerns the notion of teacher professionalism. I explore definitions and then examine whether teaching in primary schools in England is considered to be a profession by others and by teachers themselves. The impact of initiatives and reform is a key factor in current thinking about the characteristics of a profession and is therefore a highly relevant discussion for my research on the introduction of a new policy initiative on primary school teachers.

This chapter begins by outlining the changing place and status of modern foreign languages historically in primary schools from the 1960s to the current time. I examine the rationale and the aims of the National Languages Strategy (NLaS) and the National Languages Framework as these are key documents underpinning the PMFL initiative. I review the literature and research evidence surrounding the issues of early language learning in general, and more specifically language competence and intercultural understanding as these are identified as aims of PMFLs outlined in the supporting documents in England. In this way I provide a context for the research undertaken and I explain why I became interested in the impact the NLaS and what effect the subsequent recommendations would have on the teachers themselves. Next I discuss the key issues relating to different models of delivery of PMFLs. I question the Government's rationale for including MFLs in primary schools and explore the theoretical underpinning for their inclusion. This section ends with a discussion as to who should deliver the PMFL curriculum: the training of teachers is one of the salient issues to emerge from the literature and it is clear that there is much research still to be done to address the issue of PD for in service teachers.

Before focusing on the situation in England, it is important to provide a context for the debate by looking further afield for comparison. One of the reasons given for introducing MFLs into primary schools is to keep up with our European neighbours who introduce MFLs at an earlier age than has traditionally been the case in England. As English is currently the primary language used worldwide for international communication, knowledge of English is highly

valued and at the time of this study, children across the world were learning English at an increasingly young age (Graddol 2006). The picture was similar across Europe, where the Council of Europe's language policies provided a new focus for foreign language learning, with most European countries encouraging multilingualism where the aim was for citizens to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue (Graddol 2006). This policy appears to have had some success as a recent European Commission survey (2012) into foreign language proficiency across fourteen European countries found that 42% of secondary school students had reached levels B1/B2 of the CEF for Languages. This is in stark contrast to the UK where the British Council (2014) reported that 75% of the adult population were unable to speak a foreign language well enough to hold a conversation. The fact that English is currently the world's global language for communication should not make native English speakers complacent as the Nuffield Languages Inquiry claimed that due to their inability to communicate in a language other than English, young people from the UK were at a growing disadvantage in the recruitment market. According to their report the UK workforce was suffering from a severe shortage of people with language skills, to the extent that companies were forced to recruit native speakers of other languages. This meant that employment mobility was more available to people from other countries than to those from the UK. Although the report highlights the economic and business advantages of speaking foreign languages, it also raises important cultural, educational and diplomatic reasons for foreign language learning, ultimately warning that if the deficit in language learning in the UK is not tackled, it will pose: 'a threat to our competitiveness, influence and standing in the world, as well as to our citizens' ability to play a meaningful role in the global economy and an increasingly networked and interconnected world' (British Council 2014:19). The following section will begin to explore the place of foreign language learning in the UK and England in particular from 1960s.

### **2.1 Tracking Primary Modern Foreign Language Policy in England**

In the 1960s, a pilot scheme for teaching French in Primary schools in England was introduced, starting with pupils aged eight. However after running for ten years, it was discontinued after a very negative evaluation by Burstall et al. (1974) on behalf of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). According to their report, the project failed in several ways. Firstly it had not proven that an early start to language learning was beneficial. In addition, Burstall et al. found that the introduction of French neither enhanced nor hindered achievement in other areas of the curriculum (an argument often used to support early language learning). Children having a positive attitude, a benefit often cited by those advocating PMFLs, did not fare any better as the report concluded that motivation to learn

French did not necessarily facilitate the acquisition of French. Following this damning report governmental support and funding for languages in primary schools was withdrawn in 1974 and as a result, MFL provision in Primary schools became sporadic and patchy. Then in March 1999 the government announced a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) initiative to promote and develop the provision of MFLs in the Primary sector. The remit of this Early Language Learning (ELL) initiative was to support and develop foreign language learning in the primary sector, providing a basis for future developments. A major part of this initiative was the introduction of the Good Practice Projects (CILT Sept 1999-March 2001) which aimed to identify, develop and disseminate good practice across England and Wales which ultimately led to the involvement of 150 primary schools.

The ELL initiative achieved all its objectives and was extended with new objectives and fed into the developing national strategy for languages (King, 2001). Part of this included the establishment of the National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning (NACELL) which officially opened in October 1999 to provide support for teachers and institutions involved in providing early language learning. This initiative also resulted in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) publishing non-statutory guidelines on MFL at Key Stage 2 which were sent to all schools in 1999. In September 2000, the QCA published further guidelines in the form of an optional scheme of work for French with overviews and exemplar units for German and Spanish. The year 2000 also saw the publication of the report from the Nuffield Languages Inquiry which presented several recommendations as a result of its findings, and these included raising the status of foreign languages, driving forward a national strategy and introducing the teaching languages from age seven. Furthermore, the National Curriculum (2000) included non-statutory guidelines for MFL at KS 2 for the first time. This revival of interest prompted the QCA to commission a research project to evaluate the current provision and explore the feasibility of extending PMFLs to all schools (begun in June 2000). The report showed that a variety of models were being implemented across schools with considerable variation in approach. Although there appeared to be a favourable attitude towards PMFLs and support for potential expansion of provision, there were some important provisos. According to the report: 'the resources and infrastructure necessary to support any scaling up of existing provision are not sufficiently well-developed to sustain the introduction of a national entitlement for all pupils' (QCA 2001: 3).

The QCA report suggested further research and development was needed into effective approaches of implementation which could be replicated more widely, including preparatory measures to develop the necessary infrastructure by raising awareness of the benefits of PMFL

learning, a detailed audit of teacher availability, training opportunities and information transfer to secondary school (Hunt et al. 2005). These findings partly echo the criticisms of Burstall et al. in 1974 when it was found that providing the necessary numbers of suitably qualified teachers was a key issue.

An earlier report on phase 1 of the ELL initiative had similar findings and concluded that Government support for the development of early language learning should continue providing certain key priorities were addressed. Firstly, it was suggested that flexible curriculum models should be developed and this has, to a large extent, been achieved through the Framework for Languages in KS2 which I explore later in this chapter. Another priority identified was the training for teachers. In September 2001, the Initial Teacher Training Primary Languages Project began as a one year pilot. This was a joint initiative between the Teacher Training Agency and the le Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, supported by CILT (the National Centre for Languages) and consisted of five English initial teacher training institutions being paired up with five French IUFM (L'Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres). The trainees attending these institutions then followed an initial teacher training course which included an exchange element where they spent a period of a month teaching in primary schools in each other's countries. This project proved so successful that it was expanded with participating institutions covering languages such as French, Spanish, Italian and German. In this way, the training needs of the pre-service teachers were being acknowledged and addressed, although there remained uncertainty as to the most effective approach to in-service teachers' training demands. The issue of primary teachers' subject knowledge in PMFLs is of key importance to this study and I return to discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

By 2002 momentum for including PMFLs in the primary curriculum had gathered and The National Languages Strategy: Languages for all, Languages for life (DfES 2002) was published. This set out a clear vision for language learning in England and it had three overarching aims: one of these was to introduce a national recognition system for language learning, a second aim was to increase the number of people studying languages in further and higher education and work based training and the third (and most important for this study) was to introduce an entitlement for all children throughout KS2 to learn a MFL by 2010:

Every child should have the opportunity throughout Key Stage 2 to study a foreign language and develop their interest in the culture of other nations. They should have access to high quality teaching and learning opportunities, making use of native speakers and elearning. By age 11 they should have the opportunity to reach a recognised level of competence on the Common European Framework and for that

achievement to be recognised through a national scheme. The Key Stage 2 language learning programme must include at least one of the working languages of the European Union and be delivered at least in part in class time.  
(DfES 2002: 15)

This move from compulsory language learning for students aged between eleven and sixteen years to an entitlement for children aged between seven and eleven represented a new challenge for both primary and secondary schools in England. The rationale for including foreign languages implicit in this statement from the NLaS is twofold: children benefit from developing a level of competence in a foreign language and also an interest in the culture of other nations. I next address whether these aims are reasonable by examining evidence from research.

The first issue concerns whether learning a language at an early age is beneficial. Received wisdom with regards to the best age to learn languages appears to be ‘the younger the better’. However, whether this belief is supported by research evidence is debatable. This view might have arisen from research undertaken in the field of psycholinguistics in the 1950s which proposed the ‘critical age hypothesis’ (Lenneberg 1967). The critical age hypothesis states that the first few years of life constitute the time during which language develops readily and after which (sometime between age five and puberty) language acquisition is much more difficult and ultimately less successful. Originally applied to the acquisition of the first language this was then applied to second language learning as it was proposed that the principles of learning a first or second language were the same. This theory is not widely accepted for second language learning however, as there is insufficient conclusive evidence to support its claims with regards to foreign language learning. Indeed, Singleton and Lengyel (1995) point out that there are many exceptions, noting that five per cent of adult bilinguals master a second language even though they begin learning it when they are well into adulthood — long after any critical period has gone. Therefore the general assumption that teaching children when they are young will improve their language proficiency is not always supported by research (see Cable et al. 2010). However, it is important to be explicit about what learning a language “better” actually entails. In the following section I explore this idea further to examine the rationale for the inclusion of MFLs at primary school.

Burstall et al. (1974) claim that there were no overall advantages to be gained from starting learning languages early (in primary schools). They found that children who had learnt French from age eight showed no gains in mastery of the language over those pupils who had just started it at secondary school (at age eleven). However, there have been many criticisms of these findings, including that the children used in the pilot were not tested for pronunciation

or fluency in conversation. The size of the sample by the end of the project was another area of contention as was the fact that the NFER evaluation carried out its research with children who had learnt French from age eight after they had gone to secondary school and had started learning French from the beginning again which is likely to have demoralised the pupils in the experimental group. These were potentially misleading oversights as other researchers (for example Singleton 1989) found that younger pupils did indeed show superiority in oral and aural performance. Vilke (1998) also presents evidence to show that as children get older there is a decline in the quality of native like pronunciation. Furthermore Blondin et al. (1998) found that where learners who had learnt a language from an early age were compared with those who started at secondary school, the early starters showed an advantage in listening comprehension. The evaluation of the national pilot scheme in Scotland (Low et al. 1993) concurred and showed that those pupils who had started learning a foreign language in primary school as opposed to secondary school showed a clear advantage in pronunciation and intonation, complexity of structure, length of utterance, ability to sustain interaction, level of comprehension and a greater readiness to answer in class. These children also showed less stress and took more risks in their language production.

However in terms of the speed at which language learning takes place, there has been some research to indicate that older learners are more efficient and - with an equivalent exposure time - learn foreign languages more quickly than their younger counterparts (Oller & Nagato 1974; Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle 1978). This could be because older learners have a better knowledge of language patterns in general, are better at cognitively demanding tasks, have more developed general learning strategies and skills and more experience of acquiring facts and concepts (Collier 1989; Johnstone 1994). Methodological issues add to the complex picture in that much of the research demonstrating the greater efficiency of foreign language learning of older people over younger children is based on findings using tests which in themselves favour the older age group who will have had more experience with testing techniques.

In terms of what can be concluded from these research findings, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 55) suggest: 'older is faster, but younger is better.' However even this view is contentious. Poole (1999 cited by Tierney & Gallestegi 2005) carried out research comparing two schools using different approaches and her findings led her not to support the early introduction of foreign languages. She found that pupils had difficulty adapting the rehearsed chunks of language they had learned in order to use them in new situations or to create novel utterances. They also had difficulties asking questions, demonstrated poor listening skills as

well as issues with reading, writing and using numbers. It must be remembered that Poole's research used a very small sample and may not be considered generalisable. However, these findings echo some of those in the original NFER report (Burstall et al. 1974). As yet therefore there is no consensus as to the optimum age for beginning foreign language learning and the debate continues.

The issues discussed so far have largely been based on the development of linguistic proficiency and this is reasonable given the aim stated in the NLaS for children 'to reach a recognised level of competence on the Common European Framework'. However, it has become clear that improved linguistic competence has yet to be a proven result of early language learning (other than in naturalistic settings). Proponents of an early start for foreign language learning therefore draw on a range of other evidence to support their views, ranging from the importance of positive attitudes towards language learning which are more prevalent with younger children, to issues of entitlement, ensuring that state educated children receive the same opportunities to learn a language as those privately educated (see Macrory 2008a for a summary). I next explore the evidence supporting some of these arguments.

## **2.2 Other potential benefits of early language learning**

Given the doubt that remains over whether younger children are able to make more progress linguistically than their older peers, supporters of PMFLs have suggested wider benefits of ELL to make their case. Tierney & Gallastegi (2005) observed that younger children were more willing to try and were less self-conscious than adolescents and their accent and pronunciation were well developed. According to Powell et al. (2000), most primary and secondary teachers recognise that learning a language in primary school increases a child's confidence, enthusiasm and motivation to learn languages in secondary school. Indeed an Inspectorate Report (cited by Tierney & Gallastegi 2005) found one of the key strengths of modern languages in primary schools (MLPS) in Scotland was the enthusiasm and motivation shown by pupils. It is also clear that an early start to foreign language learning allows more hours to be invested so there is potential to achieve a higher level (Mitchell, Martin & Grenfell 1992) due to increased exposure.

Further possible potential benefits for primary aged children learning a foreign language include the potential to extend mother tongue proficiency, a view expressed by some teachers in the Scottish Pilot (Low et al. 1993). It has also been argued (Primary Languages Network 1998) that learning a foreign language not only complements and extends the National Curriculum requirements for English, especially in speaking and listening, but furthermore,

contributes to the aims and objectives of literacy teaching as set out in the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE 1998). It is argued that language learning also plays an important role in attuning children's ears to other sound systems (Vivet 1995). It would therefore appear that there is research to support the idea that there are wider benefits to ELL other than linguistic proficiency per se.

Sharpe & Driscoll (2000) agree and argue that early language learning also adds to a child's overall personal development, such as improving their communication skills, enhancing their understanding of human cultures and promoting tolerance. The NLaS (DfES 2002:15) stated that one of the two main aims for PMFLs was for children 'to develop their interest in the culture of others' so it is appropriate to discuss whether this is reasonable. The rationale is clear; children are being brought up in a world of increasing mobility where international borders are becoming less and less meaningful. It is against this backdrop that there is a growing awareness of the need to develop children's understanding of otherness. Byram & Doyé (1999) claim that putting an emphasis primarily on language skills is inadequate and they call for intercultural understanding to be included in the aims of primary foreign language teaching. The KS2 Framework for languages appears to heed this call and sets out a clear rationale for MFLs incorporating wider cultural benefits:

It is a comprehensive document, defining what children need to know and understand in order to learn another language and reach a recognised level by the age of 11. It will also make a contribution to children's personal development, fostering their interest and understanding in their own culture and that of others. (DfES 2005: 3)

The Framework provides a systematic approach to teaching PMFLs, comprising three progressive strands of oracy, literacy and intercultural understanding (IU). On a policy level therefore it can be seen that intercultural understanding is firmly rooted in the aims of PMFLs in England. However, despite containing a strand of learning objectives under the heading of IU, a clear definition of what is meant by this is missing. At no point does it define what it means by culture or intercultural understanding. Indeed it has not been shown beyond question that teaching IU will automatically result in children developing an interest in the culture of others. Language policy statements and syllabus aims have traditionally been based on the assumption that IU will simply be acquired as a result of language teaching and this also seems to be true of the KS2 Framework. However this premise has been questioned by many, including Byram (1990), Wright (1996) and Lawes (2000). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001) warns that it is not uncommon for the learning of one foreign language and contact with one foreign culture to reinforce stereotypes and preconceived ideas rather than reduce them. The CEF, which has shaped and influenced

the curriculum frameworks of many European countries, instead encourages knowledge of several languages and cultures. It appears then that the underpinning rhetoric of the NLaS may not have been fully explained or justified in the light of research evidence. Subsequently I surmise that it might be problematic for teachers to engage with teaching PMFLs without an understanding of the rationale behind it and the relevance of it to the children in their class. The assumption that early language learning is easier and that teaching about culture leads to more positive attitudes towards others' cultures were issues I intended to explore further with the class teachers themselves.

The suggested structure and the content of the PMFL curriculum was laid out in the Framework in the NLaS, but the decision facing schools was how to organise it and incorporate it into the timetable. The Framework suggests several different approaches for schools in England to follow and the actual content delivered would clearly depend on the model adopted. Scotland defined its aims and objectives for MLPS in the 1990s focussing on linguistic progression in one language (French, German, Spanish or Italian) from Primary 6 to Secondary 4 (ages 10-16), making the foreign language a core subject in the 5-14 Curriculum. In England however, the National Languages Strategy had much broader aims and the DfES promoted a range of models of provision. Hunt et al. (2005) outline these different models:

- language competence programmes,
- sensitisation/encounter programmes,
- cross-curricular programmes
- language awareness programmes.

*Language competence programmes* aim to develop children's linguistic attainment by focusing on a single language. This model allows linguistic skills to develop and be assessed so information can be passed to the secondary school to ease issues of transition. It also enables the children to feel a real sense of progression and gives them the possibility of real communication in the foreign language. This is the model not only adopted in Scotland, but in many other European countries. *Sensitisation/encounter programmes* offer children the opportunity to learn several different languages, although the language content is restricted by the reduced amount of time learning each one. This model may avoid the danger raised in the CEF (2001) of stereotyping and having more preconceived ideas when a single language is learnt. The linguistic demands on the teacher are also greatly reduced with this approach. A *cross-curricular programme* requires curriculum content of subjects other than the foreign language lessons to be learnt through the medium of the foreign language. This has become known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). In order to teach in this way, the teacher clearly needs to have a very confident command of the foreign language. At the other

end of the spectrum are *the language awareness programmes*. This is where explicit knowledge about language and language learning in general terms are the foci of the teaching which lays the foundations for learning how to learn a specific language later on.

The decision regarding which approach to adopt may be influenced by the language skills of those involved as the language demands of the programmes differ greatly. This raises the most relevant issue for my research. It might be logical to expect a school to base the model they adopt on the existing expertise of their staff, although from my ad hoc conversations with primary teachers this did not appear to be the case. It was the realisation that teachers might be expected to teach a subject in which they had little or no experience or confidence which was the catalyst for this study.

There is some debate over who should teach MFLs in primary schools. The most common options are: the general primary class teacher who may have some knowledge of the foreign language, a specialist in the language who is already a teacher based in the school, or a visiting language specialist. Research by Driscoll et al. (2004) found that primary headteachers preferred to staff PMFLs internally, rather than use visiting teachers, as the school then develops a sense of ownership. However Hunt et al. (2005) subsequently found that in England PMFLs were typically taught by both specialists without primary training (for example secondary trained teachers) and by primary teachers without specialist knowledge of the language.

As already mentioned, in Scotland the picture is different as the model advocated is one of language competence. In order to address the training needs inherent in a language competence model, there was a costly, nationally planned and supported programme. The Scots calculated that for every one of their 2500 primary schools they would need at least two retrained teachers. Over a ten year period more than 6000 Scottish primary teachers attended a 27 day course in language refreshment (Satchwell 2006). In England there are more than ten times as many primary schools calling for more resources and therefore other models of teacher training would have to be explored. A huge supply of primary-trained class teachers with additional skills in a foreign language and in foreign language (FL) methodology would be needed (Satchwell 2006). This reference by Satchwell (2006) hints at some of the complexities involved in the question of MFL subject knowledge. The debate surrounding the issue of teachers' subject knowledge has primarily focussed on what subject knowledge comprises, what constitutes adequate subject knowledge for primary teachers (given that they may be teaching ten different subjects) and whether a teacher's subject knowledge has an impact on

the effectiveness of their teaching. I therefore explore the conceptual notion of subject knowledge to inform the discussion as to whether it is essential and what form it should take.

Lee Shulman has been particularly influential in deconstructing teacher knowledge. He has provided categories of teacher knowledge and of particular relevance to the issue of teacher subject knowledge are his constructs of:

- *subject matter knowledge*,
- *pedagogical content knowledge*
- *curricular knowledge* (Shulman 1986: 9)

*Subject matter knowledge* (SMK) 'is the amount and organization of the knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher' (Shulman 1986: 9). He later separates this into *substantive* knowledge (the key facts, concepts and frameworks in a discipline) and *syntactic* knowledge (the rules of evidence and proof within a discipline) (Shulman & Grossman 1988). *Pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK) comprises:

the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations-in a word the ways of representing the subject which makes it comprehensible to others ... it also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult. (Shulman 1986: 9)

The final element, *curricular knowledge*, consists of knowledge of teaching programmes and the materials and supporting resources used in them. Although the research informing these categories of teacher knowledge was carried out with subject-specialist secondary school teachers, this work influenced many British studies of primary teachers' knowledge in the late 1980s and early 90s (Poulson 2001). Aubrey (1997) proposed a superordinate category of pedagogical subject knowledge which incorporated SMK, knowledge about children's understanding and curricular knowledge as a result of her research into teacher subject knowledge and the relationship between this and classroom practice. Many studies concurred and highlighted the fact that there were gaps in teachers' subject knowledge in the subjects identified in the National Curriculum (see Aubrey 1997; Bennett & Carré 1993; Wragg, Bennett & Carré 1989). This deficit model approach to teacher subject knowledge was based on the assumption that low levels of subject knowledge were problematic and would result in teachers being less effective. However more recent research has questioned this assumption (see Askew et al. 1997a, 1997b; Brown et al. 1998). They question the ways in which teacher subject knowledge was identified and quantified, and also suggest that the amount of subject knowledge required by a primary teacher may not be the same as that needed to teach at a higher level. Their research found that Shulman's construct of PCK was a more influential

factor in effective teaching than in-depth knowledge of the subject matter per se. This conclusion is also supported by research carried out by Poulson (2001) and Medwell et al. (1998) whose findings show that there was no clear relationship between a teacher's own academic knowledge of English and their effectiveness in teaching literacy. Burstall et al. (1974) concurred and found less correlation between a teacher's linguistic proficiency and effective teaching of French than between their general teaching proficiency and effective teaching of French. Baumfield (2013:47) agrees that it is unrealistic to expect primary teachers to have 'total command' of all the subjects on the curriculum and that: 'the expertise of the teacher lies in the ability to understand how a particular subject is constructed, what it means to think like a scientist or a historian, and therefore how to structure teaching so that someone else can learn.'

The message emerging suggests that there is little evidence of a clear relationship between a teacher's formal academic knowledge of a particular subject and their ability to teach it effectively in the primary school. This has implications for the training of class teachers in PMFLs as it could imply that little training would be necessary for effective teaching. This does indeed differ from the findings of Shulman (1986) in his secondary school contexts as well as the Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander 2009). This wide-ranging independent review into the condition and future of English Primary Education carried out between 2006 and 2009 found that sound subject knowledge was one of the key characteristics of good teaching as identified by teachers and children. However, the children placed greater importance on the 'expertise' (subject knowledge) of the teachers than did many of the teachers themselves who argued that 'subject knowledge at this stage is much less significant than dispositions and relationships' (Alexander 2009: 408). Despite the nuances involved in the field of teachers' subject knowledge, it is undeniable that for teachers to teach they must have some level of understanding of what is to be taught. Although the level of this understanding is contentious, the basic premise is not. Moving forward, Poulson (2001) observes much attention has been paid to teachers' subject knowledge in terms of what they should know, but less research has been done into how teachers learn.

In order to be in a position to implement a new initiative there is often a need for teachers to enhance and deepen their skills, knowledge and attitudes (or to adapt their existing ones). In the field of education, research suggests that professional development is an essential element in improving school performance (Hargreaves 1994a) but although this premise is not contested, the discourse around it is typified by 'conceptual vagueness' (Coffield 2000: 3). Terminology is also an area of contention. Professional development and professional learning

are often used interchangeably in the research literature, although some (for example Hoban 2002 and Middlewood et al. 2005) make a clear distinction between these terms. Middlewood et al.(2005) claim that professional development is concerned with the on-going process of reflection and review, combining with development planning to meet departmental and individual needs, whereas professional learning is concerned with the process of self-development which leads to personal growth in addition to the development of skills and knowledge that enhance student learning. The implication here is that professional development has a broader, more general meaning as opposed to professional learning which has a more specific, individual slant. Fraser et al. (2007: 157) prefer to use the term 'teacher learning' to represent: 'the processes that, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers.' Professional development they use to refer to broader changes that may take place over time and result in qualitative changes in teachers' professionalism. It is not surprising that Glover and Law (1996) claim that no single agreed definition exists. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is another term that is frequently used in the literature. According to Bolam (2000), CPD embraces those education, training and job embedded support activities engaged in by teachers once they have qualified. These activities are aimed at adding to their professional knowledge, improving their professional skills and helping them clarify their professional goals so they can more effectively educate their students. CPD and Professional Development (PD) are the terms most commonly used in England by governmental agencies, policy makers and drivers such as the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and the General Teaching Council (GTC). I therefore use these two terms interchangeably in this study to refer to the continuing development of teachers' skills and knowledge as referred to by Hoyle & John (1995).

### **2.3 Continuing Professional Development**

The importance of CPD has become widely recognised worldwide (Coolahan 2002; Fraser et al. 2007) and the quantity of international research carried out to investigate the most effective approaches to PD supports this view (Boyle et al. 2005). Structural developments in England have also demonstrated the government's desire to enhance the role of PD. They began with the establishment in September 2000 of the GTC with its specific remit of promoting teachers' PD. Following this was the introduction of the government's CPD strategy (DfEE 2001) which, in conjunction with the GTC's *Teachers' Professional Learning Framework*, set out teachers' CPD entitlement and responsibilities. In the same year, the UK government's white paper, *Schools: achieving success*, placed the professional development of teachers at the centre of

the transformation of the education system (HMSO 2001). In 2008, The National Advisory Group was also established to advise the TDA on the professional development of teachers and support staff. As a result of this collaboration, the TDA produced the *Strategy for the professional development of the children's workforce in schools 2009-12*. This strategy set out the TDA's vision to make learning cultures a part of every school in order to ensure children achieved the highest possible outcomes. At the time of carrying out the research, ensuring teachers had access to CPD was clearly a priority, however it is the type of CPD and the way in which it is delivered that is key. The issues raised here led me to explore whether the teachers in my case studies felt they needed CPD in order to deliver PMFLs and also whether they were offered effective CPD in this area.

Clearly the type and scale of the proposed initiative affects the CPD required, but several universal themes have emerged from the research literature. Adey (2004) has proposed three key variables that will determine whether the PD of teachers will be effective or not and I use these to structure this discussion and provide a model against which to compare the implementation of the NLaS (2002). The first variable is the *nature of the innovation*. Fullan & Stiegelbauer (1991) highlight the pointlessness of organizing PD for an innovation that is not worthwhile. This seems almost so obvious that it should go without saying, however schools are bombarded with so many new initiatives that make exaggerated claims about their effectiveness that they must be choosy about the ones in which they are prepared to invest (both financially and in terms of time). Adey (2004) suggests that to be considered worthwhile one must have good reason to believe that the change being introduced is of value. In order to ascertain this, the innovation should have a theoretical foundation and/or there must be some evidence to show its success. It has been shown that teachers welcome the opportunity to share in the reasons why they are being asked to change their practice and not to involve them in this way is to treat them as technicians (Adey 2004). Indeed the CPD that accompanied the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy was guilty of this insofar as the teachers were not given the rationale or the theoretical underpinnings of the Strategy until after it had been introduced and was embedded (Beard 1999). In the case of PMFLs, as I have already discussed earlier in this chapter, teachers were provided with the rationale for their inclusion, but not the theoretical underpinning. The main reason why the NLaS would have been considered a worthwhile innovation was that it had the status of an entitlement, originally destined to become a statutory requirement in all primary schools. This would have meant that it would be monitored by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) which would in itself make it worthwhile for the schools to engage with. However, alongside a basis of theory and evidence, teachers need to be supported with effective curriculum activities (what Adey 2004 refers to

as *generative activities*). Clear, well-constructed support materials also have an impact on the success of the CPD. This was indeed a priority for the agencies supporting the implementation of the NLAs, so government backed organisations (such as the National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning, CILT and Local Authority (LA) advisory teachers) all provided a range of materials to support class teachers in teaching PMFLs.

The second key variable in Adey's model is *elements in the PD programme provision*. There is general agreement in the international literature that although the traditional approaches to professional development such as workshops or conference attendance do raise awareness or interest in a particular initiative, they do not foster teacher learning to an extent that changes their practice (Boyle et al. 2005). Adey (2004) goes further and claims that in the research literature there is universal condemnation of the one-off in-service education and training (INSET) day (unless it is for a very specific thing like a new piece of software). Fullan & Stiegelbauer (1991) suggest that a period of two years of engagement is a minimum for real change to occur whereas Joyce & Weil (1986) maintain that a new pedagogic skill takes thirty hours of practice to perfect. The intensity of the CPD will affect the length of time required, as will the way in which the PD is delivered, which is also a variable that comes under this heading. Adey (2004) highlights the paradox when the style of teaching methods does not match the target classroom methods, for example when a formal lecture is used on the benefits of constructivist teaching as part of a PD course. Webb (2007) also identifies the need for effective CPD to include active learning that is relevant and applicable to the classroom. The way in which the CPD is approached must therefore reflect the desired change in classroom practice. Coaching and reflection are also identified as critical processes in helping teachers adopt approaches studied in CPD sessions in Adey's model, but a detailed discussion of these falls beyond the remit of this discussion.

The third and final variable is the *environment in which the change is engendered*. This is a broad and complex factor which encompasses issues of collegiality, the role of the senior management team (SMT), teacher ownership of the change and teacher turnover. The importance of collegiality is now widely recognised in the research literature (see Fullan & Stiegelbauer 1991; Bell & Gilbert 1996; Boyle et al. 2005). Indeed the current and widespread interest in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (Senge 1990; DuFour & Eaker 1998; Fullan 2001) and Communities of Practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 2005; Gravani 2007) is premised on a culture of collegiality, as both their names imply. Wenger (2005) defines Communities of Practice as 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly' and they are

'formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor' (p1). The collective component of CoPs is essential. While I do not discuss the concepts of PLCs and CoPs in depth the focus on collegiality is noteworthy as this emphasis on collegial learning is also currently echoed in English policy documentation. The TDA in its *Strategy for the Professional Development of the Children's Workforce in Schools 2009-12* identifies establishing learning cultures in schools and increasing collaboration as two of its three key priorities. A survey quoted by Boyle et al. (2005) carried out in the USA by the US Department of Education in 1999 found that many teachers believed that job-embedded, collaborative professional development activities such as common planning time, being formally monitored by another teacher, or networking with other teachers outside the school were more helpful than the more traditional methods of PD. Boyle et al.'s (2005) own research findings also demonstrate the value teachers place on collaborative and collegiate forms of CPD as they found that the most popular longer term professional development activities were the observation of colleagues and sharing practice.

To summarise the evidence, a collaborative and collegiate environment is therefore argued to be essential for effective PD to take place. Mindful of these claims, when carrying out my research in schools, I attempted to explore the environment in terms of its collegiality and cooperative nature. I also included the headteachers and coordinators directly in my research as the role of the senior management team also comes under scrutiny in discussions about creating an environment that is conducive to learning. Adey's (2004) project findings show that headteachers must recognise the amount of time required for in-house professional development and must be prepared to finance this to enable teachers to truly collaborate and develop their practice collectively. They must also take responsibility for ensuring that systems are put in place to monitor the ongoing progress of the particular innovation.

PD policy does not exist in a vacuum and the political and ideological agendas of the time have an impact on the CPD opportunities made available to teachers. According to Hargreaves (1994a) and Bolam (2000), research suggests that PD is an essential part of improving school performance. This implies that PD will be influenced by the priorities of the school improvement agenda of a particular country at a particular time. An example of this was the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in England in 1998. In order to implement this strategy, there was heavy investment in CPD for teachers, in order to train them to use the strategy as it was intended. One of the downsides reported by teachers during this time was that the choice of CPD activities was greatly reduced as the majority became focused on the implementation of the NLS, irrespective of the experience of the teachers' experience or

expertise (Fraser et al. 2007). A 'one size fits all' model was adopted. When the National Numeracy Strategy followed, much of the CPD then centered on literacy and numeracy to the detriment of other subjects/pedagogical approaches (Adey 2004). This finding is corroborated by McNamara et al. (2008) who found that in England, following the 1988 Education Reform Act, the emphasis of CPD changed from focusing on the development of individual teachers through attending external courses of their choice, towards priorities identified by the government. This report (McNamara et al. 2008: 2) goes on to say that: 'In the 'new professionalism' promoted by New Labour participation in CPD is recognised as important, albeit with the predominant purpose of equipping teachers to implement government reforms and tightly circumscribed within progression through specified standards and competences.' Webb (2007: 17) agrees claiming:

While the government rhetoric on teachers' CPD has become more expansive, the reality of the experience of the majority of teachers is that it has become narrowed down to 'one size fits all' training courses in government initiatives to meet national needs and school-based training to determine a school response to these needs.

The situation in England is therefore one in which teachers are very strongly encouraged and expected to participate in CPD but where the opportunities are limited and regulated by centralised governmental agendas. Fraser et al. (2007: 163) argue in relation to the National Literacy Strategy that the lack of ownership felt by the teachers due to the 'blanket approach to staff training ... may also have contributed to teacher disaffection.' This type of PD is known as top-down in that it is not chosen by the teachers themselves. However, although Adey (2004) acknowledges the potential disadvantages with top-down approaches to professional development, he also accepts that an entirely bottom-up approach (i.e. one that responds to the teachers' wants and perceived needs) would also have its disadvantages and that sometimes the perspective of headteachers or university researchers might be of some value. He therefore adopts a middle ground and proposes respecting the views of the teachers whilst at the same time ensuring that their PD needs (as opposed to their wants) are being met, thus combining the top down and bottom up approaches. I return to this discussion in the next section.

This section has outlined the most salient issues emerging in the literature on the issues involved in teachers' professional development and I return to these in more depth in the discussion chapter. Adey's (2004: 194) groupings of the key factors that are necessary for effective professional development are re-presented in appendix 1 to summarise the conclusions of this section.

I have set the context for my research in terms of the emergence of PMFLs from 1960 to the current time and also summarised the research evidence related to ELL and issues of teacher subject knowledge and CPD. I now turn to the literature on the processes of change to explore the factors that impact on its successful implementation. Fullan (1999: 21) argues: 'It is a theoretical and empirical impossibility to generate a theory that applies to all situations'. Change takes place at several levels and the following section begins with the literature pertaining to the change process at a state (national) level, moving to the local (school) level and finally to the level of the individual (teacher).

#### **2.4 Change at a national level**

Research on the change process in education has made the following observations: change is a process not an event; practice changes before beliefs; better to think big but start small; evolutionary planning is preferable to linear planning; policy cannot mandate what matters; integrated top down and bottom up approaches work best; conflict is a necessary part of change.

I have already touched on the idea that there are broadly two basic ways to approach educational reform: top down and bottom up, and Fisher (2006) echoes a body of research evidence to support her claim that the idea that external (top down) imposition of change is never likely to be successful. She cites the example of the top down implementation of the National Curriculum and claims that this did not lead to sustainable change as it was a technical innovation that was imposed on teachers; she further claims that teachers' ways of working have not changed as a result. Hargreaves (1994a:10) agrees that the top down model is less likely to lead to sustainable success and argues that a combination of top down and bottom up approaches (an integrated approach) has been seen to be most effective.

As many researchers agree that top down models of change are not necessarily effective or desirable, it is interesting that in the UK, government innovations have often been implemented in this way (for example the National Curriculum in 1988, the National Literacy Strategy in 1998, the National Numeracy Strategy in 1999 and the Primary National Strategy in 2006). From a government perspective changes need to be implemented and seen to be effective in very short time scales and so investing in long term reform is not an option. The amount of time and effort it takes to implement a change on a small scale is considerable and therefore to manage change on a large scale where numerous agencies and hundreds of thousands of people might be involved is extremely complex (Fullan 2007). Fullan (2007) examines and compares the implementation of national initiatives in England, the USA and

Canada (Ontario) and draws some conclusions about the reform process on a governmental level. He shows that governments need to focus on the three areas of accountability, providing incentives and fostering capacity building, if they are to be successful (but he has found that often accountability is emphasised to the detriment of the other two key aspects). He claims that in the USA, policy initiatives have concentrated mainly on accountability and that they have therefore done more harm than good. Focusing on accountability and providing incentives can result in a superficial, structural change but will not achieve a cultural change which will affect teachers' beliefs, motivations and relationships. The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) initiative in the US is accused of being just such an accountability driven reform that is impossible to deliver (Popham 2004). Fullan (2007: 241) claims that the lack of capacity building in the implementation of the NCLB reform makes it 'fatally flawed'. Others too have highlighted the dangers of accountability driven reform efforts if there is an absence of internal capacity building (Elmore 2004). Wise (1977: 45) suggests that:

When policy makers require by law that schools achieve a goal which in the past they have not achieved, they may be engaged in wishful thinking. Here policy makers behave as though their desires concerning what a school system should accomplish, will in fact, be accomplished if the policy makers simply decree it.

According to Fullan (2007) more successful examples of implementing large scale educational reform are the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies (NLNS) in England. These were introduced in 1998 and their introduction was evaluated over four years (1998-2002) by a team of researchers from Ontario. Overall the evaluation team found that the initiatives had been broadly successful, and that standards in literacy and numeracy had indeed risen, although these findings are not unproblematic. There has been continued criticism of the NLNS strategies as being overly prescriptive, that the improved statistics are due to the teachers teaching to the tests, that phonics is taught more explicitly than before and even that the statistics are faulty (Seddon 2008). Levin (2008) however argues that we are beginning to see an improvement in education policy (with the exception of the US) and he claims that the increased emphasis on capacity building is an example of this improvement. Although the Labour Government (in power in the UK since 1997 and was the government at the time of the research) introduced more changes than the previous government, it did so with the support of increased funding and an emphasis on helping schools do better rather than just insisting that they do. Like Fullan (2007), Levin (2008) cites the example of the NLNS and the infrastructure that was created to support its implementation in England. He claims that Scotland, Finland, Canada, Australia and Wales are also adapting strategies that focus on capacity building. In this discussion, the term capacity building is used to refer to: 'A policy, strategy or action taken that increased the collective efficacy of a group to improve student

learning through new knowledge, enhanced resources, and greater motivation on the part of the people working individually and together' (Fullan 2007: 58). This reference to the group working together echoes the sentiments behind CoPs, PLCs and the collegiate approach to CPD explored earlier in this chapter. It is clear therefore that this is not about a 'train the trainer' approach to capacity building but a process that is much broader and more wide-reaching.

Research into educational change has also shown that it is an extremely complex and context dependent process and therefore what works in one specific context may not work in another. However a broad set of guidelines has emerged from the field. Most researchers see three key phases to the change process (Fullan 2007: 65). These are:

- *Phase 1 Initiation* (sometimes called mobilisation or adoption). This is where a decision to adopt or proceed with a proposed change takes place.
- *Phase 2 Implementation* (or initial use) which usually refers to the initial two or three years of usage of the new initiative/change.
- *Phase 3 Continuation* (or incorporation, routinisation, institutionalisation) refers to whether the change is sustainable and becomes embedded in the system or disappears once the initial emphasis and attention has waned or a decision is taken not to continue

This model may appear simple but the boundaries between each phase are not clearly defined and the phases are not linear in practice. One might move between the phases as a change is tried and refined. Also, there are numerous factors affecting each phase, some of which will depend on whether the change is externally imposed or self-initiated as well as the scale of the change. To further complicate matters, in recent times, schools have not been faced with one change at a time but with multiple changes that may not be complementary in nature. As my research was concerned with the initial adoption of a new initiative, only the first two phases of this model are applicable and therefore the third phase is not discussed in any depth.

Fullan (2007) outlines eight factors that affect the initiation phase and a further nine that affect the implementation phase. Many of these are discussed later, so I only summarise them here. As one would expect, the variables are many and diverse (for example the time factor, the people involved, major/minor change, internally/externally imposed). However Fullan (2007) draws some general conclusions and claims that the most conducive components to initiate change are the 3Rs: *Relevance*: the change needs to be considered necessary and also to be clearly set out and useful. This echoes Adey's (2004) belief that the innovation must be considered to be worthwhile. *Readiness* refers to whether the school or individual is able and willing to take on the change in terms of whether they have the time, the facilities, the equipment and the materials required, as well as whether the proposed change fits in with the

existing school culture. The final R stands for *Resources* which might be considered essential at the implementation phase but should also be considered at the initiation phase.

Some of the issues in the implementation phase echo those in the initiation phase. For example whether a change is implemented successfully depends on whether teachers see a need for the change. Interestingly, Berman & McLaughlin (1977) have shown that ambitious, complex changes stimulate more change than smaller ones (even though they may not achieve all their original aims). Romberg & Price (1999) call these different types of change: *radical Innovations* and *ameliorative Innovations* respectively. The first is an innovation that directly challenges the existing values of the school and implies a much more in-depth change, whilst the second is a superficial initiative aimed at curriculum improvement but which does not alter or challenge any existing school values. I argue that the PMFL initiative would come under this second category, although I also maintain that this does not lessen the impact on those required to deliver it. Finally, the quality and practicality of the proposed change will determine whether it is implemented or not. Supporting materials need to be of high quality and easily available, which has implications for the time scale from initiation to implementation. There must be sufficient time to ensure that appropriate supporting resources are ready, although Reeves (2006) found that the size and prettiness of the planning document are inversely related to the amount and quality of action.

Sarason (1990) claims that most educational reforms fail for two reasons: 1) the different components of educational reform have not been conceived or addressed as a whole (i.e. curriculum change, professional development and new teaching strategies have been treated separately); 2) major educational reform will not succeed unless school power relationships are addressed (i.e. restructuring is necessary). Generally this restructuring advocates the encouragement of collegiality and collaboration and it is therefore timely for the discussion to turn to the effect of the school culture on the change process.

## **2.5 Change at a school level**

Several of the issues already raised, that either positively or negatively affect initiation and implementation, are themselves affected by the 'school culture'. Corbett, Dawson & Firestone (1984) identify eight contextual factors that influence whether schools effectively introduce educational initiatives and five of these relate to the cultural environment of the school. Rossman, Corbett & Firestone (1988) conclude from a later study that variations in aspects of school culture affect the individual teacher's response to change initiatives and their willingness to implement them. Similarly Gordon & Patterson (2008) emphasise the

importance of the school culture on the reform process. They refer to Noblit & Patterson's findings to show that reforms look very different in different school communities as they are used to achieve different aims and may end up having little to do with their original intent. They use the mantra 'It's what we've always been doing' to show how reforms are adapted to fit in with a school's existing culture.

Hargreaves (1994a) too explores the influence of school culture on teachers' values and beliefs. However, rather than talking in terms of school culture, he talks of 'cultures of teaching' comprising 'beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers...' (p.165). These cultures are developed over time and in order to understand what teachers do it is necessary to understand the teaching community and the work culture in which that teacher operates. Hargreaves (1994: 238) concludes that there are five broad forms of teacher culture: *fragmented individualism*, *balkanization*, *collaborative culture*, *contrived collegiality* and *the moving mosaic*.

The culture of *fragmented individualism* is defined as teachers working alone, isolated from outside influences. The notion of individualism does not necessarily have negative connotations here and could be interpreted as individual teacher autonomy. In this context however, it does not support the idea of collective change. A *balkanized* culture also implies an element of isolation in that the whole is fragmented. However, in this case, teachers demonstrate loyalties to a particular group (for example a department or team). This is also not a conducive culture to change initiatives due to fragmentation and divisiveness. *Collaborative* culture has much more positive outcomes as it is based on sharing, trust and mutual support. Joint work is encouraged (but not enforced) and all efforts are aimed at supporting the development of the school. *Contrived collegiality* is actually an administrative procedure where staff members are forced to work together but where the management is controlling the conditions and outcomes. Osborn et al. (2000) also encountered this phenomenon in their research. They found that although teachers were working collaboratively together, much of it was superficial. Finally the *moving mosaic* culture is characterised by overlapping group membership, enabling flexibility and responsiveness in different situations. However the boundaries are blurred which has been found to lead to uncertainty, vulnerability and potentially staff conflict (Hargreaves 1994a).

It is becoming clear that collaboration is an important determining factor in change being implemented effectively. Helsby (1999) shows how collaboration between teachers enables them to provide support for each other and draw upon shared thinking and alternative ideas

to respond to change. It is argued that solidarity can enhance confidence and encourage experimentation as well as challenging ideas and broadening professional knowledge (Helsby 1999; Hargreaves 1994a), once again echoing the call for PLCs and CoPs. However Little (1990) points out the potential danger that the move towards greater collaboration could lead to contrived collegiality and a lack of individualism and autonomy. However, although a collaborative school culture may sound like a school where everyone agrees with each other, this is not necessarily the case. Fullan (1999) points out that a collaborative culture actually fosters diversity.

One of the key determining factors in the school culture is the headteacher and his/her leadership. Mintzberg (2004: 143) captures the essence of effective leadership:

Leadership is not about making clever decisions ... It is about energizing other people to make good decisions and do better things. In other words it is about helping people release the positive energy that exists naturally within people. Effective leadership inspires more than it empowers; it connects more than it controls; it demonstrates more than it decides. It does all this by engaging- itself above all, and consequently others.

Just as education has changed dramatically since the late 1980s, so too has the role of the headteacher. Osborn et al. (2000) tracked this change over six years and found that over this time headteachers' feelings of accountability grew to a larger number of stakeholders. This inevitably led to a distancing in their relationship with members of staff (by 1995 headteachers felt more accountable to governors than to colleagues). Headteachers were seen to be aligning themselves more to government policy which entailed an increase in managerial tasks and less contact with the children and staff members. Over the six year period of this research headteachers showed a heightened awareness that they were ultimately responsible for implementing legal requirements. Managerialism also rose, perhaps because of this responsibility (although not at the expense of collegiality as this also increased). Osborn et al's project also found that the new demands on headteachers' time resulted in them being less involved in curriculum matters, which were delegated to deputies and/or subject coordinators. I wanted to explore whether this was the case in the schools in my study and the impact of this.

There has been wide ranging research into the characteristics of effective school leadership and one of the messages emerging from this research is that successful headteachers are able to develop leaders across the school, creating a critical mass of distributed leadership. As part of their conclusions, Day et al. (2000) claim that effective school leaders allow people to work as powerful professionals within clear collegial frameworks and with high levels of teamwork

and participation in decision-making (although the school leaders retain the right to make autocratic decisions where they feel it necessary). James et al. (2006) also highlight the ability of effective headteachers to develop leadership in others (as in a distributed style of leadership). Leithwood et al. (2004) confirm this approach to successful leadership, and they identify the need to build a community of leaders as one of their ten recommendations for headteachers. This strategy means that there will be more than one leader in a school and therefore the importance of the senior management team and curriculum leaders is increased. As a result a curriculum change may not be directly managed by the headteacher, but by the subject leader within the school. Therefore when discussing the role of leadership, it is not just the leadership of the headteacher that is under scrutiny. For the purposes of my research the role of the PMFL coordinator would, therefore, be key.

The school culture in which teachers are working clearly has an impact (positive or negative) on their approach to change on a collective level and I now explore the relationship between change and the individual teacher.

## **2.6 Change at an individual (teacher) level**

There are two opposite but overlapping aspects to this issue. Firstly there is the effect that individual teachers can have on a proposed change and secondly there is the effect the change has on the individual. In the first instance it is well known that there is often a gap between what the policy designer intended by the policy and what is actually enacted in the classroom. Teachers mediate policy through their own filter of values before integrating them into the classroom and therefore the practice may look very different to how the policy maker intended (Osborn et al. 2000; Vandenberghe 2002). Therefore individual teachers are understandably considered by most policy makers, curriculum developers and school change experts to be instrumental in the process of educational change (Datnow, 2000; Fullan, 1998; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1998). Hargreaves (1994a: ix) highlights this:

... we have come to realize in recent years that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement. The restructuring of schools, the development of benchmark assessments-all these things are of little value if they do not take the teacher into account...It is what teachers think, what teachers believe and what teachers do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that young people get.

Of equal importance and relevance to my research is the effect that the proposed change can have on the individual teachers including their emotional responses to the change, which will have an impact on the way in which that change is implemented (or not). This is one of the key areas in my research. The processes of change and the implementation of reform have been

extensively researched and well documented, but the impact on the teachers themselves of each initiative will change and differ depending on the variables already outlined, and my research would need to add to the understanding of the teachers' perspectives and experiences. In their large, longitudinal research project (the PACE project), Osborn et al. (2000) found there were five stances that teachers adopted in response to imposed change (in this case The National Curriculum). These are:

- *compliance* (acceptance and adjustment of ideology);
- *incorporation* (appearing to accept proposed changes but incorporating them into existing modes of working so that existing modes were adapted rather than changed);
- *creative mediation* (taking active control of the changes and responding to them in a creative and possibly selective way);
- *retreatism* (submission to imposed changes without any change in ideology leading to deep seated resentment and alienation);
- *resistance* (total resistance to changes).

These stances are not necessarily static and teachers in their study moved between them at different times and in different ways during the project. It was found that outright resistance was rare. The moral approach of primary schools where conscientiousness, loyalty and an ethic of care is emphasised makes resistance difficult as it might have a negative effect on pupils or colleagues. Unquestioning compliance was also not common (though seen more often amongst younger teachers who were new to the profession). There was considerable evidence of retreatism amongst older teachers. This has also been reported in other research (explored later in this section). Incorporation was the attitude most commonly seen, although a smaller but significant number of teachers engaged in a more active way with the changes and were able to creatively mediate the changes (i.e. protecting children from what they believed not to be good practice whilst still working within the required frameworks). The notion of creative mediation is particularly relevant here as this can lead to a change being modified or even ignored completely. In some instances, teachers responded to and mediated changes in a similar way which led to consequences unintended by the policy makers (in this case, a parallel National Curriculum policy in the classroom). This collective action is not necessarily a planned premeditated approach to change on behalf of the teachers, but this phenomenon leads Croll et al. (1994: 333) to refer to teachers as 'policy makers in practice'.

In the past, higher level policy makers and reformers have paid little attention to the effect the changes were having on the teachers themselves (Day 2002). Hargreaves (1994a: 6) refers to the 'disregard and disrespect that reformers have shown for teachers.' This blinkered approach is a dangerous one, not only because it may lead to teachers resisting and rejecting the reform effort (Osborn et al. 2000), but also because it can lead to teachers feeling

demoralised and frustrated, which can in turn lead to an increase in teacher attrition rates (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2009). As a result of this possible negative impact on teachers, there has been a rise in educational research into teacher thinking (Hermans et al. 2008), the effects of reform on teachers professional and personal identities (Day 2002; Zembylas & Barker 2007; Helsing 2007) as well as teachers' emotional geographies (Hargreaves 2001; Datnow 2000). My research into teachers' responses to the implementation of the NLaS was aimed at adding their voice to the developing collection.

According to many researchers (Hargreaves et al. 1998; Nias 1999; Van Veen & Slegers 2006), change and emotion are inseparable. There are, however, a number of variables that affect how individual teachers respond to change and here I explore some of these variables. The first one, already raised in a previous section is whether the change is externally mandated or self-initiated. I have already outlined the negative response often felt towards externally imposed change (Hargreaves 2004; Osborn et al. 2000). However on close inspection Hargreaves (2004) found that many of the self-initiated changes that received more positive responses in fact had their origins in mandated reforms. He therefore concludes that teachers do not reject mandated change merely because it is mandated, but because it may not be professionally inclusive or demonstrably beneficial for students.

When educational change is proposed, teachers' willingness to engage with it varies from one individual to another but importantly a key determinant of an initiative's successful implementation is the teachers' willingness to try it. Van Eekelen et al. (2006) found there to be a close relationship between a teacher's *will* to learn and their *ability* to do so. Important factors found to influence a teacher's willingness to learn include their openness to others, their attribution of failure or success, as well as how able they are to articulate their own learning experiences (Van Eekelen et al. 2006). If ultimately the teachers' attitudes towards the new initiative will positively or negatively affect their ability to learn how to deliver it, then teachers' voices are becoming increasingly important in the debate. How individual teachers feel about the NLaS will therefore determine the success of its implementation and so far their voices have not been heard. In response to reviewing the literature my intention to begin to redress the balance between hearing the policy makers and listening to the practitioners themselves became increasingly important.

There are many other factors that affect teachers' responses to change, including: desire to change, belief in the proposed change, age, biography, perceived sense of self efficacy, tolerance of uncertainty, conscientiousness, manner of emotion regulation, and reflection on

experience. According to Hargreaves (2005) among the most important of these factors are teachers' age and their career stage. The repetitive nature of the implementation of reform in England has led some of the more mature experienced teachers to feel cynical, disengaged and disenchanted about educational change in general (see Riseborough, 1980; Huberman 1993; Bailey 2000) although younger teachers are thought to accept change more readily as they are more accustomed to it. Reio (2005) also found that willingness to try new things decreases with teaching experience. Importantly however, this more ready acceptance of change with early career teachers does not necessarily mean that they are able to implement it more effectively than their older and more experienced colleagues (Hargreaves 2005).

In an attempt to bring some clarity to the complex and overlapping factors that affect teachers' responses to educational change, House & McQuillan (1998) proposed a model grouping these into three categories: technological, cultural and political. The characteristics and traits just highlighted would come into the category of the cultural perspective, which draws attention to the way teachers respond differently depending on their identities, age and career stages. The mandated or self-initiated nature of the change and the way in which it is received by teachers comes into the political category. Finally the technical category is concerned with the logistical aspects of change that occur at the different stages of the process (initiation, implementation and institutionalization) and which lead to a set of guidelines for the effective management of that change.

To conclude this discussion, it is clear from the literature that the change itself must be well defined and be considered by the individual teacher to be beneficial. Any new initiative must be well resourced and appropriate support/training strategies must be in place. The evidence also suggests that there must be the right amount of positive pressure exerted to encourage teachers to engage with a new initiative, and adequate time must be allowed to enable its implementation. However, all these factors could be in place and the change still not be effective if the teachers themselves are not taken into account; as Hargreaves (2005: 981) argues '... understanding how teachers experience and respond to educational change is essential if reform and improvement efforts are to be more successful and sustainable'. The importance of the teachers' responses and experiences is paramount and exploring these in-depth was the intention of my research.

## **2.7 Teachers as Professionals**

I now return to the recurring issue of the impact of whether change is mandated or more self-initiated and explore this in the context of teachers' professionalism. The literature regarding

policy reform (see Stronach & Morris 1994) suggests that teachers have been expected to practise in a climate of constant reform and change but without having the opportunity to express their own opinions, and this does not appear to coincide with the notion of a profession. It may be that there is a difference in how the term profession is applied; it is a term that is widely used and seems to have a generally accepted meaning by those who use it but as yet there is no single accepted definition of what constitutes a profession. During the 1950s and 60s, sociologists tried to establish sets of characteristics which were required of an occupation in order for it to be called a profession. This essentialist approach (or a criterion approach) led to a triangle of traits against which a profession could be measured (Locke et al. 2005). Various sets of criteria have been suggested ranging from as few as two to as many as thirteen (Hart & Marshall 1992). This makes exploring the changing nature of teacher professionalism problematic. There is some consensus however over the fundamental aspects of a profession, these being:

- A specialised knowledge base
- A license to practise based on rigorous training and examination
- A strong service ethic/altruism
- Autonomy and self-regulation embodied in a professional organisation

For the purposes of this literature review I use the classic definition of a profession, using the essential triangle of traits comprising of knowledge, altruism and autonomy, proposed by Locke et al. (2005), knowing that this trait theory of professionalism is not without its critics. Some would say that the term professionalism is one whose meaning is constantly shifting and that it is a social construction (Webb et al. 2004). Notions of teacher professionalism are therefore value laden and the meaning will change depending on who is using it (Bryan 2004). Nonetheless, the trait theory continues to have influence with policy makers. Webb et al. (2004) suggest that the setting up of the General Teaching Council (1998) was an attempt to satisfy the trait theory's criterion for a professional body to exist. The GTC has since been disbanded under the new coalition government, so if this was originally the case, it would appear that teacher professionalism is no longer supported in this way.

Current debate in England is also centred around whether, due to the widespread reforms teaching has been - and is being - de- professionalised. The alternative view from proponents of reform, is that it is instead being re- professionalised. I explain this in more detail in the following discussion where I track the shifting perceptions of teacher professionalism based on the essential traits (Locke et al. 2005) alongside the implementation of reforms. In this way I clarify the relationship between these two phenomena.

## 2.8 Effects of reforms on primary teachers' professionalism in England

Hargreaves (2000) proposes that in many countries, teacher professionalism has passed through four historical phases which he calls the 'four ages of professionalism.' At the beginning (pre 1960s) was the 'pre-professional age' where teaching was not considered to be a difficult job in terms of technical skills, but was managerially challenging as teachers were required to transmit knowledge to large groups of students. Teachers were generally considered to be enthusiastic people who knew their subjects and how to control the students enough to allow the majority to learn. They trained by watching experienced teachers, as well as learning on the job. It was a novice-expert model of training, and once the teacher had completed the student teacher apprenticeship, it was thought that very little further training was required. From 1944-1970s teachers enjoyed a great deal of autonomy with very little state intervention. Hargreaves (2000) refers to the 1960s-70s as the 'age of the autonomous professional'. Teachers' status improved, their salaries went up and it became an all graduate profession. Teachers enjoyed considerable autonomy with regards to curriculum design, and it was a period when many educational innovations were promoted both centrally and locally.

However, in the mid-late 1970s a view emerged in the political arena that teachers had abused the trust placed in them and had failed its children. As a result the state began to take greater control and the education system as it had been known was radically changed. This process was begun by James Callaghan in his famous Ruskin College speech in 1976. His terminology is interesting however. He referred several times to the 'teaching profession' as well as to the 'professionalism of teachers' commenting:

First let me say, so that there should be no misunderstanding, that I have been very impressed in the schools I have visited by the enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching profession ... I recognise that teachers occupy a special place in these discussions because of their real sense of professionalism and vocation about their work ...

He went on to make suggestions about how changes needed to take place:

To the critics I would say that we must carry the teaching profession with us. They have the expertise and the professional approach. To the teachers I would say that you must satisfy the parents and industry that what you are doing meets their requirements and the needs of our children. For if the public is not convinced then the profession will be laying up trouble for itself in the future.

His speech set the tone for the shift in thinking about education and following it, numerous reforms have been implemented, beginning with the 1988 Education Reform Act. The introduction of Ofsted (the government body charged with inspecting schools) followed in 1992, the Literacy strategy in 1998, the Numeracy strategy in 1999, the Primary National

Strategy in 2003, The Children Act and Every Child Matters in 2004, the Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics (part of the Primary National Strategy) in 2006 and entitlement to learn an MFL throughout key stage 2 in 2009/10. Reforms have clearly been pouring into primary schools with relentless regularity since the mid-1980s.

The mid-1980s onwards, Hargreaves calls 'the age of the collegial professional.' Until this time, teaching had been a largely individualistic occupation where there was little collaboration between teachers and certainly not between schools. But now teachers (and schools) would work more closely together in order to try to implement the imposed reforms. Working together, Hargreaves (2000) argues, helps teachers make sense of the new external curriculum and reduces the extra workload of planning and assessment. Professionalism here is 'new' rather than 'old' (Hargreaves 1994b); collegial and collective, rather than autonomous and individual (Hargreaves & Goodson 1996 cited by Hargreaves 2000). Given such moves it could be argued that the trend towards collegiality was a move towards further professionalisation, hence my earlier comment that some proponents of reform view reforms and the resulting necessity for teachers to work together as a way of re-professionalising teaching. Indeed in their study, Locke et al. (2005) found that more than half the teachers in their sample in New Zealand expressed a belief in the collegial nature of professionalism. However opinion was divided as to whether collaborative practices were conducive to professionalism. Although the notion of extended professionalism (Hargreaves 1991) seems to have been widely adopted in schools, this is not without its downside. While planning together can save time and teachers can work together to make sense of new initiatives, equally this collegiality could prove stifling as discussed previously.

In this same study, the teachers in the English sample saw collaboration as a positive outcome of the loss of autonomy. They found that collaboration provided security in a time of uncertainty. Webb et al. (2004) regard that working together should increase teachers' confidence to resist, delay or adopt innovations. However the evidence gathered so far suggests that collaboration is predominantly used to reduce the workload involved in implementing reform rather than challenging it in any way. Perhaps it is the case, as suggested by Webb et al. (2004), that collegiality, negotiation and partnership are the new emerging values in teacher professionalism.

Regardless, the potential for collaborative working can be sabotaged if the conditions are not right. For example, for teachers to work effectively together they need time to do so and this is often a luxury that they do not have. Also, as Webb & Vulliamy (1993) point out, the large

number of initiatives following the introduction of the National Curriculum meant that much of the collaboration had to be spent doing technical tasks of coordination rather than working together for fundamental change; once the urgency of implementing the latest initiative had passed, collaboration faded. This echoes Hargreaves (1994a) notion of 'contrived collegiality' where teachers are forced to cooperate to achieve externally driven goals which will, he argues, suppress a teacher's desire to truly collaborate. Collaboration can therefore be a double edged sword that can help teachers make sense of rapid change and high demands, but can also be a strategy used to get teachers to implement policies of others, possibly at the expense of their individual beliefs and ideals in the process (Smyth 1995).

With the advent of the postmodern era has come a drive for profitability, marketability and competition in society in general. Education has not escaped these phenomena (see Ball 2013 for details), but has moved into what Hargreaves (2000) calls the fourth age: post professional or postmodern. In 2000 he called for a movement to support a new postmodern professionalism for teachers that is 'broader, more flexible and more democratically inclusive of groups outside teaching and their concerns than its predecessors (Hargreaves 2000: 167). However he also pointed out the dangers and the forces that might challenge this, and where teacher professionalism might be abandoned, for example if teachers returned to the hands-on, learn as you go approach to training (as in the pre professional age) or by subjecting teachers to detailed measurement and control of narrow competence frameworks. Since the Labour Government was elected in 1997, the emphasis has been on raising standards through pedagogical prescription (Locke et al. 2005) and auditing. The general trend in all these reforms is one from autonomy towards central control resulting in a position where the state prescribes the curriculum, the pedagogical approaches and assessment procedures and imposes them using a top down approach. These reforms and policy initiatives leading to central control over the teaching profession, have led many to argue that teaching is being de-professionalised (Barnett 1997; Bottery & Wright 2000; Furlong 2000). Certainly the trait of a profession having autonomy, is one with which teaching would struggle to comply.

The drive to raise standards in schools has brought a move towards competence based (standards based) models of learning to teach. Some argue that education in England has become market led and competitive. Humphreys & Hyland (2002: 6) refer to this as the 'systematic de skilling of teaching through instrumentalist outcome-based strategies' and they go on to claim that 'There is a commodification of professional knowledge and the marketisation of the service culture'. Locke et al. (2005) maintain that the reforms implemented in England tend to have a technocratic-reductionist approach to teaching (rather

than a professional-contextualist one). They contend that the reforms imply that teaching in England is viewed as requiring skilled technicians, who are competent, produce the attainment of specific learning outcomes, work in a hierarchical system, and who are extrinsically motivated and contractually compliant. Adams & Tulasiewicz (1995) also identify this phenomenon of teachers being turned into technicians rather than reflective professionals.

The training of teachers reflects this trend as it currently consists of meeting a set of competences (or standards) rather than studying broader perspectives. Additional routes into teaching have also been introduced, such as School Direct and School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) which require very little theoretical input. This could also be seen as an attempt to weaken the defences of teaching as a profession with its specific subject knowledge base (Whitty 2000). However others would argue that it is in fact the opposite, and that school based training reflects the view that teaching has come of age and is now in a position to take more responsibility for training (Hargreaves 2000). Regardless, it is unarguably the case that the training takes place within the confines of a narrowly prescribed curriculum and centralised initiatives in a culture of surveillance.

Having discussed knowledge and autonomy, I turn now to the third trait of the triangle: altruism. Jones et al. (2008) argue that it is in the interests of the government that teaching is not considered to be a profession as this gives the state more justification for greater regulatory control. They claim that all the government interventions have complicated teachers' views on the 'good they are doing in society' (p.2). However Dawson (1994) returns to a more traditional Aristotelian view of the virtuous person and argues that imposed codes from outsiders cannot drive out teachers' own sense of what is ethically and educationally right for the children in their care. The good of the child is the undisputed goal amongst teachers (Locke et al. 2005). However, even if it goes against their own educational beliefs, teachers will do things if they believe they are in the best interests of the child; for example Webb et al. (2004) found that although teaching to the tests (in Standard Assessment Tests known as SATs) was against their better judgment and professionalism, teachers would do it as they believed it reduced the stress felt by the children. Locke et al. (2005) discuss this issue further and demonstrate that if the 'good of the child' is the goal for teachers, what constitutes 'good' becomes the key issue. The predominant culture is one of highly centralised policy initiatives where the economic good of the country is becoming synonymous with the good of the children (Locke et al. 2005). If teachers are encouraged to believe that the state knows best, then they may defer to the expertise of others at the expense of their own professional judgment: 'Altruism, as we might anticipate, as the profession's defining quality

has the potential to prove its Achilles' heel' (Locke et al. 2005: 564). So the third point of the essential triangle of traits is also problematic.

The relevance of this altruistic attitude for my research is that the teachers may attempt to teach PMFLs to their classes even if they disagree with the initiative or feel ill equipped to deliver it. If teachers have doubts about the delivery of PMFLs, but do not have enough in-depth knowledge on which to base their opinion, they may defer to Ofsted and/or the local authority who will require it to be taught. Teachers may teach the FL because they feel the children would learn more from them than from a visiting teacher, or they might agree to teach PMFLs against their better judgment so that the children in their class do not feel excluded or left behind when they transfer into the next class. All these possibilities are discussed in the light of my findings later in the thesis.

This discussion has so far focused predominantly on the views of academics, politicians and external commentators on the effects of reform on teacher professionalism. More importantly for my research, given the drive to hear the teachers' voices, are the views of the teachers themselves regarding the perceived crisis in professionalism and the following research literature addresses this.

## **2.9 Teachers' perceptions of the effect of reforms on their professionalism**

So far it would appear as though reform has had a negative impact on teacher professionalism with the three essential traits of autonomy, knowledge and altruism challenged and shaken. The question arises as to whether this is true of reform in general or whether this is specific to the type of reform and the nature of the implementation process of these reforms. Comparative studies help to identify what features might be generally consistent and which are country specific. Webb et al. (2004) and Locke et al. (2005) report the findings of two research projects, the first comparing teachers' responses to reform in England and Finland and the second exploring differences between England and New Zealand.

Both projects consisted of qualitative case studies and although they make no claims to generalizability their findings with regards to the views of the teachers involved are relevant to this discussion. Whereas in England education policy was one of centralisation and control with increasing accountability and testing, the trend in Finland was in the opposite direction. Legislation there in 1994 dismantled the subject based national curriculum and encouraged schools to develop their own curricula (Webb et al. 2004). Finland's national primary school

inspection system was also discontinued in 1991. The reforms being implemented in Finland and England were therefore very different in nature.

Webb et al.'s study (2004) shows that some of the teachers in Finland were very enthusiastic about the reforms and started planning their own curriculum. Empowerment for them became a reality and they felt that their professionalism was enhanced. However the majority of the Finnish sample thought they were already effective teachers and were confused as to why there was a need for reform. For them, the freedom offered by the reforms generated feelings of insecurity as they were not sure what type of curricula they were expected to produce. They did not know how to go about curriculum planning and so their workloads and stress levels increased. By 2001, the negative effects of the reform on morale had increased further. Ironically the reforms in Finland were meant to empower teachers but the majority of the respondents in the study sample felt the opposite: deskilled and devalued. There was majority support to return to national curriculum guidelines with specified content and lesson hours for each age group. This return took place in 2004.

In the English sample, Webb et al. (2004) found that the teachers were generally critical of practice in England before the reforms of 1988. They believed that teachers had been going into classes unplanned and that children wasted a considerable amount of time due to the lack of continuity. For them, having specified and detailed curriculum content and learning objectives was seen to be a positive move, although timetabling had been an issue. Time spent planning had increased dramatically and teachers' workloads had also greatly increased. The curriculum reform was seen to have adversely affected teachers' professionalism by removing opportunities for teachers to be creative and innovative in ways which motivate and engage children. It was also felt by some that the prescribed nature of the curriculum gave the public the idea that teachers needed to be told what to do. Despite these reservations, Earl et al. (2001 cited by Webb et al. 2004) found that most teachers subsequently thought the new strategies (NLNS) had positively enhanced their professionalism by making them more effective, confident teachers. Although the NLNS were originally greeted begrudgingly and suspiciously, over time teachers' ways of teaching changed in light of them. As a result of seeing the children learn more effectively, the teachers' sense of professionalism grew. Webb et al.'s (2004) research demonstrates an interesting inverse relationship between policy and teachers' values. It is evident therefore that a reduction in autonomy does not necessarily lead to a perceived loss of professionalism as perceived by the teachers themselves. In this case policy has mediated teachers' values. Webb et al. (2004) found enthusiasm for pedagogical change in England but not in Finland. Given that at the core of teachers' professionalism is the

ability to motivate and develop children's learning, because the English participants perceived the strategies as helping them to do this, they therefore felt the NLNS actually enhanced their professionalism (Webb et al. 2004). Baumfield et al.'s research (2010) found a similar dichotomy in the opinions of teachers regarding professionalism when they interviewed teachers in relation to the looser curriculum that was being introduced in Scotland. Whilst many teachers valued the new- found freedom to plan their own curriculum and saw this as enhancing their professionalism, others worried about accountability and 'getting it wrong'. Responses in the focus groups showed: 'an implicit acknowledgement of the riskiness of autonomy and a sense of exposure to potential error by removal of the "safety blanket" of prescription' (Baumfield et al. 2010:62).

In their comparative study of teachers' views of the impact of the implementation of reform on their professionalism in England and New Zealand, Locke et al. (2005) found that overall teachers in New Zealand were more positive about it than in England. They suggest that this was due to the way in which the reforms were implemented, with prescription and testing mechanisms put in place in England which were absent in New Zealand. The way in which PMFLs were introduced seemed to combine prescription with autonomy insofar as learning a PMFL was to be an entitlement for every child in Key Stage 2 (the prescribed element) but the actual content and approach adopted were decisions that each school could make autonomously. In light of other studies, therefore, this becomes an interesting case to consider and I sought to investigate how the teachers felt about this and whether this had any impact on their perceived sense of professionalism (discussed further in the analysis chapter).

The state of teacher professionalism is constantly shifting and encompasses a number of paradoxes. Teachers are expected to be more professional at a time when they are being deskilled, with fewer resources in more demanding classrooms and while under increasing scrutiny and pressure with increased intervention (Sachs 2001). Although centralised reforms give the impression of giving more freedom they are in practice de-regulating and then re-regulating; a phenomenon known as controlled de-control (Du Gay & Hall 1996). Teachers are encouraged to think of themselves as neo-liberals but are managed in a way that de-professionalises them and then re-professionalises them (Ozga & Lawn 1981). This leads to questions over how teacher professionalism can move forward or even survive (if indeed it still exists) in the midst of such turmoil. Stronach et al. (2002) argue that there is a need to move away from the traditional oppositional terms in which professionalism has been couched, for example: state control vs professional autonomy, traditional vs progressive, audit culture vs collective values, and move towards something more fluid. Darling-Hammond (1990:31)

provides an alternative definition of the term as she perceives it to be used by policy makers and administrators which incorporates 'unquestioning compliance with agency directives'. This concept of unquestioning compliance has been used by policy makers and is applied in England where teachers are expected to implement all initiatives without proper consultation in order to raise standards according to a state run system. According to Day (2002) the system now rewards those who successfully comply with government directives and who reach government targets and punishes those who do not. The degree to which teachers comply with these directives is seen as a measure of their professionalism. Tony Blair (Prime Minister at the time the research began) said that he regarded teachers as representing the forces of conservatism, resistant to change and in need of firm management. It is therefore unsurprising that the unquestioning compliant definition of professionalism is the one that has been dominating education in England in recent years.

Niemi (1999) provides an alternative and preferable approach to professionalism (in Webb et al. 2004) exploring the notion of teacher empowerment (linked to Schön's (1983) model of the reflective practitioner). This would enhance teacher status and encourage them to contribute and participate in reform. Professional autonomy would be encouraged and a pedagogy based on a deeper understanding of learning would prevail over a pedagogy based on technical skills to perform preordained tasks. This could be argued to be the case in other countries such as Finland but is not currently evident in England.

There is no doubt that teacher professionalism has changed radically over the last forty years and that it will continue to do so. There is however no agreement as to whether de-professionalisation has indeed taken place or whether the notion and definition of teacher professionalism has changed. It is certainly the case that teachers' autonomy has been greatly reduced and that initiatives are currently centrally driven and centrally audited. It could be argued that this alone has de-professionalised teaching, although it has been shown that the teachers themselves do not always perceive this to be the case. The specialised knowledge base required for teaching has also changed in that it has become more competence based and more 'technocratic-reductionist' (Codd 1997 cited by Locke et al. 2005) in nature, which has also arguably reduced teacher professionalism. Teacher professionalism is an extremely complex concept and this is reflected in the literature. My study would further investigate the perceptions of the teachers themselves with regards to implementing the PMFL initiative and would therefore add to this body of literature.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology Chapter**

Firstly in this chapter, I recap the key research questions to help the reader make connections between these and the overriding theoretical considerations explored in the chapter. The principal questions are: How do headteachers, PMFL coordinators and class teachers feel about the PMFL initiative? How are they responding to the need for change? Do they feel equipped to implement the initiative and what are their motivations, concerns and constraints? Throughout the chapter my purpose is to make clear my own stance as a researcher and to provide an exploration and justification of the research design, examining the methodology and the methods employed as a result. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 21) highlight the sequence in this process, 'ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection'. The structure of this chapter follows this sequence starting by making explicit my beliefs underpinning this study and proceeding to explore the relevant research traditions, justifying the research design and outlining the detail of the methods used.

### **3.1 Ontological and epistemological assumptions**

Methods used for research are chosen based on different suppositions about the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is gained. The ontological assumption underpinning the positivist or quantitative paradigm is that there is an objective reality that can be captured or studied and that social reality is external to the social actors. The assumption behind the interpretive or qualitative paradigm is that there is no such thing as an objective reality, rather that it is a construct of the individuals themselves. The research in this study was based on the latter position, that reality is constructed by the individuals' consciousness and therefore there is no one knowable objective reality. The research questions naturally lead to this interpretive position as it is the understandings and interpretations of the individuals involved that is paramount; the intention of this research is not to ascertain whether the participants' beliefs and experiences were 'true'. These ontological assumptions then give rise to epistemological assumptions, which concern 'the very bases of knowledge - its nature and its forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to other human beings' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2004: 6). In the type of research reported here it would be difficult to imagine that the researcher and the researched could or should be independent from each other's influence and I argue that the researcher will always interact with the researched and will always affect the object of the research and the research findings. Basit (2013) acknowledges this inevitability and concludes that in order to address this, the researcher must exercise reflexivity at all stages in the research process.

Although some of the influence and subjectivity of the researcher can be anticipated and identified in the research process, unlike those strictly adhering to a positivist paradigm, I do not adhere to the view that it can/should be completely controlled and certainly not eradicated.

From beliefs about reality and the nature of truth, methodological assumptions logically emerge. If a researcher believes that reality is subjective and that objectivity and independence are not the drivers of the research, then an interpretive approach using qualitative methods becomes most appropriate. In this instance methods could include observations, conversations, in-depth interviews and content analysis of documents. A more positivist stance would indicate the use of experiments, quasi-experiments, and hypothesis testing methods. As a result of my beliefs and assumptions in this research investigating teachers' experiences in times of change I adopted a mainly qualitative stance. Clough and Nutbrown (2008: 19) claim that: 'A characteristic purpose of a methodology is to show not how such and such appeared to be the best method available for the given purposes of the study, but how and why *this way of doing it was unavoidable - was required by - the context and purpose of this particular enquiry*' (original emphasis). These authors do not advocate an either/or paradigm but rather suggest that the researcher should adopt the stance that is most appropriate to the work. Bearing this in mind, I opted for an initial questionnaire that gathered some quantitative data to identify that there was indeed an issue to explore and also to identify the most appropriate schools for detailed case study. There was therefore a very small quantitative element which reflected the particular research question and stage of this study but this was by no means the main approach.

Clough & Nutbrown (2008) discuss other assumptions that the researcher makes in the research design process. Those worthy of note in this research are that I was assuming that teachers would want to talk to me about their experiences, that these experiences would vary from person to person and school to school, and that initially some people would tell me what they might think I wanted to hear. My aspirational assumption was that this research might lead to a greater understanding of the issues faced by teachers through exploring their individual perspectives and personal experiences of change which I feel have been lacking so far.

One final point to make so that my stance is unambiguous is that to reflect my views on the nature of knowledge and how it can be constructed and communicated to other human beings

I have chosen to write about this research using the first person to make my involvement explicit and unashamed.

### **3.2 Case study**

This research was driven by a desire to understand how teachers felt about their role in the introduction of PMFLs and to explore their perspective at a time when change was being imposed upon them. I was interested in exploring how individual teachers were tackling this change in an attempt to identify key factors/issues that influenced their attitude towards the introduction of PMFLs, with the ultimate aim of being able to disseminate findings and possibly improve practice in the future. Given these motivations I decided this would best be approached through case study. Case study generally can be described as 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context' (Yin 2003: 13). Additionally, according to Simons (2009: 5) there is the possibility of dissemination beyond the case which can influence decision making as well as policy and therefore practice. Merriam (1988) also supports qualitative case study as an appropriate methodology for exploring problems within the field of education.

Case study has different meanings and definitions in different fields. In general, the characteristics of case study which differentiate it from an experiment or social survey are the number of cases that it involves, the amount of detailed information collected, the degree of control over the variables, the sort of data collected and the way they are analysed and inferences drawn (Lewis-Beck et al. 2004). A case study approach will usually include unstructured data, the methods and analysis will be qualitative and the ultimate aim is to better understand the case itself (or the phenomenon) rather than the generalisability of findings (Simons 2009). There are many understandings of case study which range from a pure interpretive paradigm, for example Stake (1975), to an approach that incorporates more positivist approaches (for example Yin 1994). Whilst all the definitions share the commitment to studying a phenomenon in its real life setting, including all the complexities that this involves, the definition provided by Simons (2009: 21) seems the most relevant to this research as it not only explains the characteristics of case study but also includes the purpose of it:

Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action.

This definition is particularly relevant as it combines the rigour and complexity of the approach with the possibility of reacting to evidence gathered as the research is developing. In this way it echoes the claim made by Clough & Nutbrown (2008) where the methodology is dictated by the context and purpose of the research.

I then needed to decide on the type of case study that would best suit my needs. Stake (1975) distinguishes between three types of case study: firstly *intrinsic*, where the case is selected purely for its intrinsic interest; secondly *instrumental*, where the case is chosen to explore a particular phenomenon that the case illuminates rather than the case itself; and thirdly *collective*, where several cases are researched to develop a collective understanding of the phenomenon in question. The research in this instance fits into both the *instrumental* (as I was aiming to 'gain insight into an issue' (Stake 2003: 137) and *collective* as I opted for two cases to help develop a broader understanding of the issue. Yin (2003) offers an alternative definition of the three main types of case study: *explanatory, descriptive and exploratory*. *Exploratory* case study for Yin asks the question of what we can we learn and in this way it echoes the aims of Stake's instrumental and intrinsic types, and also the aims of my own case study. There are no clear boundaries between these definitions of the types of case studies, and in this instance a combination of Stake's instrumental and Yin's exploratory case study, with a collective element best describes what I needed. It is important to make these distinctions between types of case study as they reflect the researcher's aims and guide the methods. This is particularly true of ethnographic case study which has its origins in anthropological or sociological traditions and uses qualitative methods such as participant observation in order to gain a deep understanding of the context (Berg 2004). Traditionally, classic ethnographic research involves long term immersion in a particular setting, whereas more recently micro-ethnography has evolved with shorter ethnographic studies (see Ball 1987). Although I would spend time in the two case study settings and use participant observation at times during my research (explained in a later section), it was not an intentional data gathering strategy and so in this sense, although I flirted with a micro-ethnographic approach, I did not adopt this as my method. The data I needed could be gathered most effectively through interviews and non-participant observations without the need for immersion in the setting.

Glaser & Strauss (1967) advised that when planning research, the researcher should decide whether to base it on an existing theoretical framework or whether to allow the theory to emerge from the collection and analysis of the data. Reflecting this notion, Bassey (1999) adds further categories of case study, *theory-seeking, theory testing, story telling, picture drawing and evaluative*. The approach adopted in this research was *theory seeking* as I did not enter

the research process with a pre-established theory in mind but was intending that the theory should develop from the data. He suggests that theory can also be generated through cross-analysis of a number of cases which enables patterns and interconnections to emerge. In my research two cases were identified and therefore cross case analysis was possible as well as theory being generated from the data from one particular case.

### **3.3 Potential issues associated with case study**

#### **3.3.1 Generalisation**

The question of whether case study research can be generalised has been debated for some time (see Merriam 1988 & Bassegy 1999 for a summary of the arguments). Some have argued (Atkinson & Delamont 1985: 25) that if case study researchers reject the idea of generalisation, case studies 'will be doomed to remain isolated one-off affairs, with no sense of cumulative knowledge or developing theoretical insight'. Traditionally the aim of case study is not to find universal truths or provide statistical generalisations, rather to better our understanding of the particular. However this does not preclude conclusions gained from case study research from being applied to other cases.

Stake's (1995: 3) explanation of an instrumental case study contains the implication that it can be used not only to deepen our understanding of the specific case, but to better our understanding in general i.e. that there is scope for generalisation:

We will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case ... This use of case study is to understand something else. Case study here is instrumental to accomplishing something other than understanding (the particular case) ...

Much depends on one's conceptualisation of generalisation. Yin (2012: 18) talks of 'statistical generalization' versus 'analytical generalization'. He argues that case study can indeed make claims to analytic generalisation in that it can 'establish a logic that may be applicable to other situations' (Yin 2012: 18). Other terms that refer to this approach to generalisation are 'naturalistic generalisation' (Stake 1995: 8), and 'fuzzy generalization' (Bassegy 1999: 52). Simons (2009: 164) claims that: 'In many contexts where we conduct case study research we have an obligation not necessarily to generalize but to demonstrate how and in what ways our findings may be transferable to other contexts or used by others'. Here Simons makes a useful distinction between generalisability and transferability. She goes on to outline six ways of generalising from case study research (choosing to continue using the term generalisation as it is the most commonly used). The important points to note are that unlike positivist research, where formal generalisations assume that one case is representative of others and typical of a

wider population, case study generalisations may draw implications from one case to another, fully cognisant of the fact each case is singular and unique. Flyvbjerg (2011: 305) further argues that not only can case study be used to generalise but that formal generalisation is 'overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas the "force of example" and transferability are underestimated.'

The way I chose the two case studies in this research using purposive sampling (explained in more detail later in this chapter) was in an attempt to enable some cross-case generalisation as well as in-depth particularisation suggesting a universal understanding (Simons 2009). Flyvbjerg (2011) supports this strategy and states that the generalisability of case studies can be increased by the careful selection of cases to study. He claims that when the main objective of the research is to gain the maximum understanding of a particular phenomenon, an approach using random sampling or representative cases might not yield the most data. As it was my intention to gain an understanding of the implementation of a particular initiative and its impact on individual teachers, it was appropriate to select cases that I thought would be different in the data they would generate. Whilst the schools chosen were not atypical (in the sense of being extreme or deviant), they were contrasting with each other in terms of their context and approach to the implementation of the PMFL initiative.

### **3.3.2 Subjectivity**

I have already alluded to a criticism of qualitative research in general; that it can be said to be too subjective, and case study research in particular has been accused of this. However, although the subjectivity of case study research is more openly acknowledged than in some other approaches, subjectivity will be present whatever the approach. The criticism regarding subjectivity stems from a premise that objectivity is the ultimate aim and that subjectivity is a problem. However I argue that it is not possible to eliminate subjectivity and this does not necessarily present a problem unless this subjectivity results in a distorted presentation of the case. Basit (2010: 7) claims that: 'no research is totally value-free as all research is carried out by humans'. I also align myself with Griffiths' (1998: 46) view that 'all facts and information are value laden, but this is not helpfully described as "bias", since in this context the sense of the term "bias" depends on there being a possibility of a neutral view'. Unlike other more positivist approaches, case study research makes the subjectivity and involvement of the researcher obvious and leads the researcher to focus on how their own predispositions and feelings might impact on the research (Denzin 1989). Flyvbjerg (2011: 311) argues strongly that case study researchers do not set out to verify existing beliefs and theories but the opposite:

The case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher's preconceived notions than other methods of enquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification.

Griffiths (1998) argues that bias may exist only if the researcher is not sufficiently reflective and allows their own opinions to affect the research. All researchers will have their own values and part of the researcher's role is to reflect on these pre-existing values and express them explicitly. Therefore in the tradition of case study research, I make my own background (a former primary school teacher) and professional experience (as tutor involved in the PMFL specialism in teacher training) known as it means that I have my own preconceptions of the impact this initiative might have on teachers. I assume that there will be some difficulties around organisation, timings and subject knowledge. Being aware of these beliefs it is important that initial questions are not based on these assumptions but that the issues emerge naturally from the participants themselves.

### **3.3.3 Reliability and validity**

The concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research are very different to those in quantitative research. I therefore outline the reasons why positivist researchers might argue that my research is neither valid nor reliable and then justify why and how I have set about achieving a rigorous and trustworthy study, using different approaches that are appropriate for my chosen methodology. Quantitative research assumes the possibility of replication, that is, the extent to which the findings of a re-study would repeat those of the initial study (Seale 2004). This is not the claim here. The obvious presence of the researcher in qualitative research and particularly in case study raises questions about the possible effect of the researcher on the researched - the 'observer effect' (Bogdan & Biklen 1982: 38). This is particularly pertinent in this case as at the time of the research I was working as a tutor on the PGCE Primary programme and was responsible for running the Primary French specialism that formed part of this. This meant that I had met many of the participants in this capacity and had worked with some of them in the role of tutor overseeing the progress of trainee teachers in their classes. As many of these trainees were French specialists, some of the teachers participating in the research saw me as an expert in Primary French. It was also known to some that I had carried out some work with the TDA with regards to up-skilling primary teachers in French. Initially this had its advantages in that it gave me access to and knowledge about several schools and teachers in advance of the research so I was able to make informed choices about which schools I wanted to participate due to their level of engagement with the PMFL initiative. I explain the sampling process in more detail later in this chapter.

My perceived status, however, caused some tension with my role as researcher. At the beginning of the process it was clear that many of the teachers either wanted my advice or felt they should say the right things, mistakenly believing that my agenda was to check that French was being properly introduced. Moreover, having the permission of the headteachers may have implied that I was there to help them monitor and feedback on the progress of the school re the PMFL initiative. It would have been impossible to avoid this given that the headteachers are the gatekeepers to the schools and I could not have carried out the research without their permission. In terms of the participants knowing who I was, this was also unavoidable without moving the research to an area where we would be unknown to each other, which would bring other practical disadvantages. I had anticipated these role conflict issues in advance and went to some lengths to explain the aims of the research in terms of the importance of hearing the teachers' own views and experiences. Although I perceived there to be an element of suspicion to begin with, as the process continued, the participants relaxed and began to treat me more like a colleague, including me in jokes and comments about the school and its day-to-day workings.

My perceived role as an expert however did not change and this resulted in my decision to, on several occasions, alter my role from impartial observer to participant/advisor (as described by Simons 2009). This meant joining in with some lessons in order to model pronunciation or correct grammar. I felt it was necessary to become engaged in this way as it was important to maintain the relationship I had developed with the participating teachers. As a result of my participation and relationship with the teachers, I do not claim that if the same methods were used with the same sample by a different researcher, the results would be the same, but this is not the most relevant definition of reliability for this context. Other ways have been suggested to ensure that equal rigour is applied in qualitative research contexts where the terms and measures are different to those used in quantitative research. Yin (1994: 37) suggests that the possible way of addressing the reliability issue in qualitative research is to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder. He suggests using rival explanations throughout the research process as a way to make sure the researcher constantly questions whether s/he is actually witnessing what they believe they are and whether respondents are giving honest and full responses. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) give further advice and suggest that reliability as replicability can be addressed in qualitative research in several ways: stability of observations, parallel forms and inter-rater reliability. Approaching qualitative research in this way is implying that it should adopt the same principles as quantitative research and I argue that this should not be the case as replicability is not the main driver of case study research. Replicability is much more important where the research makes claims to be statistically

generalisable and again, this is not applicable to case study research which strives to report the individuality and preserve the uniqueness of a case.

Nonetheless, qualitative research may still strive for a version of reliability. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2004: 120) conclude that: 'In qualitative methodologies reliability includes fidelity to real life, context- and situation- specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to the respondents.' This is the approach towards reliability that I adopted throughout the research process. I made every effort to explore the issues in as much depth as possible. I encouraged participants to be honest and I tried to be honest in my own interactions and analysis and to make explicit any potential influences and biases. I approached triangulation and participant validation through the cycle of interviews followed by observations and back again. My only disappointment regarding participant validation was that due to time and, more specifically, timing constraints, I was not in a position to use communicative validation which involves checking with participants for shared meanings and interpretations (Flick 2009). Although this would have been my preferred approach neither I nor, more importantly, the participants had the time to do so. I certainly did not want to run the risk of alienating the teachers who had given up their precious time to be interviewed and observed.

Similarly to reliability, the concept of validity in its traditional positivist sense has also been challenged by qualitative researchers (Maxwell 1992; Guba & Lincoln 1989). They argue that qualitative researchers should be wary of working within a positivist researcher agenda re the definition of validity and Maxwell (1992) suggests replacing positivist notions of validity with the concept of authenticity. This would seem to be more appropriate for this particular research. Every effort was made to ensure that the research design would enable me to elicit as many views about the implementation of PMFLs as possible in different settings. The viewpoints of the primary class teachers, headteachers and coordinators would all need to be sought and included as it was important to adopt an inclusive stance. Triangulation also played an important part in ensuring reliability and validity (insofar as this is possible in qualitative research) and for this reason I used a multi-method approach. A combination of questionnaires at the initial phase and subsequently interviews and observations were used. One data gathering method I had planned to use but then decided against was the analysis of documentation (for example PMFL policies and long/medium term planning). Initially I believed that these may be useful in multi-method triangulation but it soon became apparent that the long/medium term planning consisted solely of the particular scheme of work that the school was using which bore little resemblance to what was actually happening in classrooms.

I was told this on several occasions by PMFL coordinators and the class teachers themselves, and on this basis I decided not to pursue this avenue. I also discovered that at that time, the schools did not have written policies relating to the teaching and learning of PMFLs other than that they would be taught in KS2.

The trustworthiness, authenticity and dependability of my approach were at the foreground of the decisions made during the processes of research design, implementation and analysis. In my research the participants were allowing me to enter their professional (and personal) world and therefore ethical considerations were similarly crucial at all stages. The following section provides an overview of the main issues and these are exemplified in the detail that follows in the research process.

### **3.4 Overview of ethical issues**

Ethical issues that arise in this type of research relate to the moral concern with protecting the participants in the research process from harm (both physical and emotional) whilst in the pursuit of knowledge. To help researchers adhere to the overarching principle of 'doing no harm', various sets of guidelines have been proposed (see for example BERA 2011) and academic institutions have their own procedures in place. This research adhered to the University of Southampton's ethical guidelines and the ethics protocol was approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee (and University Research Governance Office). However, these regulatory processes cannot in themselves check that the researcher is acting in ethical ways during the research process; they can only highlight some potential issues that are predictable at the research design stage. For example one of the first issues in this study concerned obtaining informed consent, so in accordance with the ethics protocol the appropriate forms were completed and returned. However this does not address the real and more subtle ethical issues inherent in this process, and I explore these in more detail in the discussion on the selection of participants.

Although in this particular research design the ethical considerations might not initially appear complex, once in the field they became more complicated, and difficult decisions had to be made. Nind et al (2013) discuss the complexity of research ethics, concluding that they are much more complex than the issues of confidentiality and anonymity that are the main concern of most ethics review boards. Brinkmann & Kvale (2014: 23) agree and state: 'ethical research behaviour involves more than rule following and adherence to ethical codes.' For me it was helpful when making decisions regarding ethical issues to consider the broad moral stance I wanted to take. There is a balance to be struck between the need to search for

knowledge and to consider the effects that this may have on the participants, and this balance is not easy to achieve. As the research progressed it became clear that my findings would not always show the teachers in a wholly positive light and this made me feel anxious as I had not set out to be critical of teachers' practice, but rather to make their voices heard. However it is equally important to report the findings accurately and honestly and therefore it is perhaps inevitable that some of the analysis might not be entirely positive. Morris & Cohn (1993) also found that many ethical dilemmas emerge at the reporting stage. In an attempt to lessen any potential harm to any of the participants, I have made every effort to present the data in a sensitive way, making findings thematic rather than personally attributable to individual teachers.

With a view to ethical sensitivities, I have also made the participants as anonymous as possible by giving the schools and the participants pseudonyms. Nonetheless, for those people who knew the research was taking place and who work in the specific schools it might be possible to identify certain individuals as there are frequently few people teaching French and certainly only one PMFL coordinator and one headteacher. As this was known in advance it was made clear to the participants that complete anonymity would not be possible in all cases and the participants were happy to continue on this basis. Any further publication of the findings from this research would bear this in mind.

I purposely called this section "overview of ethical issues" as it represents an overview of the main considerations and actions taken to ensure no harm was done in the field. Other, more specific ethical dilemmas arose in the process of carrying out the research are these are discussed in following sections. Having set out the overview of the rationale for the research methodology, I now explain and justify specific decisions made pertaining to methods.

### **3.5 Selecting the cases**

For this study I needed to identify a variety of schools to take part in an initial phase of data gathering from which I would select two to focus on as case study schools. The flow diagram in figure 3.1 below provides an overview of the way in which this selection was made.

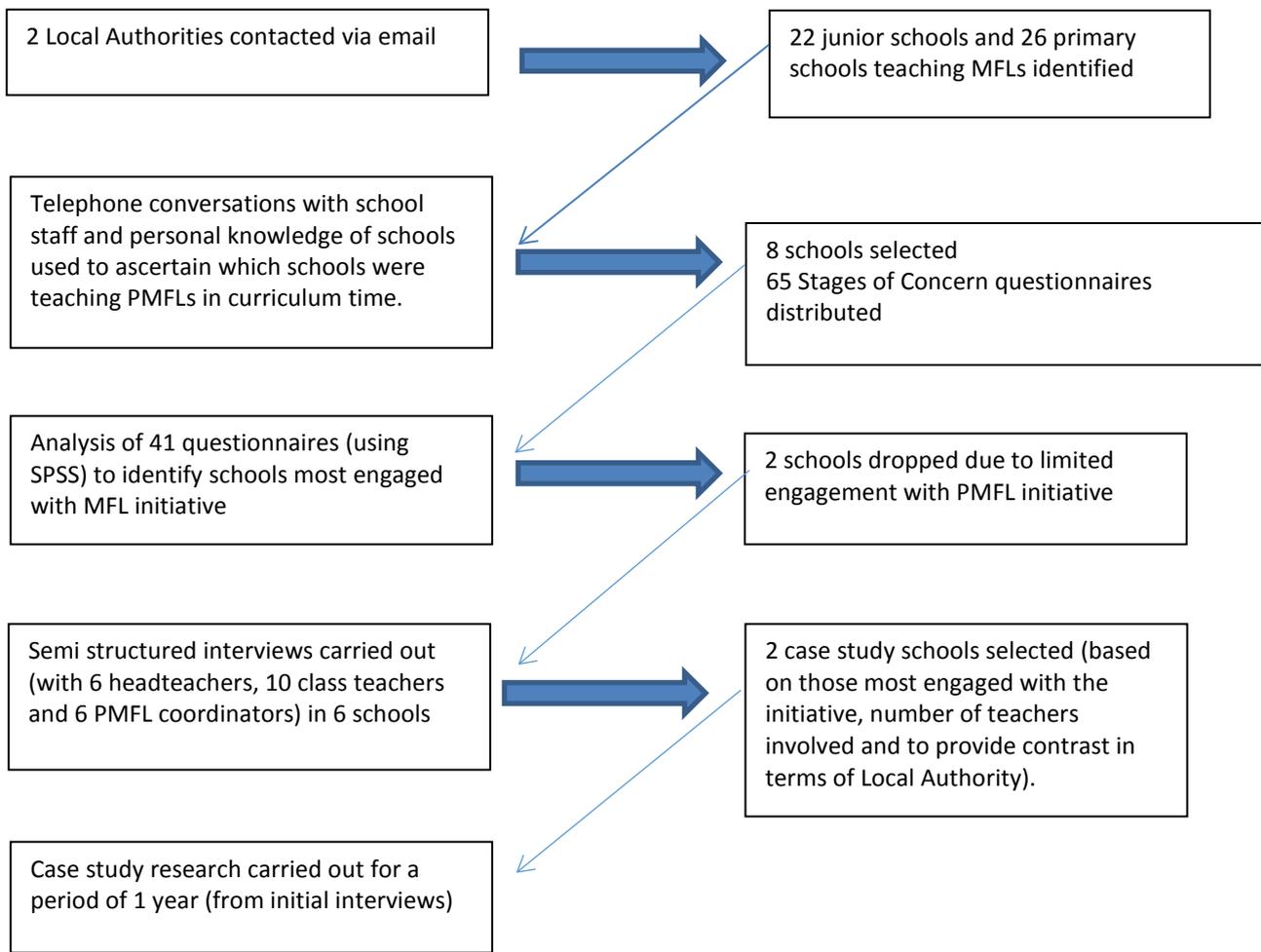


Figure 3.1: Selecting the cases

Initially I contacted two nearby local authorities to ascertain which schools were engaging with teaching PMFLs. Eight junior schools and five primary schools were identified in one, and fourteen junior and twenty one primary schools in the other. It was suggested that one particular school did not form part of my study as it was struggling with standards in literacy and numeracy and so this school was excluded. From my own knowledge of these schools and telephone conversations with members of staff at the remaining schools I then ascertained which of the schools were teaching French in taught curriculum time (i.e. not as part of after school or lunchtime clubs) and the extent to which this was being done. With this information I then selected eight schools to take part in the next stage of the research process based on those teaching the most French.

I then negotiated with headteachers (by phone and letter) permission to distribute a questionnaire to staff. Depending on the wishes of the headteacher, I either attended a staff meeting and distributed paper copies myself or I left them with the headteachers to distribute. It was made clear at the top of the questionnaire that the teachers were not required to

complete it and that it was their choice. The advantage of being able to be present at a staff meeting was that I could provide some context and answer any questions which contributed to a higher response rate. However there was a limitation with regards to the amount of time people could take to complete the questionnaire in the staff meeting itself as there was other school business to cover. In contrast there was a lower response rate when the questionnaire was left in schools although teachers had more time to complete them. Using a combination of these approaches, a total of 41 responses were gathered out of approximately 65 questionnaires distributed (63% return rate). This is a good return rate for a self-completion questionnaire where it is not uncommon for 40% to be returned (Sutton 2011): the higher than usual rate was possibly due to me being able to present the questionnaire to potential respondents either in person or through a colleague.

Data from these questionnaires (see below for more detail regarding the nature of these) revealed that teachers in two of the eight schools had not yet become sufficiently involved in the PMFL initiative to be in a position to share their experiences. Therefore I continued the research process with the remaining six schools. This initially consisted of semi-structured interviews with the headteachers, the PMFL coordinators and a sample of teachers in each school with the aim of exploring their beliefs about the PMFL initiative in general and specifically their role in implementing it. As a result of these interviews I decided that two schools would no longer be part of my study due to the underdeveloped state of PMFLs at that time and because the PMFL coordinator was not a permanent staff member. From the remaining four schools I chose two main case study schools for the research. It would have been impossible in the time available to continue in-depth with all four and so two were selected that offered a useful contrast in terms of: different LAs, the type of catchment area, and Ofsted ranking. Moreover, they seemed to be the most engaged in teaching French at the time. It was also important to the research that the schools were large enough to have several teachers engaged with the delivery of PMFLs as opposed to a very small school where the PMFL coordinator was carrying out all the teaching. This would also make an interesting case study but would not provide the rich data that I wanted from a range of teachers.

### **3.6 Data collection procedures**

#### **3.6.1 The questionnaires**

The questionnaires were adapted from those that form a central part of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) developed by Hall & Hord (1987) and used to evaluate the implementation of innovations to show how those most affected by the change react. It is a conceptual framework that 'was created to serve change facilitators and to focus attention on

the needs of the individual so that change facilitation is personalized' (Hall & Hord 2006: 257). Christou et al. (2004) suggest that it shares a lot of similarities with the phases of change process proposed by Fullan & Stiegelbauer (1991). Initially I chose to use these questionnaires to ascertain whether there were indeed any concerns or issues over the introduction of PMFLs into primary schools as I suspected there would be. My previous career as a primary teacher indicated to me that there would be particular difficulties but I did not wish for my own impressions to steer the research and therefore these questionnaires (as they were not written by me) seemed an appropriate way to begin the research process, reducing the influence that I had as the researcher at this initial stage.

The Stages of Concern questionnaire that was designed for the CBAM consists of 35 statements and respondents are asked to circle from 0-7 against each statement (where zero means "irrelevant" and 7 indicates "very true of me now"). There is also a space at the end for respondents to add any other concerns they may have that have not been covered in the SOC questionnaire. Before using the questionnaire I carried out a pilot with 3 senior teachers to ensure that the terminology was clear (the questionnaire was designed in America and there were a few specific terms that I changed in order to ease understanding in a primary school setting in England).

I conducted an initial analysis of the questionnaire results (using SPSS) and found it was very helpful in identifying which schools appeared to be engaging the most with the PMFL initiative. This analysis also indicated that some teachers did indeed feel uneasy about the introduction of PMFLs and their role in this initiative. As this was the full extent to which I used the data from these questionnaires I do not discuss any further findings.

### **3.6.2 Selecting the participants**

During the different phases of this study, participants were selected in different ways. As I have already illustrated most of the teachers that completed the initial questionnaire were selected on the basis of the school they were working in. After that they self-selected as it was their choice whether they actually completed and returned the questionnaire. It was possible for teachers not to complete the questionnaire without it being known so there was no pressure on them to do so. From the numbers of teachers I knew to be involved with French at the time, and the number of responses I concluded that the majority did complete the questionnaire, so I have no reason to believe that the sample was in any way unrepresentative

The teachers working in the six schools selected to take part in the next phase of the research were initially approached by their PMFL coordinator. All six coordinators had agreed to help and be interviewed themselves, and they provided information on which other teachers were also fully involved in teaching PMFLs at that time. This was not usually very many and so I also went into the schools to ask individual teachers whether they would be happy to talk to me and to explain that it would take approximately half to three-quarters of an hour (based on a pilot interview). In all schools I interviewed at least two of the teachers who were delivering French. Where more than two other teachers could have been selected I approached an opportunistic sample based on availability. This meant that I interviewed eight class teachers, six PMFL coordinators and six headteachers.

All those involved were given a participant information sheet explaining the purpose and details of the research process and the participants then signed a consent form confirming understanding about their right to withdraw from the study at any time as well as arrangements for anonymity. I was aware that some of the participants might have felt pressurised into agreeing to be interviewed because the PMFL coordinator had suggested they might. For this reason I renegotiated consent with each individual and answered any questions they might have, making it clear that there was no obligation to participate. In this way I felt that the class teachers regained control and had a real choice rather than feeling coerced. This resonates with Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007: 42) argument that: 'Negotiating access involves considerations such as 'whose permission *ought* to be asked as well as whose permission *needs* to be obtained' (original emphasis). It was important to me to act in a morally responsible manner throughout the research process, and establishing relationships with participants based on trust and respect was paramount in this. Charmaz (2006: 19), amongst many, highlights the importance of rapport with research participants and this is particularly important in case study research where an open and transparent relationship between the researcher and the participants is fundamental.

### **3.6.3 The interviews**

The approach, style and content of any interview depend on its purpose and on the individuals involved. As Patton (1980: 252) notes: 'The particular situation, the needs of the interviewee, and the personal style of the interviewer all come together to create a unique situation for each interview.' Kvale (1996: 126-7) suggests setting the options along a series of continua depending on the openness of their purpose, their degree of structure, whether they are exploratory or hypothesis testing, whether they seek description or interpretation or whether they are cognitive-focussed or emotion-focussed.

My interviews had a slightly different purpose depending on the phase of the research. At the beginning of the research, interviews with class teachers, coordinators and headteachers aimed to explore what the issues might be for each of these participants regarding the introduction of PMFLs into the primary curriculum. These needed to be short and relatively open as I did not have a particular hypothesis to test or highly structured research questions to answer at this stage. Ideally I would have liked to have adopted a grounded theory approach where the interviews would have been open ended and totally exploratory (Charmaz 2006). However as a novice interviewer I felt I needed some structure and so I had thought through the wording of some questions in advance. Interpretations of grounded theory methods vary and although Glaser (1998 cited by Charmaz 2006) would argue that using questions that have been devised in advance might push the data in a particular direction, Charmaz (2006) argues that for novices, thinking through some questions in advance might help them avoid using loaded questions which restrict the data. Instinctively I felt that devising some questions in advance would be beneficial in this instance although I acknowledge the potential dangers in doing this. Through drafting some open ended questions in advance (e.g. about the teachers perceived to be the aims of PMFLs) I was able to address issues of particular interest such as whether they felt that early language learning is easier and whether teaching about culture leads to more positive attitudes towards others' cultures. In this way, answers to these questions naturally emerged. The purpose of these particular interviews was partly to build up a better picture of the state of PMFLs in each school so there were also some factual questions to which I needed answers, ultimately leading me to a semi structured approach. There was a notional order to the questions in that I began with some simple closed questions (about the role of the participant and their linguistic qualifications), but it was more important to follow the natural progression of the conversation rather than stick to a prescribed order. The semi structured approach I adopted led to some parts of the interviews seeming unstructured and open to allow issues to emerge more naturally, and parts that were more structured. This enabled me to include my key questions, but also to be flexible and respond to the comments made by the participants which is ethically preferable according to Brinkmann & Kvale (2014). They suggest that the interviewer should be spontaneous but at the same time well prepared. This was the approach I adopted by preparing some key questions in advance but not sticking rigidly to them.

I had not anticipated in advance however how interactive the interviews would be. The interviewees often asked for my opinion in the course of giving their answer and this initially surprised me. Instinctively I answered their questions (although not in great detail) as it felt

like the polite, respectful thing to do although I worried at the time about influencing the interviewee (particularly given my perceived expert status). Having read some of the literature relating to this I can relate to Oakley's (1981) view that it is necessary at times to give information and to share the experience to make the relationship non-hierarchical. Although the subject matter might not be of a personal nature, some of the teachers seemed insecure and given that I hoped to continue working with some of them it was particularly important to nurture a relationship of openness and trust. This interaction also gave me a further opportunity to make it known that I was not necessarily a firm advocate of the PMFL policy which dispelled the possible belief that I was there to make sure it was being implemented effectively.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face affording benefits such as being able to take advantage of social cues (voice, intonation and body language), although there are challenges for researchers with this method. Wengraf (2001: 194) speaks of 'double attention', meaning:

that you must be both listening to the informant's responses to understand what he or she is trying to get at and, at the same time, you must be bearing in mind your need to ensure that all your questions are liable to get answered within the fixed time at the level of depth and detail that you need.

This can make it difficult to keep the natural flow of the conversation and avoid it feeling stilted or pre-planned. Yin (2012) refers to open ended interviews potentially lasting all day during case study research. This interpretation of an open ended interview fits well with my approach as before, during and after the observations I carried out in the participants' classrooms we chatted about a variety of topics related to their teaching of MFLs. The themes that arose during these times were recorded in my field notes. All the interviews took place in the teachers' classrooms or headteachers' offices both for convenience and also to enable interviewees to feel more comfortable and therefore to speak more freely. Additionally, by playing host within their own territory, the interviewees are also likely to retain a good degree of social control over the situation (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 150). To dispel any notion that I might be in the school to evaluate what was happening I adopted an informal style during the interviews. This was also reflected in my informal style of dress and my personal approach to the interview.

There has been some discussion concerning the use of data recording procedures (see Stake 1995 for a summary of pros and cons) and a key concern was whether or not to use an audio recording device. The main benefits of using a recording device are that the researcher is freed up to concentrate on the social interaction and they can help accuracy of reporting. There are

potential problems associated with recording devices however. Some are based on the practicalities of the equipment failing and the amount of time required for transcription. Others focus on the potential distortion of data that might be gathered due to the possibility that even though it might be unobtrusive, an audio recorder can constrain the interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale 2014). After careful consideration I decided that the advantages of audio recording outweighed the disadvantages in this instance. I hoped that people in the teaching profession would have been recorded before and so would hopefully not see this as threatening. The detail subsequently captured in the interview transcriptions proved extremely useful when analysing the data and I would have been unable to have noted this down as the interview was taking place. Interviewees often made additional comments once the interview had officially ended and the audio recorder switched off, and these comments were recorded in my field notes on leaving the site, along with any comments made during informal conversations I had had with the participants in the course of the day.

All the interviews were then transcribed by an experienced transcriber in order to be accurate and time efficient which enabled me to begin informal data analysis immediately, as grounded theory methods propose. Once transcribed I then listened to the original recordings alongside the transcription to check for any inaccuracies. Working with transcriptions allows the researcher to identify where questions might have been loaded or forced the data, and analysis of them encourages the researcher to be reflexive about the nature of the questions (Charmaz 2006). It was important for this to take place soon after the initial interviews to allow the data emerging to shape the next stage of the research.

#### **3.6.4 The observations**

Observation is a well-established method of gathering data in interpretative research. This may be: formal and informal, structured to unstructured, participant observation to non-participant observation. Simons (2009: 55) claims that 'through observing, you can tell if you are welcome, who is anxious, who the key players are in the informal structure, and whether there are any unspoken rules.' These factors are not necessarily immediately apparent and I spent five consecutive days in each school acting as a teaching assistant (in addition to subsequent specific observations of French lessons) seeking a deeper and wider understanding of the school context. I envisaged that the context and culture of the school might influence the reactions of the participating teachers and spending more time in the schools enabled me to become a familiar face in the staff room and therefore better understand these. Stake (1995) talks of the importance of making an unobtrusive entrance into the case study setting and also of the benefits of being able to offer something in return for the intrusion and my

offer to act as a teaching assistant for five days in each setting enabled me to do this. It also made it possible to have useful ad hoc conversations with other adults in the schools.

I have already discussed the advantages and disadvantages of my role (as PGCE tutor) with regards to my perceived status in the schools but my role also inevitably impacted on the way in which I was able to observe in the school. My familiarity with primary schools in general meant that I was quickly able to assimilate into the settings and interact easily with the other teachers, but this could also have meant that I would make assumptions about these schools based on my own prior experiences. Clough & Nutbrown (2008: 48) advocate 'radical looking' which they describe as 'exploration beyond the familiar and the (personally) known, to the roots of a situation: this is exploration that makes the familiar strange.' It is making the familiar strange therefore that presented the biggest challenge. In an attempt to do this I wrote everything down as a factual account in a journal which I could then reread at a much later date to get some distance and possibly a different viewpoint. My reflections and interpretations of events were written down separately as it was also important to note these at the time. Whilst in the schools, I tried at all times to be looking through the eyes of a stranger and therefore to question my initial interpretation of events. In other respects my position and familiarity was an advantage as I was able to look for and ask for things that a true stranger might not be aware of. In this regard I adopted a combination of insider and outsider stance to my research. Pole and Morrison (2003) summarise the combining of insider and outsider research in their exploration of emic and etic educational studies. Agar (1996) explains how the emic (from an insider's viewpoint) and the etic (from an outsider's point of view) have become blurred:

The distinction doesn't make sense anymore. People don't clump into mutually exclusive worlds. Ethnographers and others swim in the same interconnected global soup. They know things about each other even before they meet and start to talk. (Agar 1996: 21)

One final point to make with regards to the influence of my own identity in the research process is that I am very familiar with carrying out observations as an assessor of trainee teachers' performance. During the formal observations of French lessons it was difficult not to form judgements about the quality of teaching and I found this less evaluative way of observing a challenge at first. It proved helpful to organise the lesson observations at times when I was not carrying out assessments of other teaching. I carried out nineteen scheduled observations of French being taught in the two case study schools. As this research was designed to be theory generating it was important to make these unstructured observations so as to explore issues that perhaps neither I nor the teachers were aware of. These observations

also enabled me to better understand the individual teachers, to triangulate data gathered from interviews and to see how the teachers' attitudes and feelings were represented in their lessons. For example, through observing the teachers I was able to see whether/how their level of confidence impacted on their delivery of the lessons and how the aims of PMFLs in their opinions were reflected in their content and practice. As I have already mentioned my role was primarily intended to be an impartial observer however this quickly changed. In some of the French lessons the teachers wanted help with pronunciation or grammar, and in other lessons I offered to act as a classroom assistant in order to give something back to the research site and make a contribution to the teachers offering to participate. I was happy to do this as I do not think that it prevented me from gathering data. The opposite is likely in that the teachers were more forthcoming in talking to me as I had been involved with their lesson.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

When discussing his own approach to analysing qualitative data in case study, Stake (1995:77) admits that:

It is greatly subjective. I defend it because I know no better way to make sense of the complexities of my case. I recognize that the way I do it is not "the right way". Methods books like this one provide persuasions, not recipes. Each researcher needs, through experience and reflection, to find the forms of analysis that work for him or her.

To the novice researcher, it can be confusing grappling with the different approaches to analysis advocated by the different research traditions, as concepts and stages appear to overlap (for example the coding and categorising of data could form part of a case study analysis and or a grounded theory approach). It is the way in which the categories are devised and what the researcher then does with these categories that make the research traditions distinct.

During my research I adopted some of the approaches advocated by less traditional grounded theorists (see Charmaz 2006). One of the tenets of grounded theory methods is that data collection and analysis occur simultaneously and this was certainly the case in my research as I was informally analysing the interview data and using this to inform subsequent interviews and observations. Another important component of grounded theory practice is that codes and categories should emerge from the data rather than from any preconceived hypothesis and this was also very important in my research. I wanted to explore the cases with little preconceived idea of what I would find and to be able to develop some theory from the data. In terms of following some of the guidelines of a grounded theory approach such as 'studying processes in the field setting(s), engaging in simultaneous data collection and analysis,

adopting comparative methods, and checking and elaborating our tentative categories' (Charmaz 2011: 360), I could make a claim to adopting some grounded theory strategies (although by no means all of them). This would seem an acceptable stance as some have argued that grounded theory has become a general method of qualitative research and that researchers can adopt one or two of the key strategies (Foster-Fishman et al. 2005; Mitakidou, Tressou & Karagianni cited by Denzin & Lincoln 2011). Strauss & Corbin (1994) have also observed that grounded theory has become a general qualitative method and they highlight strategies of simultaneous data collection and analysis, inductive coding, and memo writing as having permeated qualitative research. I would argue that these are also components of other approaches to qualitative data analysis and are not solely methods advocated by grounded theory. I therefore used some of its strategies but with no intention of adhering to all the components of a traditional approach to grounded theory. Instead I found Stake's (1995) overall approach more appropriate for my research so this is where I depart from grounded theory.

Creswell (1998) provides a very useful summary of how data analysis and representation might be carried out depending on the research tradition, and the phases involved in the Case Study tradition are very relevant here. I have re-presented in table 3.2 the most relevant parts of his more comprehensive table.

<b>Data analysis and Representation</b>	<b>Case study</b>
Data managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and organise files for data</li> </ul>
Reading, memoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes</li> </ul>
Describing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the case and its context</li> </ul>
Classifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use categorical aggregation</li> <li>• Establish patterns of categories</li> </ul>
Interpreting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use direct interpretation</li> <li>• Develop naturalistic generalizations</li> </ul>
Representing, visualizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present narrative augmented by tables, and figures</li> </ul>

Table 3.2: Creswell's summary of approaches to data analysis (Adapted from Creswell 1998: 148/9)

I found this summary useful as a starting point in the process of data analysis. I also integrated the flow model suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994: 10) into my approach. They outline three concurrent flows of activity comprising: *data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification*. The *data reduction* consisted primarily of selecting and focusing the field notes and transcriptions of interviews as the research process was on-going. Codes were

applied and themes were identified. This was a central part of the analysis and the decisions made regarding what to include/exclude, the interpretation of the data into codes and themes were all part of this process. Miles & Huberman (1994: 11) maintain that 'data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that "final" conclusions can be drawn and verified.' When carried out as the data collection is ongoing it also informs the direction this data collection might take. The second activity is the *data display* which can take many forms such as extended text, matrices, graphs, charts, tables in order to display the information in a way that is accessible to the reader. During the process of reviewing the literature I was incorporating and combining the ideas and devising a model of the factors that affect the successful implementation of a new initiative. The process of *data reduction* in my data analysis took the form of the initial coding of interview transcripts and field notes leading on to two methods that Stake (1995: 74) argues are key to case study which he calls 'categorical aggregation' (where the researcher looks for a collection of instances of a phenomenon) and 'direct interpretation' (where the researcher interprets a single instance as having meaning). Examples of these can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

To be more specific, in order to code and identify themes from the data, I read through every transcript and made notes in the margins to summarise my interpretation of the meaning of every sentence. Having done this with every interview transcript I then started to look for links between points initially within, and later across, interviews. This enabled tentative groupings to emerge which I then studied and applied larger, more over-arching themes. I changed and refined these themes many times until the data seemed to fit comfortably within the broad themes. I then left a period of time before repeating the process with the transcripts once more to check that my understanding of the comments was as accurate as it could be and checking that the themes still seemed to reflect the original data.

The analysis of the data can be organised into five general phases which initially developed from and then informed the data collection. The phases are therefore time-related initially, but as they progressed, they overlapped and were no longer sequential or distinct from each other. In this way, the three processes in data analysis proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994: 12) occurred simultaneously, endorsing their view that all three components of data analysis are not sequential or time-related, rather that all three processes take place concurrently and combined with data collection form an 'interactive, cyclical process'. Table 3.3 below summarises the key activities comprising the data collection and identifies the broad phases of analysis.

Table 3.3: Summary of methods of data collection and phases of analysis

<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
Jan-June 2007 and then on-going	None	Familiarisation with the literature	To understand the context and framework for the research and to highlight potential areas of interest	<b>Phase 1:</b> led to an on-going model of what affects the successful implementation of a new innovation. This model changed over time to accommodate findings in the literature and the field. Overview of the issues potentially involved in implementation of new initiatives.
June/July 2007	Southampton and Hampshire LAs	Liaise with Southampton and Hampshire LAs and HTs	To identify participants and obtain consent from HTs (Southampton 8x Junior 5x Primary, Hampshire 14x Junior 21x Primary)	
July 2007	Staff in 6 selected schools	Complete SoC questionnaire (n=41)	To identify key issues and identify specific schools	<b>Phase 2:</b> analysis informed the planning and questions used in the first round of interviews.
Sept/Oct 2007	Headteachers x6	Interview1 (3/4-1hr)	Explore their approach to the intro of PMFLs. What is their strategy? Do they agree with the PMFL initiative? Approach to introduction of new initiatives? To identify 2 case study schools.	<b>Phase 3:</b> to identify which schools should continue to participate. At this stage key issues were also refined and expanded. This analysis informed the focus of the subsequent lesson observations to some extent (although only loosely as it was important to stay open minded). Coding and categorical aggregation & direct interpretation.
Sept/Oct 2007	PMFL coordinators x6	Interview1 (3/4-1hr)	Background info. Why are they the PMFL coordinator? What are their motivations? How do they feel? How are they going to introduce it to other staff? Issues? To identify case study schools.	<b>Phase 3 contd.</b>
Sept/Oct 2007	Advanced Skills Teacher (AST)	Interview 1 (1hr)	Background info. What is her perception of the take up of PMFLs? How is she approaching training and what is response of schools?	<b>Phase 3 contd.</b>

<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
Sept/Oct 2007	Selected other teachers in focus group schools (x8)	Interviews 1 (1/2hr)	How do they feel about the intro of PMFLs into Primary schools? How will it affect them?	<b>Phase 3 contd.</b>
Feb/July 2008	PMFL coordinators & selected other teachers in 2 case study schools	Observation of teaching PMFLs (19 lessons observed)	Background info re what training they've had. What is their approach? How is it going? What is their attitude?	<b>Phase 4:</b> further informed questions for second round of interviews. Coding and categorical aggregation & direct interpretation.
Feb/May 2008	Random selection of teachers in 2 case study schools	Observation of general teaching (any subject) (16 lessons observed)	To better understand the ethos/culture of the school in general. To enable informal chats with other members of staff.	<b>Phase 4 contd.</b>
Oct/Nov 2008	PMFL coordinators x2	Interviews 2 (1hr)	Update on training they've had/given to other staff. INSET? How do they feel about progress of PMFLs in their school? Issues?	<b>Phase 5:</b> Coding and categorical aggregation & direct interpretation.
Oct/Nov 2008	Selected teachers in case study schools x5	Interviews 2 (1/2-1hr)	Update on training they've received. How do they feel about teaching PMFLs into Primary school? How is it affecting them?	<b>Phase 5 contd.</b>

The final element of the data analysis in Miles & Huberman's (1994) model concerns drawing *conclusions and verification*. They suggest that:

From the start of data collection, the qualitative analyst is beginning to decide what things mean - is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions. The competent researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and scepticism, but the conclusions are still there, inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded ... (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 11)

As I have stated previously, the research reported here was originally intended to be theory seeking and therefore it was particularly important not to develop conclusions too early in the process. Nonetheless, I was also aware of the need for tentative conclusions to influence the on-going data collection. My aim was to better explore the issues arising but without jeopardising the openness of the research.

Common themes emerged early on in the analysis of data and these remained constant throughout the research process. Although more detail and explanation was gathered, the key themes did not change substantially. The issues facing the teachers were not unpredictable, but the ways in which teachers approached them was. Their openness to change and their compliance was striking and these findings led to the emergence of the issue of teachers' perceptions of their roles and their understanding of professionalism.

Throughout the research process I took steps to address issues of authenticity and dependability. The transcriptions were carried out by the same person in all cases and I checked them for accuracy. In a positivist sense the questionnaire I used has strong reliability estimates and internal consistency (although this is not overly important considering the way in which it was used in this research) and it was piloted to check that the respondents would understand it in the way it was intended. I spent as long as possible in the case study schools (given the time constraints and demands of my job) and the process has been monitored by my research supervisors. Throughout the process I have kept a research journal allowing for checking of findings and thoughts retrospectively. I have also analysed and re-analysed the data. Due to personal circumstances (having two children and two periods of maternity leave) a long period of time elapsed between the data collection/ initial analysis phase and the thesis writing. This has meant that I have re-analysed the data with fresh eyes, ensuring an element of distance from the data which could lead to a more analytical approach. Drake (2010: 98) also found that leaving a period of time between conducting interviews and re analysing the transcripts and data was beneficial as it: 'transformed my perceptions of research and also deepened my understanding of why I had wanted to undertake that particular project.' In my

own case I have found that in the intervening years my role has changed as I have become more distant from the PMFL initiative and I believe that this has helped me read the interview transcripts and field notes with a more neutral eye.

I have now made my own position as the researcher clear and explained the methodological choices made throughout the research process. In the next chapters I present the findings of the different phases of the analysis.

## Chapter 4: Findings

The six schools that participated in the initial stage of the research were all at very different stages of implementation as shown in Table 4.1. The most relevant aspects to highlight in terms of background information are: the level of linguistic qualification and experience of the PMFL coordinator, the amount of French that was currently being taught in the school at the time of the interviews and the amount of staff training provided.

School	Qualifications/linguistic level of PMFL coordinator	Current level of implementation	Amount of staff training
Uplands Primary (small, suburban, below average Free School Meals (FSM), above average English as an Additional Language(EAL))	Recently qualified PMFL specialist Attended several courses since qualifying 2 years ago	Confident class teachers in Y3 and Y4 Secondary MFL specialist in Y5 40 mins per week plus additional 20 mins incidental French	2 staff meetings to raise awareness
Southerley Junior (large, suburban, below average FSM and EAL)	Unqualified coordinator Holiday French	Encouraging staff to experiment and have a go Y5 have done this so far 1 meeting between Advanced Skills Teacher and PMFL coordinator	1 ¼ hrs for half of staff to look at French resources
Heron Primary (very large, sub urban, below average FSM and EAL)	Experienced PMFL specialist Many courses since qualifying Been involved in PMFL project funded by TDA	Y3 and Y4 this year. ½ hr per week timetabled plus additional incidental ½ hr recommended	According to coordinator: None-only training those that need to know at the time. Coordinator has modelled teaching French at least once for those delivering French who had no previous experience HT says some whole staff meetings have taken place
Bankside Junior (average sized, urban, average FSM, below average EAL)	Unqualified and very basic level of French	AST in French has been supporting-teaching in Y3 last year and now in Y4. All Y3 and Y4 classes aiming for 1 hr per week Visiting secondary school teacher supporting Y6	1 staff meeting to introduce French and role of AST AST modelled and delivered French with CTs observing to Y3 teachers and now Y4 teachers

Landmark Junior (very large, urban, Above average FSM and below average EAL)	A level French and has attended several courses since becoming coordinator	Y4 1 hr per week timetabled French AST taught throughout previous year in Y3 Y5 1 hr per week taught by AST	Whole staff meetings run by AST Previous year AST modelled and delivered French to Y3 teachers. Currently modelling to Y5 teachers
Smithfield Junior (large, sub urban, below average FSM and EAL)	Headteacher/Secondary MFL specialist acting as French teacher and will take on coordinator role in future Not primary trained	Headteacher coordinating MFL specialist is currently delivering all French sessions to all year groups in PPA time. No class teacher involvement	None

*Table 4.1: Background information on each school*

This chapter continues with an analysis of the interviews carried out with the 6 headteachers of the schools identified as having begun to engage with the PMFL initiative and goes on to present the findings from the interviews carried out with PMFL coordinators and class teachers.

#### **4.1 Views of the headteachers**

The schools differed in terms of size, location, and catchment area and the headteachers themselves were at different stages of their careers, from a young head in his first year of headship to one who was on the point of retirement having led the same school for twenty years. Purely by chance three of the headteachers were women and three were men. Despite their diversity in other respects, these schools had all begun to implement the initiative (unlike many others) and they had also all chosen to provide French (as opposed to another language) due to perceived staff expertise. After initial analysis and coding of the interview transcripts the data gathered from the interviews with the headteachers was organised into four overarching themes:

- response towards PMFLs in general;
- perception of their role in implementing the PMFL initiative;
- communication and support;
- concerns and threats to the success of the PMFL initiative in their school.

##### **4.1.1 Response towards PMFLs in general**

All six headteachers were positive in their attitude towards PMFLs and this is unsurprising as their schools were amongst the first to take up the initiative. Four of the six had previously

been involved in the introduction of French to all Primary schools in the 1970s and all talked positively of this time. One headteacher (Landmark Junior) communicated both her excitement about the PMFL initiative, but also her frustration about ‘the way everything in education goes round in circles’.

The headteachers spoke about the variety of benefits they saw. The head from Landmark Junior saw a key benefit as the inclusiveness and accessibility of PMFLs for children with SEN. Another headteacher (Uplands Primary) explicitly mentioned raising children’s confidence and instilling a “can do” attitude through language learning. Two others (Heron Primary and Smithfield Junior) maintained it was easier to learn a language at a younger age than when older. This is a commonly held belief but not one, as previously discussed, that is always supported by research findings. Another of the headteachers (Bankside Junior) was enthusiastic in general about PMFLs, commenting: ‘There are benefits on so many levels for the children, it’s impacting on their learning’. However, he did not specify what he meant by this and went on to talk of the fun the children were having. Enjoyment emerged as the most important benefit of PMFLs from his perspective. All six headteachers interviewed expressed a desire to teach languages to primary aged children although they varied in their motivation and reasons for this belief.

#### **4.1.2 Perception of their role in implementing PMFL initiative**

All the headteachers interviewed had appointed a PMFL coordinator and had delegated the responsibility to them to manage the implementation. In most cases this seemed to be due to the headteachers not having sufficient knowledge of the initiative (with the exception of the headteacher at Uplands) and feeling there was someone better placed to oversee it. The PMFL coordinators appointed varied widely in subject knowledge, from the PMFL specialist to the class teacher who had little knowledge of the language who was learning French alongside the children (see Table 4.1). In most of the schools, irrespective of the expertise of the coordinator, responsibility for implementing the initiative lay primarily with them.

Having delegated responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the initiative to the PMFL coordinator, the headteachers then differed in how much support they provided for the coordinator and how involved they became. The majority of them were keen for the PMFL coordinator to decide on the details of implementation and they perceived their role as being available for PMFL coordinators to consult, raising expectations that French would be taught and spending money on resources when required. The model seems to be that of delegating responsibility and facilitating when necessary.

### 4.1.3 Communication and support

The theme of communication comprises several strands: communication between central government via the local authority with individual schools, and communication between and within schools. Several of the headteachers mentioned feeling isolated and unaware of what other schools were doing. Lack of communication from the LA did not concern those headteachers who had well qualified, experienced PMFL coordinators, but was more of a concern for those who did not. Very few of the headteachers were aware of any support or help that might be available from the LA, apart from the possibility of receiving £1,000 grant to support setting up PMFLs.

One of the headteachers (Landmark Junior) saw the (re)introduction of French into the Primary curriculum as a way to re-establish communication with the secondary school: 'in the future I hope that we can re-establish links with our secondary schools that we did have in place in the seventies ... I would like to see that developed.' However, another headteacher (Southerley Junior) was more concerned with communicating with other primary schools in the area to share good practice and to find out about funding possibilities.

An additional aspect of communication that arose across the headteacher interviews was that between the headteacher and the rest of the staff. In only one of the schools (Heron Primary) had any discussion taken place with the staff as to which approach and which language they should adopt. In the majority of cases the headteacher had taken this decision in isolation, based on their perception of existing expertise amongst staff members and which language they believed would be the most appropriate for the children in their school.

I explored with the headteachers the reaction they felt the class teachers might have regarding the expectation for them to teach French. Their responses were very similar in that they all felt that their staff were very good at taking on new initiatives. One (Smithfield Junior) described the staff as "gritty" and 'a positive lot', commenting: 'We haven't got much negativity here which is great.' Another headteacher (Southerley Junior) referred to the age of the staff as being relevant to how they approach new initiatives:

Yeah, they are positive. I mean when you get to my age, and we've just had a couple of teachers who've actually retired and their attitude was well goodness me, what now, where's this come from? ... They were a bit like that, they've been worn out frankly, they're physically burnt out, but the youngsters, and we tend to have a pretty young staff as it happens, they're still enthusiastic.

All interviewees assumed that the ideal scenario was for the staff to feel positive and willing to take on the teaching of French. There was little concern regarding whether it was appropriate for the class teachers to do this, and whether they would have the necessary expertise to do it. In one school (Heron Primary) the headteacher referred to teachers who were not keen to take on new things as 'resistors'. This particular head was adamant that all primary class teachers must be able to teach all subjects and that if they did not feel able to, they should find their own solutions and make sure they got the help and support they needed. These opinions contrast with those of the headteacher from Bankside Junior who emphasised the importance of support for staff from the outset: 'I think showing them the support is there and it's not just a matter of saying off you go. The support is there, it's put in place and people know that we're going to come back to it.' He was confident that all his members of staff were "very keen" although as the research developed it transpired that this was not actually the case (see case study 2).

One headteacher (Uplands Primary) was unsure how his staff would feel about being asked to teach French. He was very well informed about the initiative and was clearly enthusiastic about it, but he talked of "battle weariness" of his staff as a result of too many initiatives from central government. He was confident they would respond positively but he was also sensitive to their issues regarding workload. Indeed he had decided not to implement French in Y6 yet as there was a new teacher in that class and he felt it would be expecting too much of him at this point. Another headteacher (Southerley Junior) was worried about forcing the teachers in his school to teach something they were not comfortable with (in this case French) and so he talked of introducing it slowly, in a low key way: 'sort of sucking and see. I think probably that's the right way to do it rather than sort of making it a three line whip.'

In general the interview data showed pride among all the headteachers about the nature of their staff (being hard working and willing to take on new initiatives) as well as sensitivity in some cases to the overload some teachers might feel and the support and training needed. However in the majority of the schools, headteachers commented that ultimately class teachers would be required to teach French no matter what their feelings were. It was this pragmatism perhaps that led to the quality of the provision being commented on less frequently than the need to teach it.

#### **4.1.4 Concerns and threats**

In addition to the issues over increased workload, one of the other key concerns perceived by all the headteachers was that of staff turnover. All talked of the need to plan strategically so

the initiative would not rely on one key person in the school. However not all had been able to put long term plans into place and several were adopting pragmatic solutions to get started. In several cases (Bankside, Uplands and Southerley) the schools were using colleagues from secondary schools on an ad hoc basis. Training was a key element in the strategic planning but staff turnover was also a threat, for example in Bankside Junior the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) had co-taught French for a year with one particular teacher who subsequently left the school. In other instances teachers had changed year groups resulting in them not needing their recently gained expertise. The size of the school was reported to have an impact; it seemed easier for the larger schools to plan for staff turnover as there were more teachers available to take on subject coordination. In the largest of the schools (Heron), the headteacher talked of having succession planning in place and other teachers identified who could take over if the current PMFL coordinator left. She also observed however that in a larger school the staff turnover is higher too. The headteacher of a smaller school (Uplands) felt that losing his PMFL coordinator would be a 'major stumbling block' with staff already coordinating two or three subjects. All headteachers admitted that staff turnover would have a negative impact on the initiative but they also felt that it would be overcome. The answer for most of the headteachers seemed to be to get a critical mass trained so replacements would be easier.

The other common concerns expressed by the headteachers were funding and time. All expressed concern over whether there would be sufficient funding to effectively resource French (support and training for class teachers as well as buying schemes of work/physical resources). In one school (Heron) having sufficient funding would enable the PMFL coordinator to leave her class to support other teachers. For this school the main threat was perceived to be money: 'I suppose at the end of the day it'll depend on whether we've got the funding to keep this going' the headteacher commented. The headteacher at Southerley agreed and referred back to when the science curriculum was revised but not adequately funded:

Some time ago ... you know people used to bring in yoghurt pots and so I thought well what sort of message is this giving you know children, you know bringing resources. Well you've done your best but I used to call it yoghurt pot science but you know if you're going to do it properly, let's do it well. If you have the quality of resources then you give the staff quality time and quality INSET.

The final commonly perceived threat to the PMFL initiative from the headteachers' perspective was that of timetabling. The majority stated that the primary curriculum was already overly full and so timetabling French would cause difficulties. Most thought a possible solution would be to relax some of the subjects in the curriculum to make more use of cross curricular

approaches. This would enable 'incidental teaching of French' for example in PE, classroom instructions etc. The implications of this are discussed in more depth in the discussion chapter.

## **4.2 Views of the PMFL coordinators and class teachers**

In presenting the initial findings from the interviews carried out with the PMFL coordinators and ten class teachers interviewed from the participating schools I make the distinction between them where necessary but I use the term 'teachers' when referring to both the class teachers and coordinators together. The themes that emerged were very similar to those articulated by the headteachers so they have been similarly grouped.

### **4.2.1 Response towards PMFLs in general**

All the class teachers interviewed were in favour of PMFLs, and just as with the headteachers, their reasons varied. The most commonly articulated benefit was that learning a PMFL was fun for children. One class teacher (Landmark Junior) said: 'I think it's just the fact that the children are getting a lot out of it, they enjoy it, and that has an impact on me as well.' The enthusiasm that this teacher caught from the children was also experienced by two class teachers at Bankside Junior. Enthusiasm seemed to transfer from the children to the teachers but also vice versa according to the coordinator at Landmark who noted many instances where the enthusiasm of the teachers was passed on to the children. Developing children's linguistic skills from an early age was also thought to be one of the prime benefits of PMFLs. Most of the teachers talked of the importance of learning some useful words and phrases that could be used abroad. One class teacher (Heron) said:

I think it's valuable to learn it early as long as it's just conversation and you're not worrying too much about it. And things that they'll use if they go to France. I don't see the point in teaching them something they'll forget because they don't use it.

This functional approach to language teaching and learning was one that was echoed by several of the respondents. The coordinator at Bankside Junior included this element when she talked about a range of benefits:

Well I think it's important from the word go with children to just sort of teach them that there are other cultures and there are other languages that are just as valuable as ours so that children have a feeling of being confident to try out different languages maybe when they're abroad with their parents or maybe they come across someone who speaks another language.

Here she also referred to the cultural aspect of language learning and this was seen by all the teachers as being at least as important as developing children's linguistic skills. One of the teachers from Bankside summed up the feelings of several participants when she said:

Culturally it's really valuable ... it's not just about the language and there are parts of the scheme that have involved what it's like to live in France and it's the cultural side which I think is really really important.

Although all the teachers mentioned culture being an important factor, few explained in any detail what they meant by this. One class teacher from Heron said:

I think French culture is a big thing. To actually understand where the language is coming from and to be able to say the simple things like days and greetings so that when they go on holiday they can say hello to people.

Her initial point concerned cultural understanding but the examples she went on to give seem more related to linguistic skills. The coordinator at Heron was more specific. She saw learning languages as a 'way of opening the children's minds up to the world', and she went on to give an example of teaching a Y3 class about the different traditions associated with Christmas in France. Another class teacher from Landmark talked of 'bringing in bits and pieces about the cultural aspects as well. You know we've looked at Paris and all the different places you can go in Paris.' When teachers did exemplify what they meant by teaching a culture it seemed to consist of highlighting differences between English and French traditions for specific events or celebrations.

To recap, fun appeared to be the most important reason for teachers supporting PMFLs, although linguistic gains and cultural understanding were also considered important. For several of the teachers however, the advantages went further and they talked of the benefits of inclusion. At Landmark Junior it was one of the first benefits identified by the headteacher and the class teacher echoed this. In contrast to this, one of the Heron class teachers implied that children who struggled to read and write in English should focus on very basic greetings in French and cultural elements, as they would not be able to cope with learning a foreign language. A class teacher from Bankside admitted that she too initially thought this, but that she had been surprised by the achievement in French of children who were not usually high achievers. She commented:

I felt that a lot of the children that we would be teaching were finding English very challenging and were very special needs in terms of that. I felt trying to then teach them another language was going to be quite difficult for them but ... there were some of them that had good verbal understanding and good verbal skills and they were succeeding in a way that they didn't normally when they had to write.

The majority of teachers who mentioned inclusion did so in relation to how PMFLs could positively enhance inclusive practice in primary schools.

Echoing the responses from several headteachers, there were also several comments made about the relative ease of learning a language when younger. There was a perception among some teachers that younger children have fewer inhibitions and would therefore pick up languages more quickly. None of the teachers talked specifically about the possible advantages that early language learning can have on developing correct pronunciation (which has been supported by research findings) but rather seemed to be referring to language learning in general terms.

The only benefit of PMFLs mentioned exclusively by the teachers was preparation for secondary school. Several of the teachers (from Uplands, Bankside and Southerley) thought that children needed to be prepared for secondary school and suggested that learning French in primary school might make children more likely to continue with language learning. Interestingly a teacher from Smithfield felt that the children might not enjoy French at secondary school as she believed the first few years of language learning were the most fun, and these would have already taken place in the primary school. Overall however it was felt by the majority of teachers that learning a language in primary school would help prepare children for secondary school and make it more likely that they would want to continue learning that language. Interestingly in Heron Primary the class teacher mentioned that the secondary school they fed into did not allow all the children to continue learning French as some had to learn German instead 'to balance the books'.

#### **4.2.2 Perception of their role in implementing PMFL initiative**

Table 4.1 summarised the current level of implementation and the background qualifications and experience of the coordinators, I will not reiterate these points here but instead focus on the initial perceptions the coordinators and class teachers had of their role. All the coordinators had taken on the role willingly and all believed that their first task was to support teachers who were required to teach French but who were not confident in doing so. They approached this in different ways, depending on the perceived needs of the class teachers and the amount of time and resources available to them. Bankside and Landmark benefitted from having ongoing input from the visiting AST which enabled the coordinators in these schools to delegate much of the training to her and meant that their role became more advisory and organisational in nature. The coordinator at Landmark was also advising teachers on accuracy of the language and correct pronunciation but the coordinator at Bankside was not sufficiently confident in French to do this. In the remaining schools the coordinators were directly involved in the training of the other class teachers. This ranged from team teaching and modelling French lessons (Heron and Uplands) to introducing French resources (Southerley). The majority

of coordinators talked about their role in terms of supporting, reassuring and training including convincing class teachers to engage with the initiative. The coordinator at Heron Primary alluded to this aspect of the role. She said she needed to 'persuade people and win them round'. In general, the coordinators saw themselves as facilitators of implementation rather than carrying ultimate responsibility. The coordinator from Southerley Junior articulated this by saying: 'At the end of the day I refuse to panic too much cos I've done what I can and if it's not there, it's not my neck on the line, it's theirs.'

The class teachers perceived their role mainly in terms of doing what was asked of them and giving the children the best language learning experience they could. As with the coordinators, there was a wide range in the language qualifications and experience but those who were confident and had very good subject knowledge were in a minority. Many had some experience of learning French in their own schooling and had completed a GCSE/O level albeit many years ago and with varying degrees of success, and two had never learnt any French. Despite this, all had agreed to teach it. None had been consulted about the approach or the language the school should adopt. All of the class teachers accepted this approach with little (if any) resistance. I got the impression that some class teachers liked being told exactly what to do and a couple of coordinators talked of teachers wanting to be 'spoon fed' and 'painting by numbers'. Several respondents claimed that a primary class teacher just 'gets on with whatever needs to be done'. One from Landmark Junior explained how the previous year, an older colleague had left the school because she was intimidated by the requirement to teach French. She went on to say: 'We're Primary practitioners so we get on with it, don't we?' A class teacher from Heron echoed this point:

You teach what you're told to teach and you get on with it. And you move with the times. I mean, I wasn't taught how to use a computer or a whiteboard but you use it and get familiar with it. You just do it.

This same teacher added: 'When somebody comes and says I think we'll start French this week, we'll say: "ok, what are we going to do?"' This compliance and lack of ownership of strategic decisions is evident in every interview. The majority of the teachers felt they had no choice in aspects of their teaching in general, and particularly with regards to teaching French. At Southerley Junior one teacher commented that you had to 'accept what's thrown from the table' and another said that although there was sometimes an element of discussion with the teachers about taking on new initiatives, it was 'under the impression that we have to try and do it somewhere along the line.' She continued: 'you can talk and talk and talk about it but that doesn't change the fact that you've got to do it at some point' and she concluded that the best approach was to 'try our best to get on with it'. There is pragmatism evident in the

responses of the teachers to the demands made of them, and a resignation towards having no choice. This impression was unchallenged by any of the teachers. The overwhelming finding relating to this theme is that of teacher compliance and the belief that 'getting on with it' was the best approach for a primary class teacher.

The next issue for the teachers relating to their role is subject knowledge. As previously mentioned, some of the teachers were not confident in their subject knowledge so for many of these teachers, the fun element of language learning was paramount. However it was also important to many that the French they were teaching be accurate. In these cases, teachers checked their pronunciation with the coordinator (for example in Landmark, Uplands and Heron). For other class teachers the most important thing for the children was to see their teacher 'having a go' and not worrying too much if it was entirely accurate. The coordinator at Southerley Junior said:

My biggest thing to tell people who say to me that I might not be teaching them the right dialect, and I say - Look I go across to France and they all think I'm Irish. So long as they're speaking French it doesn't matter if it's perfect. It's French and they're learning something from it and other things can come later.

In this instance a positive attitude and a belief that anyone can try to learn a language was considered to be more important than accuracy. Some class teachers felt that it was beneficial for children to see their teachers in a learning role and not necessarily in possession of all the answers. At Bankside one of the teachers commented:

I was very open with the children and I'd say – I'm not entirely sure how this is pronounced ... they're positive children anyway and they've been very positive about it. I think they've seen it as quite reassuring that actually they're learning and so am I.

Another teacher found that she needed to ask the children for help. This approach was also mentioned by a teacher at Heron who relied on the children who attended French club. The notion of the children seeing the teacher as a learner was often used by those who were not confident in their own subject knowledge. This raises the question about whether this was a pre-existing pedagogical principle or some post hoc rationalisation at work. In terms of the subject knowledge required, there was some consolation for these less confident teachers who perceived that the level of French required was not very high and would not be too demanding to learn. The understanding of some teachers across the schools was that, if necessary, teaching French could consist of singing of a few songs and learning some basic vocabulary.

### 4.2.3 Communication and support

The amount of support the coordinators received from their headteachers varied greatly. In one school (Bankside) the headteacher and the coordinator implemented the initiative in a mutually supportive way. They had regular meetings where the coordinator could talk through what she would like to do and the headteacher tried to facilitate this. In other instances the coordinator did not feel as well supported. The coordinator at Southerley Junior talked of feeling frightened and isolated:

It's certainly quite frightening at times. You have been left and there's nobody comes round and says "Look I am here. This is it. This is what you do." You've just been more or less left to fend for yourself and I must admit I'm sorely disappointed with the whole lot.

This particular coordinator also talked of feeling like the 'partially sighted person leading the blind' in her school. She felt isolated and unsupported both by the headteacher in her school and by the local authority. At the other end of the scale, the coordinator at Uplands Primary felt extremely supported in terms of having external staff to model and train class teachers, a headteacher that was knowledgeable about the PMFL initiative, having dedicated time for staff training to it, and having put it on the school development plan.

The six schools were situated in two different local authorities but according to the coordinators, neither had provided sufficient support in terms of funding or training. The AST provided invaluable training in Bankside and Landmark and there was general acknowledgement that this was vital to the success of the initiative in terms of staff training. In those schools not receiving this support from the AST, the coordinators were finding it difficult to support other members of staff. All the coordinators felt that more financial support would have eased this situation. The coordinator at Southerley commented:

Everything else [apart from the Framework] has just been thrown in, totally thrown in and they haven't even made the pretence of pushing the money at it that they did with literacy and numeracy. To be quite honest it's a farce and anybody who looks at it and says it's not a farce is daft.

She went on to articulate her concerns that the school would not be able to afford training for all of the staff that needed it:

It would've been nice to have had training for all of us but if I've got to choose two or three people than I will choose two or three people and the rest of us will have to survive on enthusiasm. And I don't think that's fair. It's not fair to not give people what they need because they're enthusiastic about having a go.

The lack of funding to support training was also having a direct impact in Heron Primary where there was not enough money to cover the coordinator to leave her class to support colleagues. She said: 'I don't have any budget or money for French ... so it'll just be meeting up after school

or me helping them with their planning or whatever.’ However during the interviews it transpired that some support was available for teachers in some schools in terms of physical resources. Many commented favourably on the different schemes of work available and those who benefitted from the AST’s input had access to all the planning for the year and a range of other resources that she had prepared. The data from the interviews with teachers suggested that the amount of support available, certainly from the LA, was extremely variable and depended on getting the request for help in first while the AST still had some availability. For those schools that did not do this it appears that they were not then able to access similar levels of support.

In all schools teachers talked of the support they offered each other and how vital this was.

One of the teachers at Heron Primary captured the thoughts of many when she said:

I think the most important thing that’s going on here is the support network and how we work together to support each other and build each other up. I think if you’re in a school where you don’t support each other then it’s not going to happen. So the support is the most important thing.

Although the amount of support from headteachers and the LA varied, without exception the teachers found this in their colleagues.

#### **4.2.4 Concerns and threats**

The greatest concern for the majority of the class teachers was their subject knowledge. Many teachers expressed serious concerns in this regard. A class teacher from Southerley Junior explained how she thought that PMFLs were:

a lovely idea ... but I’m not sure I’m the best person to teach it. I have such a negative experience of language learning that I don’t think I’m the best person to teach it. I’m so scared that I’m going to teach them wrong and I’m scared that I’m not going to give them the right stuff.

The coordinator at the same school was aware of some staff feeling scared about teaching French; she said that ‘for every person who’s enthusiastic about it you’ve got someone on the opposite extreme who’s absolutely shit scared about it.’ Even for those teachers who prioritised ‘having a go’ and being enthusiastic, they considered some degree of subject knowledge essential. The subject knowledge concerns expressed by the teachers were twofold: the first was modelling authentic pronunciation and the second was teaching the correct vocabulary and grammatical constructions.

Some teachers treated the need to learn new French subject knowledge just as they would approach it in any other subject. A class teacher from Landmark said:

I would just, just have a go 'cos with every subject you've got to learn don't you? If I went into History in Year Six I would have to learn what they were doing I don't know much about Ancient Greeks at the minute so...

The coordinator at Heron made a similar parallel between learning curriculum content in French and other subjects in the primary curriculum. She used the example of Music and explained that the teachers who are not confident in French might feel like she does when asked to teach Music (which was the subject she was least comfortable teaching). One way of increasing teachers' confidence was to allow them to observe French lessons being modelled by the AST or PMFL coordinator. All those teachers who had benefitted from this approach commented favourably on it as a way of improving their confidence to teach French themselves. A class teacher from Heron explained: 'having somebody to model it themselves without just giving you a lesson plan ... makes you think I could actually do that.' This approach is explored in more detail in the discussion chapter.

It has already been highlighted that many of the less confident class teachers took comfort in the fact that the level of French they would need would not be very high. However several teachers were already concerned about how they would cope with the level of French required once the children had been learning it for three years if they were the Y6 teacher. A class teacher from Landmark Junior (confident in her French in Y3 and 4) felt that by Y5, and certainly in Y6, a specialist French teacher would be needed. A class teacher from Heron Primary who was a very confident French speaker himself also felt that when children get to Y6: 'like anything, like music, it's actually quite complex and if you haven't got the confidence that's the first thing that will fall off your weekly plan.' He was referring here to his view that there is a hierarchy of subjects, and lower status foundation subjects such as Music (or French in this instance) often drop off the timetable.

This leads on to another key concern mentioned by the teachers which was related to lack of time. Firstly there was a concern on behalf of some of the teachers that planning and preparing French lessons would take too long. A class teacher who did not have a high level of French herself said:

Preparing for the lesson would mean sitting there with a dictionary and trying to translate everything before you use it with your class which I don't mind doing but it's when am I supposed to do it.

Several of the class teachers alluded to this although a more commonly voiced threat relating

to time was that of actually timetabling French. All the teachers, without exception, talked of the difficulty of fitting anything else into an already overcrowded timetable. This feeling was summarised by a class teacher who said:

But if they want us to do that we need something else to be taken away almost to make the room for it ... with it staying as it is at the moment. We've already extended our school day by fifteen minutes so far this year.

Interestingly, all those who had actually started delivering French on a weekly basis had found a solution to the time problem. Several schools (Bankside, Landmark, Uplands and Heron) had shortened the time allocated to other subjects. In Smithfield, French was being taught by a subject specialist in the class teacher's non-contact time, although this created its own issues. Many teachers were trying to carve out half an hour per week for a French lesson and intended to follow this up with three ten minute sessions as and when they could fit them in. In several instances (for example Heron, Southerley, and Uplands) there was an element of hoping some time might appear on an ad hoc basis. The danger with doing this was pointed out by a teacher from Heron:

Only if the timetable gets so hectic that it's the first thing to get pushed out, alongside music (laughs). I think if you're motivated and enthusiastic about it then you will teach it, even if it's just ten minutes of singing a song or whatever.

This is not the same teacher who referred to French dropping off the timetable mentioned earlier and this thought is reiterated by two other teachers from Uplands and Southerley and so it emerges as a shared belief and approach. Comments such as the one above and many others made by class teachers about fitting French in to ten minutes here or there (for example if assembly is cancelled, during story time, after swimming while waiting for the coach) could potentially raise issues about the quality of the French teaching and learning. Another strategy commonly talked about by the teachers to address timetabling difficulties was to teach French using a cross curricular approach. However, although this was seen by some as a beneficial approach, others warned about forcing links where they did not exist. The other difficulty with cross curricular teaching was the increased demands on teacher subject knowledge. It was felt by several teachers that this might be an approach that could be used in the future but not at the current time. A class teacher at Bankside observed:

Yeah, I think that [cross curricular teaching] would be good. I mean how readily it could happen ... I imagine we'd have to grow in confidence in what we're doing first but hopefully we could do it. I mean just little things at the moment like we do the register in French in the afternoon for example, so that's really good.

This comment reflected the view of the majority of the teachers who felt that doing the register and giving classroom instructions in French constituted cross curricular teaching.

When highlighting concerns over timetabling French, some teachers took the opportunity to express their frustration over the large number of initiatives being introduced into primary schools concurrently. This was a concern expressed by all the teachers. During the interviews recent initiatives relating to assessment, literacy, numeracy, PE, science, PSHE and music were cited, resulting in one teacher commenting:

Stop, I sometimes think that the politicians just want to seem like they're doing something in Education so they start churning out new initiatives perhaps they're paid to come up with new initiatives rather than actually thinking it through.

The coordinator at Southerley used the metaphor of a playground. She clearly felt strongly when she complained about the way things were constantly changing:

You're constantly on a see saw and you know damn well the best place to be is in the middle so you don't have to move very much, but you end up running from one end to the other because that's the way it is. And if you're not careful it turns into a roundabout at the same time!

Several comments from other teachers who had been in the profession for a few years showed she was not alone in thinking this way. A considerable threat to the implementation of the PMFL initiative from their perspective was not necessarily the specific French content, but the fact that it was yet another initiative in a long line.

The final threat voiced by the teachers over the implementation of the PMFL initiative, similarly to the headteachers, was that of staff turnover and as a result losing momentum after the initial impetus. Several teachers talked of training a critical mass so that if a member of staff left the remaining teacher/s could support the newcomer. The departure of a coordinator was seen as more problematic and could potentially lead to French being dropped.

Having presented the main findings from the initial interviews with headteachers, class teachers and PMFL coordinators, I now present the case study schools in more depth.

### **Case Study 1: Heron Primary School**

I present this first case study using a mixture of vignettes and interview data in order to provide as rich a description of the individual case as possible. In this way I hope to provide the reader with a vicarious experience of being in this particular school (as suggested by Stake 1995). I begin the section with some general vignettes and description to provide a feel for the school, before moving to individual teachers (particularly Mary, Sam, Martin and Lucy); I end the section highlighting two other key factors that arose from the data: the role of the leadership and teacher compliance.

#### **4.3.1 Background**

*I turn into the wide suburban road leading to the school and am greeted by the sight of parking chaos. It is a cold, damp morning and the long road is scattered with stressed looking parents at the wheels of cars at various stages of three point turns, all trying to drop their children off as close to the school gates as possible. It transpires that the school is very aware of this and has been trying to stop this practice, but several pleas to the parents have largely been ignored. So I sit in my car at the end of the road and wait for the chaos to abate. I imagine the residents in this road feel like prisoners in their own houses between 8.40am and 9am Monday-Friday. There is no obvious school car park so I wait for a while for a space to become available on the side of the road and park. I then walk through the school playground round to the main entrance of the school. While they wait for the morning bell to ring, hundreds of children play noisily all around and pay me no attention at all as I pass by.*

*The school itself is a very large primary school with a three-form entry and 590 pupils on roll. It is well established (since 1978) and has a good reputation in the area. The surrounding area is reasonably affluent and the school has a lower than average number of children on free school meals but a slightly higher than average number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. It was judged to be 'good' in its last Ofsted inspection two years before my study began, but this is a school that considers itself better than this and is determined to be outstanding. The school prospectus emphasises the 'friendly, caring, family community, committed to achievement and sharing in the successes of each individual'. The school's vision is that the children will enjoy being taken on a challenging and creative journey of discovery. The prospectus also highlights the school's desire to work closely with parents/carers and this is also commented upon in the Ofsted report. It is a school that is doing well and has aspirations to do even better.*

*Having weaved my way across the playground I arrive at the main reception area to find two reception staff busy chatting and laughing together. As soon as they notice me, they smile and once I have introduced myself, they release the locked door with the buzzer and wave me through. They then continue with their conversation and include me in it while I wait in the designated area for the return of one of the children who has been dispatched to find the PMFL coordinator I have arranged to meet.*

*Sam (the PMFL coordinator) arrives smiling broadly. She was one of the first cohort of trainees to follow the French specialism at the university and although I did not teach her personally, we know each other through this and have worked together on another project since then. Sam is*

*a confident teacher and a willing PMFL coordinator who has a clear vision for how PMFLs should be implemented in KS2. She took on the role two years previously and has attended several additional training days and taken part in several funded projects related to PMFLs since then. She seems pleased to see me and we go to the staff room where she offers me a cup of tea.*

*There are twenty chairs round the edge of a large staff room which is divided in two by a long step. On the table at the lower end there are some large bowls of fruit and some books for sale. It transpires that the upper end is usually occupied by the teachers in KS1 and the other end by the KS2 teachers and there is only one teacher who has crossed 'the key stage step' and usually sits in the opposite key stage area to the one in which she currently teaches. I was told about this by a KS2 teacher over a rare cup of coffee in the staff room: usually the teachers make a hot drink and then take it back to their classrooms as they do not have time to drink it in the staff room. Lunchtime is similar and many teachers spend most of the lunch break in their classrooms but try to go to the staff room for fifteen to twenty minutes to be sociable. There is a whiteboard with the school's timetable for the week which looks extremely busy with class trips, specific activities and visitors marked in, as well as notices to the staff about coffee money, assembly times and requests for resources for junk modelling. The room is empty apart from the two of us as lessons are due to begin shortly and staff are busy doing their final preparations for the first lesson of the day. Several people pop in and out again as they check things on the board, leave their lunch in the fridge or put their coffee cups in the dishwasher. Outside in the corridors there is a very busy but orderly atmosphere as the children hang up coats, stack lunch boxes and walk quickly to their classrooms. Sam too needs to get back to her class as her Y6 are waiting for her so having explained my timetable she rushes off to begin her day.*

I spent two weeks in this school with all the year groups in Key Stage 2. I was able to join in for a week of lessons in different subject areas to acclimatise myself with the school and the teachers and their general approach to teaching. This experience also enabled me to get to know staff better so they would feel more relaxed with me and have more honest conversations and we could also talk about issues on an ad hoc basis. In the second week I observed eight French lessons delivered by class teachers, to explore how these lessons were taught. I continue this section by exploring the issues that emerged from these observations, using my field notes and interview data as evidence.

#### 4.3.2 Individual lessons

*It is a bright and sunny afternoon and the children in this Y6 class are coming in from the playground after lunch. They are full of chatter and there is a jovial atmosphere as they settle down. Molly (the class teacher) has just welcomed me into the class but has also warned me that I may find this lesson a bit boring. She gives me a copy of the SATs practice paper they will be using, apologises that the lesson won't be much fun to watch and moves to the front of the classroom to greet the children. Molly announces that they are going to do some SATs practice in this lesson and the children greet this unwelcome news with groans and a few drop their heads onto the tables. I hear some children quietly sighing 'Oh no, not again!' Molly doesn't seem surprised or annoyed by this reaction and she tries to cajole the class into working, using a mixture of humour and promising an extra playtime if they work hard. Most of the children resign themselves to this, quieten down and get on with the task of reading a passage about cowboys driving cattle. Molly gives them some reading comprehension questions to get on with. Many of the children find it difficult to get started and seem to be looking for excuses to avoid starting the task. I can see several children procrastinating by sharpening their pencils, having a drink of water and asking each other how far they have got with their reading. Rather than getting angry or punishing them, Molly seems sympathetic and understanding of their reticence and she continues to use positive strategies to get them started. In the end however she insists more firmly that they complete the task and the majority of the children comply. After forty five minutes Molly decides that they deserve the extra playtime and the children cheer with relief.*

While we are in the playground she tells me that she does not agree with SATs in principle and particularly does not like having to practise for them so much and so far in advance, but she feels under pressure from the senior management team who are leading it this way. This is Molly's second year of teaching and Heron is the only school she has worked in (apart from as a trainee teacher). She tells me that she is very much looking forward to teaching some MFLs once SATs are over and that she is particularly keen on teaching the intercultural aspect.

In another Y6 classroom SATs are also being rehearsed as I join Sam's science lesson. Looking round the classroom I do not see any displays related to PMFLs which surprises me given that she is the coordinator. Apparently they are not doing any French yet 'as SATs are too important'. It is several months before the SATs actually take place but revision is well underway in this class. The headteacher and the deputy have recently attended a Y6 team meeting to go through the class lists and identify the level of attainment and the support that each child is going to receive in the build up to the SATs. A parents meeting was also held to

inform them of the importance of SATs but not many attended according to Sam. She herself is not keen on SATs and feels that teacher assessment should be enough. She tells me that she is hoping that they will have time to do more fun things after SATs and may teach some French then, but then she admits with a rueful grin that this is not very likely due to catching up on other foundation subjects that have been sacrificed in favour of SATs revision. Sam is now in her eighth year of teaching and has been teaching in Y6 for a few years and so she has learnt from experience that this is what happens every year.

It is playtime on another sunny spring morning and as I walk across the now familiar chaotic playground I am approached by Kim whose class I am going to observe after play. We have not met before so we introduce ourselves and I thank her for letting me come into her class. She replies proudly that she is a leading maths teacher and very used to being observed by other people who pay to watch her. This is the only school she has worked in and although she is only in her third year of teaching she seems to be very confident and to have strong views. We chat for a while on the playground (although she is not supposed to be on duty today, no one else has turned up so she says she is happy to cover). We talk about the school in general and she explains how she thinks there are more problematic children beginning to come to the school and that this is changing the school dynamics. While we are chatting we see a girl chasing two others, shouting that she is going to 'beat them up'. The two girls run off and their pursuer tries to get into the school to take a short cut but Kim prevents this by locking the door. The girl continues to bang the door in an attempt to open it and then tries to follow other adults in as they go through. Kim ignores this and tells me that 'She's new and doesn't yet have the one-to-one support she should have. She's got mental problems.'

*The bell rings and all the children line up ready to go into their classrooms. Kim and I walk over to her class and she leads them in. I walk at the back of the line of children and the children are keen to know who I am and what I am going to be doing in their class. Once in the class I notice lots of displays relating to Maths and some literacy related posters. Individual children's targets are also very visible and when I ask some children what they are, they are happy to explain. These children are clearly very used to having visitors in their class and being asked questions. This time there is no opportunity for groaning about the fact they are having a SATs practice lesson as there is a quick fire introduction to the lesson as soon as the children are in the classroom. The Interactive whiteboard is showing 'Who wants to be a mathionnaire?' and everyone joins in enthusiastically with their own mini whiteboards. Kim then explains the importance of reading SATs questions carefully and doing an estimate before attempting to find the exact answer. The children seem familiar with this advice and most nod knowingly. Kim*

*then gives out some questions relating to division for the children to carry out individually, although most decide to discuss them with the other children sitting at their tables. Kim does not seem to mind this and allows them to continue. Once the majority of the class have finished their questions they play a game of number 'Countdown', again using the interactive whiteboard. This proves very popular and the children join in singing the 'Countdown' music each time the stopwatch ticks down. Kim encourages this liveliness and this is clearly a game they have played many times before and a ritual ending to a maths SATs practice lesson.*

After the lesson Kim and I continue the conversation we began on the playground. In her role as leading maths teacher she has attended conferences on assessment and has found a different system that she would prefer to use (APP-Assessing Pupil Progress). However she acknowledges that this is not possible currently and goes on to mention that senior management at Heron seem to be 'more pushy about SATs this year than before'. This seems to be the opinion of all of the Y6 teachers. One of them tells me that the headteacher thinks that: 'the more you assess them the more they'll learn'. Kim tells me that she has asked the children in her class what they would like to learn in their lessons once the SATs are over and they have told her that they would like to learn a language which she says she is very happy to do. She speaks a little French but also says she would be happy to teach a language she didn't know at all.

It is clear that in this school, assessment (and SATs in particular) is the priority for several months of the year for all classes. All the Y6 teachers feel uncomfortable with this approach to SATs but they feel pressurised into complying whilst at the same time feeling sympathetic to the children's experience. All three of them show this to different degrees in their approach to teaching the SATs practice lessons. They try to make them as much fun as they could be, and/or give the children more leeway in terms of behaviour and concentration, allowing them to express their feelings and rewarding them for their efforts. Although none of the teachers personally want to teach these lessons in this way, and they would prefer not to have SATs, all of them comply with the drive from senior management. It is not just PMFLs that suffer at this time of year due to SATs, but all foundation subjects. However in terms of status, it is clear that French comes below other, more established foundation subjects and so may not get taught at all throughout Y6 in this school.

To exemplify this, on my first visit to the school to carry out some observations, although Sam had made arrangements with two class teachers for me to observe them teaching French, when I arrive the teachers I am scheduled to see have forgotten I am coming. It had originally

been agreed a few weeks previously and according to one of them: 'A lot happens here in a few weeks!' Both class teachers are very apologetic and although I try to stop them, both insist on changing their plans for the day to teach French instead. It transpires that French should have been on the original timetable anyway but one has some art to finish and the other wants to finish some science work so they have bumped French off the timetable. Several teachers refer to this as being a frequent occurrence as French is considered to be the least important subject. Martin (a Y4 class teacher) explains:

Once you've cleared up Maths and English in the morning and then in the afternoons on certain days you're timetabled for the hall for IT, for outdoor games, you're suddenly left with very minimal slots. RE is as you know a compulsory subject, then you get the ones that are squeezed out like PSHE and French.

Martin is not the only teacher to refer explicitly to the lack of status that French has in the school. Most teachers I speak to explain that although they have every intention of teaching French it often gets side-lined by other, higher priority subjects. This seems to be the case irrespective of the confidence and the expressed desire of the individual teacher to teach French. Sam explains that although French is officially a priority identified on the school action plan and has been discussed by the Governing body: 'this school seems to have so many [priorities] that that kind of negates it a bit.'

*It is Wednesday afternoon and I am in Paul's Y3 science lesson. It is hot, stuffy and untidy as the children have spent their lunchtime break in the classroom due to the rain outside. I am introduced as someone who is very interested in French and the children immediately start trying to speak to me in French saying 'Bonjour, ça va?' They are keen to tell me all about people they know who live in France or who have been to France. They are very enthusiastic and I find it difficult to talk to them all. Paul calls them to sit down at their tables so the register can be taken and they amble off, toying with pencils, books, water bottles that have not been tidied away from the tables on the way. The children are fidgety and do not settle down to listen to Paul's introduction to the lesson which is based on answering questions about materials in a QCA booklet. There is a constant low level chatter which Paul clearly finds very irritating. Before the lesson began he told me that he finds his class challenging in terms of behaviour and he believes this is a result of one of the other Y3 classes being carefully organised so that one particular child with severe SEN could be accommodated. He said that due to this 'good class' being made, the other two Y3 classes have suffered as a result. I look around the room and alongside examples of children's artwork and science I see displays about De Bono's thinking hats, Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC) wheels and 'wonderwalls'. On the tables there are cards related to 'thinking activities' as well as 'table top tips'. In short in this*

*class I am surrounded by evidence of a lot of initiatives recently introduced in the school. In the middle of this, the children struggle on with their QCA booklets, many of them unable to read the instructions and not recording anything in the booklets. As the lesson draws to a close Paul shares his displeasure with the class about the small amount of work that has been done in the past hour and ends by praising those who have managed to work through the booklet. I get the impression that some of the children are unaware of this reprimand as they are still chatting to each other.*

The issue of the large number of initiatives constantly bombarding teachers in Primary schools is the topic of many discussions I go on to have with class teachers on other occasions. I now explore this, and other key issues, from the points of view of the three main characters who took part in my fieldwork at Heron: Mary, Martin and Lucy. All are class teachers with very different personal experiences of learning and teaching PMFLs and who allowed me to spend time in their classes when they were teaching French as well as giving up their time to chat with me more regularly.

#### **4.3.3 Mary**

Mary is a very experienced class teacher currently in Y3. Her own experience of language learning was in her own words 'miserable' and she seems resentfully compliant about teaching French. When I interviewed her for the first time she seemed slightly aggressive and I wondered whether she felt pressurised by Sam into talking to me. However as the year went on she relaxed considerably and I enjoyed many interesting and unplanned conversations with her. In retrospect, I wonder whether she initially thought I was monitoring PMFLs on behalf of the senior management team (even though I explained my reason for being in the school) as it transpired that she had a mistrust of the leadership in the school. She referred to the headteacher making decisions with no regard for the feelings of the staff, for example by putting teachers into particular year groups whatever their own personal preferences (she was moved from Y2 into Y3 although she said she wanted to go into KS1). Other teachers I spoke to implied that this was also their feeling about the senior management team. In Mary's initial interview it was clear that she did what she was told because there was no choice. Despite her initial defensive attitude towards me, after our initial interview, she would seek me out to tell me about French lessons she was going to teach (as well as inviting me to a French class assembly she was taking). Initially she was not at all confident with the idea of teaching French and seemed proud of the fact that she had never even been to France. However she also said that, despite this, she would teach French because she had been told to teach it. Despite her lack of expertise in French, as the initial interview went on she started sounding more positive

and almost enthusiastic, rating herself as a four out of five in terms of having a positive attitude towards teaching it. Throughout the interview (and in subsequent conversations) she was self-deprecating, making comments about her age and the fact that Sam may well come and tell her she was making 'a hash of it.' Interestingly she turned out to be the teacher who spent the most time teaching French even though her own subject knowledge was, by her own admission, weak.

By the end of the year she was clearly teaching more than the minimum required of her, and she was proud of the French she had taught and keen to continue (with the proviso that she would retire before Ofsted began inspecting it). It is important to note that apart from one session where Sam was able to come and model a French lesson in Mary's class, Mary received no further organised training. For a time she had a TA who could speak some French and she fully involved her in the French lessons by getting her to model pronunciation of the vocabulary in French. However this TA subsequently left the school so Mary was unsupported from that time and 'left to muddle through'. Mary did not seem at all surprised by this and having got through the first year of teaching French, she was quite happy to 'muddle through a bit better next year.'

*Mary's French lesson begins just after lunch and as I walk in I see the children are in the middle of quiet reading. Some of them are choosing to read simple French dictionaries and they are busy trying to work out what the French words say. As this settling down activity comes to an end Mary asks the children with the dictionaries what they have found. One of the girls answers 'l'argent' (money) in a very English accent. Mary isn't sure what this word means and so asks another child for their word. Luckily he answers 'la moto' and Mary guesses this is something to do with a car. The register is then done in French. This is followed by revision of the song 'Heads shoulders knees and toes' in French. Mary is unsure of some of vocabulary, for example 'épaules' and 'genoux' (shoulders and knees) and her TA who is sitting on the carpet with the children calls them out (with a strong English accent in her pronunciation). Mary wants to write the words up on the whiteboard so the TA starts to do this, and I help out with some of the spellings. As I look round the classroom I see that the children seem to be enjoying the activity and joining in with enthusiasm, although they are pronouncing the words as if they were sounding them out in English. I also notice a display on the wall that is all about France and has some basic vocabulary relating to greetings and also some words to identify family members. Mary points towards the Interactive whiteboard where she is showing a clip of a French girl introducing her family and pets. All the children seem to be listening attentively and Mary asks them some simple questions: 'Combien de frères? Combien de soeurs?' (how many brothers/sisters?) to which the children answer either 'un, deux, trois etc'. Some of the children*

*clearly go to French club and they are confident with this; more confident than Mary who needs some help with pronunciation and with the new vocabulary of 'grand-mère' and 'grand-père' (grandmother/grandfather). There is some confusion over the use of 'grand' meaning big in the sense of a big brother and grand as in grandmother. The lesson ends with a quick revision of numbers nought to five. Everyone seems confident with numbers and the volume rises as all the children happily join in. Mary ends by playing a song 'oh là là regardez moi' which the class are going to sing in their French assembly soon. The news that they are going to sing this song is greeted with the well-known response of 'Yesssss!' and they go on to practise the song with the help of the backing track which has French children singing along.*

Once the lesson is over Mary and I discuss how much the children are enjoying their French lessons, and she mentions one particular boy who has learning difficulties in other areas of the curriculum but is a very enthusiastic participant in French. Mary jokes that she's sure I have written down all the things she did wrong, which I take as a sign of her insecurity with her own subject knowledge. However she was the instigator of my observation of this lesson, and she continues inviting me to more as the year goes on. It may be that my presence in the classroom is more supportive than threatening, as I am able to assist her with French subject knowledge. When I interview Mary at the end of the year, she reflects on the success of her French teaching and concludes:

I thought it was quite successful really... although perhaps their accents weren't particularly good or you know they might not have learnt quite as much as they might have learnt with somebody else but I think we were enthusiastic and they were keen and they wanted to do it and they were quite happy talking to each other.

Mary is clearly very aware of the shortcomings of her French lessons but values the children's positive attitudes above acquiring specific competences in French language skills. The difficulty for Mary has been timetabling. The over loading of the primary curriculum is a worry to her.

She says:

I do worry about the whole timetable really with everything that's being brought in... and sex education ... and rights and responsibilities we do quite a lot of and we're doing philosophy for children ... it's just you don't do something and you do something else instead. I say I can't do everything. I just can't do everything.

In order to fit French lessons into her timetable she has to replace the only child initiated learning slot of the week. When I ask her whether it has been worth it she replies that she would prefer to keep the original slot but there just isn't time. She remains unconvinced by the need to teach French to children at this age:

Whether French is valuable in Year 3 I haven't the slightest idea ... I mean they're so enthusiastic to learn it now and they pick it up quite quickly, is that the reason for doing it? I don't know what the reason for doing it is.

It is not because she is not interested in finding out about the initiative as she goes on to talk about her desire to know why it is being implemented and she also mentions discussions she has had with some French secondary school teachers who have told her that by the time the children come up to them from primary schools they are already turned off French, and their accents are awful due to having had French lessons in Key Stage 2. Mary makes the point that this might well be a transition issue and she suggests that the secondary schools need to plan better for differentiation to keep the children engaged. Towards the end of our discussion she says: 'If they're hoping to get brilliant French speakers, buy a French person to do it'. Mary feels that she had no choice but to agree to teach French despite her lack of subject knowledge and ignorance of the supposed benefits of it. However this does not worry her unduly and her approach is to 'get stuck in'. She claims that it doesn't matter what she is asked to teach, to the extent that it could be Egyptian, and she would get 'one step ahead and give it a go'. She says: 'It doesn't faze me, it might faze some people but it doesn't faze me, just get on with it.' These comments lead us on to a discussion of Mary's understanding of teacher professionalism and whether teaching French has had an impact on this. I explore this concept once I have introduced all three teachers so their views can be compared.

#### **4.3.4 Martin**

Martin is an experienced and confident AST. He is very accustomed to sharing his practice: he has delivered some lectures at the University to trainee teachers and regularly does outreach work in other schools (particularly those that are deemed by Ofsted to be struggling). He has a degree in French (albeit from twenty years ago) and is more than happy to see French coming into Key Stage 2 although has concerns about finding the time to fit it into the timetable as well as the difficulty that some teachers will have finding the time to prepare themselves in terms of subject knowledge and supporting resources. Martin is always very accommodating and makes it clear that I am welcome observe his classes whenever I like, stressing that I can just drop in without arranging it in advance. I take this offer as a sign of his confidence in teaching French and also a sign of his familiarity with being observed by others due to his training role.

*As soon as I enter Martin's classroom the children greet me with 'Bonjour' so they clearly know I am interested in French. The lesson begins with a revision of body parts in French. The children are so keen to tell Martin the French words they are making the squeaky 'about to burst' noise children make to communicate to the teacher that they really want to answer. Those children*

*that Martin chooses are rewarded with merit points if they get the correct answer. One of the last children to provide an answer is given the role of being the 'professeur' (teacher) and is then responsible for telling the rest of the children what they should do in French. 'Levez vous, asseyez vous, écoutez, chantez' (stand up, sit down, listen, sing) are amongst the commands the child remembers. All the children are joining in happily and their pronunciation is very authentic. Martin reminds them of their last French lesson when they practised the names of the colours in French and they practise these again with the help of a PowerPoint presentation Martin has prepared. There is excitement as the children spot pictures of Star Wars characters and images from the Simpsons and they go off to their tables to practise the terms 'Montrez moi les yeux' (show me the eyes) etc in pairs. This is quite challenging for some who struggle and screw up their faces as they try to say 'Montrez moi' but they are enjoying trying. Throughout the lesson Martin is adding lots of incidental comments in French and his own accent is authentic. At the end of the lesson a few of the children demonstrate their dialogue and the issue of the different word order in French and English arises. Martin uses this as an opportunity to teach the children where the adjectives should go in French, unlike English. The lesson comes to an end and the children have clearly made progress in their learning and have enjoyed the lesson.*

One of the most striking aspects of Martin's French lesson is his confidence in his own subject knowledge. Because of this he is able to address children's misconceptions and use them as a teaching point, illustrated by his impromptu teaching about word order in French. He is also able to reinforce incidental vocabulary and classroom language as he is comfortable using French in an unplanned way. This gives the lesson a much more 'French feel', enhanced by his authentic accent which the children are imitating. Martin himself recognises the importance of this and he comments that without this the lesson would be predominantly an English one 'with a few words of French thrown in.'

At this point in time Martin is extremely enthusiastic about the introduction of French. He is finding it difficult to fit in however, particularly with the additional time commitment of a new music initiative in the school where his whole class is learning to play the ukulele. This serves as another example of the relative low status of French in the curriculum hierarchy. During my first interview with Martin he comments on the overload of initiatives he feels that teachers are struggling with. He says:

So you know we genuinely have so many new initiatives so often, that's the problem I think. Almost generally in education you've got to be quite disciplined and say 'look this is a new initiative - is this something we are going to take on board, do we try it and evaluate it at the end?'

He is referring here to education in general but also specifically to Heron school which he admits is always taking on new initiatives that are not statutory. At this point he compares being inundated with initiatives with swimming against the tide. I ask him whether the staff enjoy taking on new things and he answers: 'we don't really get a lot of choice!' In Martin's opinion the danger with taking on too many new initiatives seems to be twofold: firstly there is the work that this entails for teachers 'who are already up to their eyeballs' and also the practical issue of fitting everything into the timetable. Martin's concern about trying to fit French into a curriculum where there is no time available is that it will get taught in five minute blocks as and when time unexpectedly arises and clearly this will be detrimental to the quality of the French being taught. Martin is one of the only participants in the school to mention the quality of the French being taught as important. The other solution that Martin suggests is to teach French in a cross curricular way (i.e. teach another curriculum subject through the medium of French). Although he acknowledges that this could be an effective method he is also well aware of the subject knowledge demands required of teachers to do this. Even with a degree in French he doubts his own would be strong enough for it, let alone those teachers with few/no qualifications in French.

When I interview Martin at the end of the year his fears about French dropping off the timetable have indeed materialised. However he does not entirely attribute this to the lack of time due to other initiatives, but more to the waning of momentum and the insecurity teachers feel with regards to their own subject knowledge. He feels that teachers would have fitted it in if:

the subject had come more naturally to people. If you're teaching geography you might have to go away and find some maps but that's not outside your comfort zone. But for something like this if it doesn't come naturally, that's when it's easier not to do it.

He returns to a concern he originally expressed in my initial conversation with him over the quality of French provision. He clearly feels that if a teacher is just 'ticking the boxes for the sake of it' in terms of teaching the required number of French lessons, then that teacher should seriously consider whether they are the most appropriate person to be teaching it. In these instances he says there may be someone else in the same year group who could teach it more effectively and therefore take over those lessons. This is evidence of his belief that colleagues can and should support each other in very practical ways, as well as highlighting his assumption that he is not one of the teachers in a position of teaching French just to meet the requirement. Having been fairly optimistic about the approach to delivering French at the beginning of the year he ends the year with more doubts. Despite acknowledging that teachers

always try to do their best, and the rarity of teachers admitting they cannot do something, he thinks that the introduction of French may well lead to teachers having to take this stance. He concludes that a better approach would be to employ specialist teachers in the future.

On this crucial theme of teacher's subject knowledge, I have already explained that despite her very weak subject knowledge and despite promises to the contrary, Mary was not given any additional training (with the exception of one lesson modelled by Sam). This was also the case for the rest of the staff. None received any training in French during the course of the year. They had, however, had training in Philosophy for children (P4C) which was not a statutory initiative and so I asked Martin why this was, given that he was the coordinator of this particular subject. Although it was not a national initiative, P4C was something that Martin himself had been interested in for a while and had been 'bending the headteacher's ear about for about three years.' As a result the headteacher had agreed that the entire staff could spend a whole INSET day and two follow up staff meetings on P4C. Martin had also been released from his class to deliver training to the lunchtime supervisors and teaching assistants. In our discussion it became clear that Martin had been able to negotiate this because he was an assertive and confident member of staff who was determined to get his subject (in this case P4C) high on the list of priorities, hence his success. If a subject coordinator did not do this then according to Martin: 'you're not leading the subject, you're just holding it.' Sam was not such a confident, influential teacher in the school and perhaps this is why she had difficulties being released to deliver training to other members of staff. Nor had she been able to ensure that any staff meetings were dedicated to French, despite it being one of the school priorities on their action plan and something that the Governors had spoken about. I now explore some of these anomalies.

#### **4.3.5 Sam**

I have already introduced Sam as the PMFL coordinator, and her qualifications and experience all suggest that she would be confident in taking on this role. However, time spent in Heron Primary school indicates that a coordinator also needs to be assertive, influential and determined in addition to having the knowledge of the subject and the expertise to both teach it and to train others. When I interviewed Sam at the beginning of the year she was excited about the idea of bringing French into the school. She has now been the PMFL coordinator for five years although for the first few years French was not an entitlement or a national initiative. During this time she encouraged teachers to have a French 'phrase of the week' and to use incidental 'little bits of French here and there'. Then she became involved in a project funded by the TDA to help introduce French into primary schools. This funding enabled Sam to

spend some time in the Y3 classes modelling how to teach French to enable the class teachers to take it over the following year. Unfortunately for the school several of these Y3 teachers left at the end of the year, taking their expertise with them. (The issue of staff turnover is one that the headteacher is aware of and she spoke specifically about strategic planning in order to minimise the impact of staff leaving.) During the previous year the TDA funding had also paid for the Y5 children to go to the secondary school to be given some taster sessions. This year, however, there is no funding available that Sam is aware of (apart from a small amount that one of the governors has donated for a few resources).

Sam's main concerns about introducing French into the school this year are teachers' subject knowledge and confidence levels, and finding the time in the overcrowded timetable to fit it in. The latter she has decided can be tackled by teaching French in one half hour slot and the other thirty minutes to be made up with incidental French practised during registration time, while children are lining up etc. She herself used this approach last year in Y5 and found it reasonably successful. She also suggests teaching some maths in French and she plans to suggest this cross curricular approach to other members of staff next year.

The key issue of staff subject knowledge and confidence she acknowledges is difficult. As I have already mentioned, she imagines that teaching French for some teachers in her team would be similar to teaching Music for her:

I think they (and I would be) quite worried if they don't speak the language. I imagine they feel as I do about teaching music because I'm not a very musical person and I don't feel that comfortable teaching it because of my own subject knowledge. So I imagine they feel the same.

Sam never explicitly refers to the importance of the quality of French lessons being delivered. She talks in terms of teachers' feelings and timetabling issues but she implies that teaching French to beginners is something that can be done mainly in English (for example looking for rhyming patterns in French words, or teaching about France and where French is spoken in the world along with the cultural aspects of French). Sam sees the inclusion of French as an opportunity to broaden children's minds and 'make them aware of the rest of the world'. She is keen for children to understand some of the traditions in different countries and she considers having fun as one of the most important aims. Because of this she believes that Mary originally might not have felt confident about teaching French because she was over-estimating the amount of French required to deliver the lessons. She refers to an occasion when she was introducing other members of staff to the idea of teaching French:

Once they saw the Framework and saw that it wasn't this huge mountain of a subject and it literally can be singing a few songs here and there and chanting rhymes, it's not

what they were initially worried about, it's not so bad and so they don't feel quite so scared by the whole idea I suppose.

Sam's priority is clearly to reassure those teachers she perceives as scared of teaching French, in order to get them teaching it. She is not currently prioritising the quality of the teaching and learning in the French lessons.

Amongst the teachers currently being expected to deliver French lesson, one in Y4 (Lucy) had training from Sam when she was in Y3 the previous year so Sam is confident that she will be fine. The other Y3 teacher, while without qualifications in French, is keen to give it a go and happy to try on his own, using the planning left by Sam from the previous year. There is only one teacher that Sam is particularly concerned about and that is Mary. Sam knows that she is not confident about teaching French because of her own lack of subject knowledge and so she has planned to support her by modelling a French lesson to her. Sam will introduce the new vocabulary at the beginning of the week so Mary can practise it during the rest of the week. Sam has not decided exactly how many times she will do this but envisages three or four occasions. This does not sound like a lot of support for someone who currently has hardly any subject knowledge, but this perhaps reflects Sam's opinion as to the aims of PMFLs and the resulting level of subject knowledge required of the teacher. When I ask Sam how this training will be organised and how she will be released from her own class to do it, she informs me that as there is no funding she is thinking: 'of fifteen minutes here or there to do that. And me borrowing a TA to cover my class or even doing it during assembly time.' Given the hectic nature of the school day and the fact that Sam is currently teaching in Y6 where the pressure for good SATs results is so high, it is perhaps not surprising that despite her intentions at the outset, Sam was not able to deliver even this amount of support to Mary.

Martin has already highlighted the importance of the coordinator in Heron Primary as the key factor in how much time is dedicated to a particular subject area. Sam sees her role as coordinator as enthusing the staff and winning them over to the idea of teaching French. She believes it is: 'more to do with persuading people and winning people round than actually getting written plans down and all that sort of thing.' At the beginning of our interview she expresses her belief that nearly all the staff are positive about the idea of French in the curriculum, but this particular comment hints at an awareness that there are people who need to be convinced by her. She appears to be happy to do this, although her approach to coordinating a subject is different to Martin's in that she does not seem to want whole staff meetings or training, preferring to start training with one or two year groups. She is currently targeting Y3 and Y4 and so other year groups are unaware of the initiative: 'It's kind of going

on without anyone really noticing it.' She is fearful of trying 'something extravagant' as this might fail and then all the teachers would be unwilling to try again. This comment sounds as though she has learnt from previous experience of other people bringing in new initiatives which Sam admits is very frequent in this school: 'because the headteacher always wants us to be on the ball and doing the latest thing.' The danger of Sam's 'softly softly' approach might be that the senior management team and specifically the headteacher do not then allocate either funding or time to training, creating barriers to effective introduction of French in this school. There is no training for subject coordinators concerning what their role actually entails. Sam says:

It was never clear to me at the beginning. I felt what do I do? Who decides? Do I have the power to do this? I didn't really know. And there wasn't one before me so there was no one to hand over to me so I just sort of made up a role for myself.

Her own insecurities about her role are clear here. At this time responsibility for PMFLs had just been handed on to a new coordinator (in his second year of teaching) as Sam has been asked to coordinate English. She is excited about this prospect and looking forward to coordinating a subject that represents: 'a step up for me, a bit of an opportunity really to go for it instead of doing French.' Again the perceived status of French is evident. Literacy is a high profile subject to coordinate and could lead to a position in the senior management team.

In Sam's initial interview one of her main concerns was the difficulty in keeping momentum going and she referred several times to the danger of this waning. She talked of staff being really keen in the first few weeks and then other things coming up, for example the Christmas production, and then French would be the first thing to go. This is another reference to the low status of French and also to the idea of too many competing priorities. During the follow up interviews I carried out at the end of the year with those teachers who were meant to have been teaching French, this had definitely happened and they all admitted that they had not taught as much French as they should have or would have liked to. Sam seems aware of this (although she does seem to think more French was being taught than was actually the case) but she certainly doesn't blame teachers for dropping French, as she explains: 'And I'm not judging them because that happened because we're all busy most of the time and there's a lot to fit in and something's got to give sometimes.' Sam talks of 'waves of initiatives' and she explains that when the next wave of initiatives comes, enthusiasm and momentum for the previous wave diminishes. The role of the incoming PMFL coordinator she believes is to try to maintain some enthusiasm amongst the staff as well as providing resources which will support teachers so that they do not have to spend a lot of time preparing their own. If enthusiasm is

lost and momentum fades then Sam predicts that the introduction of PMFLs will once again fail, as it has in the past:

If it doesn't work it will just go down the same as all the other times they've tried it. Oh, it doesn't work so let's try something else. It could just go round and round in circles and then again in a few years they'll say: let's do languages in the Primary school again.

The only way she sees to avoid this happening would be for more direction and leadership for PMFLs on a national level and a lot more funding. Given the gaps in teacher subject knowledge and the issue of staff turnover Sam believes that: 'you'd have to decide to just go for it and say everybody's going to learn this, we're all going to be doing this in the future, let's dedicate some money and some time to it and train everybody.' The biggest threat she feels is the lack of funding for training. She suggests that the only alternatives to this would be either to employ specialist language teachers (just as Martin suggested, but this also has a financial implication) or to remove the language element of the MFL curriculum to focus on the cultural side of language learning.

I turn next to Lucy, who Sam was confident had sufficient training the previous year to enable her to deliver the French lessons and who had two other confident teachers in her year group.

#### **4.3.6 Lucy**

*I sit in the staff room and wait for Lucy who is just finishing teaching the lesson before the lunch break. The staff room is fairly empty apart from a couple of teaching assistants who are discussing a burglary that has happened locally last night. The noise of children rushing into the hall for their lunch can be heard so I assume the lunch break has begun and brave the corridors, dodging round the hungry children, to go and see Lucy to make sure she is still happy for me to come and see her lesson after break. She is very welcoming and says she is more than happy for me to join them but reiterates that she is 'not very good at French.'*

*The lesson begins, as many do, with the teacher reading the learning objective and making sure the children know what the lesson will be about. In this case the objective is to learn the names of some colours in French. The class play some games matching coloured pieces of card with the correct word in French. Some children already know the colours as they learned them last year in their French lessons and others know because they attend a French club after school. The majority of the children in the class seem very confident with this vocabulary. Their accents however vary considerably. It appears that those that attend the French club have more authentic accents than those that do not. Lucy herself has an English style pronunciation,*

*particularly with /r/. Once they have revised all the vocabulary Lucy introduces a song to help them remember the words which she writes up on the whiteboard for the children to follow. As she is doing this she points at the word 'et' in French and highlights the fact that the <t> is not enunciated. As she does this she looks to me for confirmation that this is indeed the case, so I nod encouragingly. This seems to reassure Lucy and she continues with the song before introducing a game on the interactive whiteboard. It is a BBC Language Lab game where a dog is looking for a bone but it has to be the right colour and the children have to guess in French what it could be. The children pick this up very quickly even though the possible options are quite difficult to hear. As the lesson goes on Lucy uses more incidental French to praise the children's efforts (superb, fantastique). Apart from this, all the instructions and comments Lucy makes are in English. At the end of the lesson the coloured pieces of card with the French words written on them are stuck up round the room so they can be practised later in the week. The children clearly enjoy their lessons with Lucy and French lessons are no exception. They seem pleased with their achievements and file out of the room for their ukulele lesson.*

Once the children have gone Lucy shares her thoughts on the lesson. She thinks it 'went ok' but they have not done as many French lessons as she would have liked as they 'get shifted if something else comes along.' The lowly place of French in the hierarchy of the curriculum subjects seems unanimous. This is despite Lucy expressing her keenness on the idea of languages in primary schools and her view is that they are very important as the children will pick them up better if they start from an early age. For her the cultural aspect is as important as the linguistic element. She admits to feeling quite excited about the idea of teaching French even though she does not have the basic subject knowledge. Her parents have moved to France and she is prepared to do extra work to prepare herself. She taught her previous class for half an hour per week and Sam supported her with planning and modelling lessons. Pronunciation is one of the aspects of the language that Lucy is most worried about and so she tries to check this with Sam in advance of the lesson, or she phones her parents in France for advice. Having taught some French the previous year Lucy is considering supporting the current Y3 teachers alongside Sam. She feels she has learned a great deal from watching lessons being modelled to her rather than simply being given the planning. During the initial interview she also mentions the importance of the good support network amongst the staff. She feels this is strong in Heron Primary and she thinks this is essential.

I think the most important thing is the support network and how we work together to support each other and build each other up. I think if you're in a school where you don't support each other then it's not going to happen.

Lucy communicates that she feels well supported and is happy to ask for additional support if she feels she needs it. It seems that her year group team is a close one and she also seems to have a friendly relationship with Sam (they are similar in age and apparently meet up socially, outside school). Lucy feels lucky that the support is there in this school. Unlike some of the other teachers I spoke to, Lucy is pleased that there are a lot of initiatives to get involved with. One of the reasons she originally applied to the school for her job was the feeling that the school was involved in many new initiatives. She says:

I know for a fact that this school is very good at picking up new projects and getting people involved in new things so you don't get stuck in your ways, whereas other schools aren't like that. So we're really fortunate here that that is the kind of ethos. The culture we have here is we're all up for doing new things. But I don't think other schools would be quite as fortunate to be able to do that.

Lucy is one of the younger members of staff who has been at the school for several years and she is also the music coordinator. She herself has been involved in implementing new music initiatives and in supporting staff in their delivery, so she has an idea of what this involves.

Lucy began the year full of optimism and excitement about the prospect of teaching French but when I speak to her at the end of the year the situation has changed. She explains that she has not taught very much French partly due to timetabling issues, but mainly due to her lack of confidence. After the training she had the previous year she felt confident in her own subject knowledge, but as time went by and there was no additional input, this confidence waned to the extent that she no longer feels confident enough to teach French. The French lesson I observed was more of a revision of a lesson from the previous year and this might explain her apparent confidence earlier in the year. Once the children needed to move on to cover subject matter that Lucy had not previously seen modelled she felt out of her depth. So whilst the other two classes in her year group were making progress in their French, Lucy has returned 'to doing the register in French and the date and other small bits and pieces, just trying to build my confidence up gradually.' Although the teachers plan together as a year group, the other teachers then deliver the planned lessons, but Lucy tells me that her confidence is not high enough to actually teach them. She is not happy with this situation as she is adamant that she wants to teach it and is trying to find a solution. Her colleague (and soon to be PMFL coordinator) is very helpful and has offered to spend time with Lucy going over the vocabulary and the activities, but once again finding time to do this is problematic. One evening is taken up with a staff meeting and on two other evenings Lucy takes a school club, and as she is music coordinator she also has to factor in supporting other teachers with the music initiative. She is very pleased to tell me that she has negotiated an INSET day for the whole staff dedicated to

music. Again I wonder whether Sam's approach of not wanting whole staff training is a wise one.

It is not surprising that Sam thinks that Lucy is happy to continue teaching French in Y4 as she was so enthusiastic and confident after her experience in Y3. However this is not the case and Lucy feels that although she still believes in the importance of primary languages, she needs a lot more training, ideally in the form of modelling, to develop sufficient skills to continue to teach French. Currently there is more support and training on offer for P4C and music than there is for French. From Lucy's experience it appears that a lot of training is needed for a teacher with limited language skills to feel confident teaching it. Both Mary and Lucy have a similar lack of confidence in their own subject knowledge, but their reactions are very different. Whereas Mary decides to 'get on with it' and see what happens, Lucy has avoided it and has reverted to the areas in which she is confident (mainly vocabulary for numbers, months of the year, colours and greetings).

During the course of the interviews I explored the idea of whether teachers should be expected to teach subjects in which they were not confident themselves and whether this might affect their sense of professionalism. This was not a concept that the participants themselves raised but because the compliance of all the teachers surprised me, I wanted to discuss this with them.

#### **4.3.7 Emerging issue: Compliance**

All the participating teachers assume that if they are asked to teach something, whatever their own feelings, they have no choice but to try their best to do it. This is an attitude very much encouraged by the headteacher whose views are explored in more detail later. In response to being asked about professionalism, Mary's answer shows that her understanding of professionalism is related to coping and doing the best she can even if this involves working extra hours. She says: 'Teachers cope and if you're asked to do something you generally do your very best for it even if it means you work at home and do things, perhaps you'd rather be walking the dog you know!' When I explore these ideas further, Mary talks about needing to feel prepared when she walks into a class as there will be 28 children looking at her, waiting, and if she is not adequately prepared the children won't just sit there and wait for her. She goes on to reiterate her willingness to work extra hours at home to make sure she is prepared for her lessons. As we continue this conversation, Mary goes on to explain that she believes that if you are asked to do something as a teacher you just do it, as it is difficult to say no. She explains: 'I think teachers are fearful of repercussions and they don't like confrontation.' She

thinks that primary teachers like to keep the peace rather than cause any trouble. She continues:

I mean, you know, I am a bit outspoken at staff meetings and the headteacher just looks at me as if (tuts and sighs) oh no, not that one again. You know, I'm the stirrer and I'll say can you just explain that once more, have I got that right? ... and everybody else will say I'm glad somebody else said that but nobody will because they're worried about their jobs you know, they've got a mortgage to pay.

Mary talks of teachers' reluctance to speak out for fear of losing their jobs, whereas she feels more freedom because she is not the main wage earner in her household and so in her opinion she does not fear losing her income to the same extent as others. I ask her whether this could actually happen and she talks about teachers 'being made to feel uncomfortable' if they do not take on board everything that is asked of them. As a result of her experience, financial security, and proximity to retirement she adopts an approach of doing as much as she can but: 'if I can't do it, I don't and somebody will come along and say have you done it? And I'll say actually I haven't had time for it.' The repercussions for a teacher of not doing what is asked of them, according to Mary, include being 'made to feel uncomfortable'. It is unclear for a while what this actually means but it transpires that 'people might huff and puff about you.' She believes that, unlike her, a lot of people would not be able to shrug this off, although she goes on to say 'you get downtrodden by these people huffing and puffing at you.' It seems that although Mary claims she is immune to others' perceptions of her, they do affect her.

Sam, Lucy and Martin all have less to say about compliance and professionalism. As the other teacher whose subject knowledge and confidence is low, Lucy's approach seems to be to appear enthusiastic and willing to give French teaching a try (and this is a genuine desire) while actually avoiding teaching it. Consequently, Sam thinks that Lucy is more confident than she is and also that she is teaching more French than she actually is. The only comment Lucy makes when I ask her about whether teachers should be expected to teach a subject they may not be confident in is:

That is a conversation that has gone round this week between a few teachers that you know at this point, it's a very tiring term and everybody's feeling a bit overloaded, and the comment was made by a teacher that you know we should actually say no, actually I can't fit this in.

She goes on to add: 'But we don't.' When I ask her for more thoughts about this, she is unsure why teachers don't say 'no' more often and she thinks their approach is to say 'yes' and then when they find that it won't fit into the timetable they have to let subjects drop off unofficially 'and so it just kind of rolls on.' Martin agrees that Primary teachers do not stand up and say no to new ideas even if they don't agree with them. He explains that teachers are reticent about

asking for help, particularly in certain subjects such as English as he thinks teachers feel they should know everything about it already as it is their mother tongue. He feels that teachers are more likely to ask for support in Maths or Science and he believes that for French 'it may well get to the point where people say well I just don't know how to do this ... I haven't got the skills.' He relates this to the need for teachers to be aware of the quality of the teaching they are delivering. He believes it is preferable for a teacher without adequate French language skills to admit they cannot teach French than to teach lessons entirely in English and possibly give out some sheets with French vocabulary on them.

Although Sam is confident with French, in a conversation about compliance she says that teachers feel that they always have to do what they can, rather than saying they cannot teach something:

I don't think you have the choice, I mean I don't feel confident teaching music in Y6, I don't have a lot of musical knowledge and I don't feel confident about it and we used to have a music teacher who taught every class ... and I kind of muddle through and just do bits but when they get to Y6 it's quite complex.

This idea of 'muddling through' in music sounds very similar to Mary's approach to teaching French, and the 'doing bits' element echoes Lucy's strategy. I go on to ask her whether she thinks that teachers should question whether they are always the right people to be delivering a particular subject (in this case French) and she replies: 'I don't know, I don't know what I think about that. I think I'm a bit biased because I think yeah, that's fine, I can do that, whereas perhaps other people should say no.' Interestingly, despite her comments about teaching music, she has not tried to say 'no' to that.

I am led to wonder if this compliant attitude has something to do with the ethos of the school and the attitude of the headteacher, so I now add the context of the headteacher's role in more depth.

#### **4.3.8 Emerging issue: Leadership**

Throughout the observations and interviews, comments are made by the teachers about the headteacher who they perceive as being very keen for the school to be involved in new initiatives irrespective of teachers' wishes. In my interview with the head it is clear that she is an experienced headteacher with a clear vision of where the school should be going and a determination to achieve the highest of standards. When talking about the appointment of the most recent teacher, who also happens to be a French specialist, she explains that the French expertise was not a determining factor in this applicant being offered the job, but that:

'the criteria was actually about being a really good classroom teacher who'd got standards in the back of their head.' She is very clear about the emphasis being on standards and she focuses on this aspect above specific subject knowledge. She can do this as she believes that anybody can be taught to teach anything in the primary school, so knowledge in a specific subject is not a prerequisite. It transpires that she thinks that the majority of the teachers in the school are already confident about teaching French, while time spent researching in the school has suggested to me that this is not the case; Lucy and Mary are only two of several teachers in the school expressing concerns about their competence and confidence.

In the face of new initiatives, the headteacher is proud that there are no 'resistors' in her school and she explains that if someone feels they can't do something she expects them to find a solution to the problem or identify what training they might need to help the situation. Mary's and Lucy's accounts however indicate that they know what support they need but it is not available. The headteacher's idea is that teachers will support each other. She gives an example: 'Put me in the top maths group and I'll die so I will have to go and talk to someone about what it is that I'm teaching.' This is an approach that the teachers themselves identify as one that would be helpful to them but they find that they do not have the time available to do this. The spirit of collegiality is definitely there but the practicality of finding the time is not. The headteacher says she hopes to be in a position to pay for some in-house French training in the future but there is a limited budget and French will have to compete with writing and Mathematics (which are currently the priority subject areas in Heron). She seems fairly dismissive of any issues the teachers might have with teaching French when she says: 'I can't see where the problem is really to be honest with you. I go back to it I think it's easier to get in than music to be honest with you.' During the course of my study there were many analogies made between introducing the music and French initiatives.

This school leader is very experienced at bringing new initiatives into the school. She has introduced 'lots and lots and lots' and her expressed preferred approach is to:

bring things in slowly and get it embedded ... they'll have learnt in Y3 what went well last year and what didn't go so well and they'll change things accordingly and the same goes into Y4 and they'll make amendments and then start Y5.

I reflect that for this approach to be successful, it will require that French is actually taught in the classes that it should be, in order to build on the experiences of the previous year. In the case of French in Heron this is not necessarily the case at the time of my study.

The comments from the teachers suggest that the headteacher makes most of the decisions and then tells them what is going to happen. However the headteacher perceives the situation very differently. She explains that she uses a distributed style of leadership and therefore she does not feel that she is bringing French in to the school, rather she is allowing it to happen. She reflects on this: 'Have I got this initiative in or have I allowed the initiative to take place? I think Sam has brought this initiative in and I haven't blocked it because I want it to happen.' She is very keen for staff to take an active role and is pleased that her staff enjoy taking on new initiatives. Although she admits that a couple of years previously there were too many staff all wanting to bring in new things and she had to say no as nothing would get embedded if too many new initiatives were introduced at the same time. She feels that this is not currently an issue.

Having presented a case study of Heron Primary and described pertinent issues using multiple perspectives, I now move on to introduce the second of my case study schools before discussing the issues in more depth.

## **4.4 Case study 2: Bankside Junior School**

The presentation of the case study of Bankside Junior School follows the same structure as that of Heron Primary. I begin with some descriptive vignettes to give a feel for the school and its ethos. I then present the data using three teachers as focal points (Amy, Laura and Hannah) as well as a brief exploration of the headteacher's style of leadership. These participants all have different perspectives on the issues and different experiences that are relevant to the study. I include other observational data as well as interview data where they can highlight and add more detail to key areas.

### **4.4.1 Background**

*I turn off a very busy urban road full of rush hour traffic and turn into a quiet, small side street and into the car park of Bankside Junior school. It is a warm, sunny morning and although I have arrived well before the beginning of the school day, the staff car park is already full so I squeeze my car next to several others on the grass verge surrounding the marked parking spaces. I am early so I wait for a while in my car. I can see two separate schools on this site: the infant school and the junior school. Unlike many infant and junior schools in this area they have not merged and there is no immediate intention to do so. Once the children begin arriving for the school day I walk past the infant playground where a few scooters and trikes have been*

*put out, and the early arrivals are eyeing them up. Their parents are holding their hands and chatting to each other and as I pass I hear talk of book bags and reading levels.*

*The junior school is an average size and takes in children from a wide catchment area, resulting in an intake of children from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of children with special educational needs and disabilities is in line with the national average. I have been coming into this school sporadically for a couple of years to observe trainee teachers who are following the PGCE programme. I therefore knew the previous headteacher who left at the end of the last academic year, and I have previously met her deputy who has since taken over as acting headteacher.*

*The school is classed as 'good' in Ofsted terms and its particular strengths are the relationships it has built up with parents and its commitment to enhancing children's personal development and well-being. Ofsted also commented on the good standards that children reach by the time they leave the school; standards are generally just above average despite children coming into the school with standards just below average.*

*I walk down the path to the reception area and I don't need to press the buzzer as the doors are already open. Several other visitors are gathering in the entrance hall waiting to sign in and be given permission to enter the school. There are also some parents/carers waiting to talk to the reception staff who are cheerily dealing with each visitor in turn. When it is my turn I introduce myself and I am given a badge to show I have been admitted into the school. I am just about to ask if the headteacher is available so I can remind him that I am in his school this week, when he comes out of his office and spots me. He greets me and invites me into his office for a chat and to see what I'm focussing on today. He is always very interested in the progress of the trainee teachers and how his staff are mentoring them, and today is no different. He remembers our conversation several months previously when he agreed that Bankside could be one of my case study schools and seems very pleased to hear I am visiting in a different role and hopes I find it interesting and helpful.*

*I set off upstairs to find Hannah (the PMFL coordinator). She is busy in her classroom getting the last few resources together for her first lesson. When she sees me she stops what she is doing and comes over to say hello. She is very friendly and has been extremely helpful in organising the timetable for the week ahead. She has arranged for me to observe lessons in all the different year groups. I thank her for doing this but she assures me that it hasn't been difficult as the teachers were more than happy for me to join their lessons. This may be*

*politeness on their behalf, or a response to my offer to help during the orientation week, which I soon find is taken up.*

Just as in case study 1, I spent two weeks in the school. The first week helped me get to know the school and its teachers by observing a range of lessons in different subject areas across key stage 2. The second week was more focussed on the teaching of French. During this time I observed nine French lessons in Y3 and 4. I was made to feel very welcome by all the staff I came across. The teachers I spent time with all invited me to pop in and see them whenever I wanted, without needing to make arrangements in advance. (I appreciated this gesture but did not actually do this as I felt it would not be fair.) As with Heron Primary, the teachers ranged in expertise and experience of French and this gave me the opportunity to pick up on any issues that may not have arisen in the initial interviews, to follow up any issues the staff had, and to get to know the teachers better in the hope that they would trust me in subsequent conversations about the introduction of French.

I have chosen the first few vignettes to give a flavour of the ethos of this particular school. According to several members of staff and the headteacher, many of the children attending the school find it difficult to settle and concentrate. This first vignette shows examples of how the school wide commitment to engaging the children's interest is put into practice: it shows how children's enjoyment and ownership of their learning are embedded in the teaching and learning ethos here.

#### **4.4.2 Individual lessons**

*My week begins by spending the morning in the Y3 class of a newly qualified teacher (Sarah) who was a PGCE Primary French specialist last year: indeed I was her tutor and observed her teaching as a trainee on several occasions. I am pleased to see her and we have a quick chat and a chance to catch up on how tiring she is finding full time teaching and the strangeness of seeing me in her classroom again. In the meantime the children file into the room. Once they have hung up their coats and bags they sit quietly in their places at their tables, get their reading books out and begin independent reading. A few children come over to ask me who I am and what I am doing in their class but the majority seem so used to having other adults in the classroom that they ignore my presence and get on with their usual routines.*

*Sarah takes the register and rewards the class for coming in so sensibly. She asks them how they would like their reward points to be recorded that day and they vote for having a smiley face and then adding a freckle for each point they earn. As it is Monday morning Sarah begins*

*the lesson sharing some news from the weekend. Some of the boys have been to the city's football stadium to be presented with an award and they are clearly very proud of this accomplishment. Sarah encourages them and sounds very impressed. A couple of the girls tell us about a pantomime they have been rehearsing and Sarah sounds equally impressed by this news, as she also is about the boy who is going to go to New York and the girl who is getting a new pet. Sarah has a confident, enthusiastic and energetic teaching style and the children are keen to participate.*

*The lesson moves on with Literacy and thinking about which Roald Dahl character the children would most like to be. A class discussion ensues and once again Sarah praises the children for their efforts and the respectful way they are taking turns and listening to each other. Another class point is awarded. Sarah asks the children to move to their Literacy tables (as they sit in same attainment groups for this subject) but before they move, she reminds them of her expectations for this to be done sensibly and quietly and asks how many points they think this would be worth if they do it correctly. The children suggest two points and Sarah agrees. They manage the transition and get their points as promised. The lesson continues with a very engaging activity involving the children acting as reporters interviewing Roald Dahl. All the children seem motivated and full of ideas, excitedly filling in the booklets Sarah has given them. When this has been completed Sarah collates the questions they have devised and shares them out between the different groups. Now they have to find out the answers using a mixture of articles, books and websites. The children are engaged and generally on task and there is a loud buzz of activity in the room. Sarah has given out the questions carefully so that each child is able to read them and access the resources needed to find the answers. I take a group just outside the classroom to work on the computers. After some issues with the computers not recognising the children's passwords we manage to work round this and complete as much of the activity as the time left allows. Interestingly the children seem used to having trouble with the computers, and rather than getting frustrated, they just wait for further instructions. Sarah calls the children back into the classroom and they gather on the carpet area to share what they have found out so far. She seems very pleased with their hard work and congratulates them on this before tidying up ready for the second lesson of the day.*

Over the course of my orientation week several class teachers refer to the challenging behaviours of some children that are now coming in to the school. According to these teachers, behaviour is becoming more of an issue and much more difficult to manage. In their opinion the number of severe behavioural issues is increasing (several gave me the example of a girl in Y3 who needs to be supervised at all times and who has been known to be violent

towards both teachers and children). The feeling is that behaviour in general is deteriorating. In several of the lessons I observe it is clear that the teachers are following a very clear behaviour policy and adhering to the rewards and sanctions outlined in this. There is consistency across the school in this regard. In every lesson I observe I see class points being awarded for appropriate behaviour. This very structured approach to rewards is clearly one that the children are used to. I also observe an equally consistent and structured approach to sanctions and the combination of these two elements seems to have a positive impact on the children's behaviour. A couple of days into the week I join a PE lesson run by a qualified teacher (but not the class teacher) who does not follow these systems to the same degree. During this lesson the children behave poorly, ignoring the teacher and being disrespectful, and towards the end, the teacher asks me to take a group of the children who have been misbehaving the most over to another part of the playground. From these observations and the conversations with the teachers, I surmise that, in general, the children at Bankside Junior School need very clear boundaries and consistent implementation to help them control their behaviour.

*Sarah begins the second lesson of the morning, which is PSHE. She is following the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme and is currently teaching a sequence of lessons on assertiveness. As soon as the lesson begins a TA enters and nods at three boys who instantly rise and follow her out of the room. When I ask about this it transpires that they are required to go and do some extra writing, as this is currently one of the school's priority areas. Despite Sarah beginning this lesson in a positive manner, several of the boys are making silly noises and inappropriate comments and she opts to give out warnings that result in three boys having their playtime taken away from them. After a particularly silly comment about another member of the class, one boy is asked to leave the class. After three or four minutes he is brought back into the room by another teacher. He looks a little sheepish but is still smiling as he apologises for his behaviour and promises to try harder.*

*The rest of the children are very engaged in discussing various scenarios and considering how they might react assertively in each one. As in the previous lesson Sarah uses lots of interactive teaching strategies to involve the children as much as possible and the activities she has planned are short and have a clear focus. This seems to help the children stay on task and the majority work hard in this lesson. The lesson comes to an end and all the children (except the three boys) leave and go out to play in the sunshine. Playtime is over very quickly (fifteen minutes) and the class all come back in. Many of the children look hot and sweaty and they rush to get a drink from their water bottles. The final lesson of the morning is Mathematics and*

*this passes without major incident although many children come in and out as they have harp/trombone/piano lessons. By the end of the lesson the class have earned nine class points which is a class record and Sarah announces that it will be French after lunch. This news is greeted with a loud cheer.*

The teachers at Bankside Junior School seem very aware that they have to work hard to keep the children focussed on their learning and they use a variety of strategies to do this. In addition to following the behaviour policy, I also note that the teachers plan lessons that are engaging in terms of their content and structure. The activities are carefully chosen to motivate the children and be enjoyable. This is important throughout the school and conversations with several teachers indicate that considerable time is spent on this in year group planning meetings. The teachers try to ensure that the children have activities in which they can be actively engaged and which will spark their interest, as well as being short in duration to encourage maximum concentration and participation. However I also observe occasional lessons where this approach is not adopted and the following vignette is an example of this. First thing on Wednesday morning I arrive at Denise's Y5 class. The first part of this lesson is focussed on spelling and is always taken by Fiona (a member of the senior management team).

*Fiona enters the room where the Y5 class are waiting at their tables. She does not say good morning or introduce the lesson in any way; instead she quickly distributes spelling test papers. She reminds all the children to give in their homework. If they have not brought it she reiterates the consequences: 'You can give it in now, if you have lost the sheet, get another copy. Bring it in tomorrow completed, or stay in at lunchtime tomorrow to do it!' Fiona quickly begins calling out different words for the children to try to spell. There are several sets of words, depending on which attainment group the children are in. The children are clearly used to this and have no difficulty following their own set, and none of them attempt to write down another group's words. Once this part of the lesson is over, Fiona moves briskly on to introducing the word ending '...ily.' This confuses many of the children and Fiona realises this, saying: 'I am really concerned that you don't seem to be getting this at all.' So she repeats her input and explanation and moves on to revise the unstressed vowel sounds in 'interest, definitely and separate' and the children copy these words down onto their white boards. While the class wait for their class teacher to return, Fiona instructs them to get out their class book ('Holes' by Louis Sachar) and she then initiates a discussion of the story so far. This heralds the end of the lesson and some of the class line up (with visible relief) at the door to go to their literacy sets for the next lesson of the morning.*

There is little evidence in this lesson of engaging or child-centred activities and Fiona uses little praise or encouragement and certainly no rewards. Despite this, the children are generally on task and do not exhibit any disruptive behaviour, due in part perhaps to her teaching style which is more transmissive (with less discussion/consultation with the children) as well as her more stern approach. I suspect that her status as a member of the senior management team also has an impact on the children's attitude. At the end, as she rushes out of the room, Fiona tells me that she hates the lesson she has just taught. The only part she thinks was 'any good' was the very end of the lesson where she led a discussion on 'Holes' while she was waiting for the class teacher to return. I sense that she feels a little embarrassed about her lesson, and although the class teacher had agreed that I could spend the morning with her, I wonder in retrospect whether she had informed Fiona in advance (I suspect that she hadn't). Although this was not representative of the style of teaching I generally observed during my time in this school, it appeared that this was usual for this weekly spelling lesson, and there were other examples of this transmissive style of teaching in some of the French lessons.

*The class teacher (Denise) re-enters the room and begins the literacy lesson by sharing the learning objective and success criteria. Normal order is restored as Denise awards house points for correct answers and hard-working attitudes. After this introduction to the lesson, the children spend some time discussing ideas with each other and sharing their own experiences of camping and staying away from home. They seem keen to participate and I hear lots of interesting and enthusiastic discussions of their experiences related to the character in the book. They jot down some ideas on a work sheet for ten minutes and then settle down to listen to Denise reading the next chapter of the book. Calm enjoyment pervades the room as lunch time approaches.*

This is more representative of the style that teachers in this school claim to be most effective and the one which they try to adopt whenever possible. Denise has been teaching for many years but only a few in this particular school. As the children file out to lunch we talk about the focus of my research and she tells me about her experience in her previous school where she was expected to teach Spanish. She does not speak any Spanish and was horrified at the idea. Despite being promised support and training, this did not materialise and so she had to carry on alone which she 'hated' and says she was 'useless' at. She worries that there may be people in Bankside who might be in a similar position with French (although she herself is more confident with French as she can speak it fairly confidently). Currently teachers in Year 5 are not expected to teach French and she is unsure of plans for the following year as nothing has been shared with her yet.

The teachers I spoke with all seemed willing to dedicate additional time to the children when needed. I saw and heard many examples of teachers offering to spend their lunch breaks with children to help them with an aspect of their learning. I also saw teachers using their breaks to plan lessons, sometimes because they had not previously found time, but also on occasions when the children progressed either more or less than expected which necessitated tweaking the original plan for the lesson. This might explain why I very rarely saw class teachers in the staff room as they tended to stay and work in their own classrooms or got together in year teams during breaks. I wondered whether this might lead to cliques forming amongst the staff and so I was conscious of exploring this in more depth during the interviews and impromptu conversations I had with the staff. I return to the issue of collegiality later in this case study.

I now introduce the three main characters who took part more extensively in my fieldwork at Bankside Junior School and highlight the key issues through their experiences/words. Two of these are class teachers (Amy and Laura) and the other is Hannah (the PMFL coordinator).

#### **4.4.3 Amy**

Amy is an experienced class teacher currently teaching Y4. She is the least confident of all the participants in my research in terms of her own subject knowledge. Her own language learning experience at school was:

not a good experience. It wasn't something that was either well taught or well received, and something that I lacked confidence with and hardly ever spoke and so my initial reaction when we were told about teaching French here was 'that's awful.'

The headteacher and the PMFL coordinator were aware that Amy felt very unsure about teaching French from the outset, and as a result of being involved in a small project that began two years previously, they had given Amy the opportunity to observe an AST from a secondary school teaching her Y3 class French throughout the year. All the Y3 teachers had received similar training for the first year. The intention was that the AST would initially teach all of the lessons whilst the class teachers observed so they could practise some of the vocabulary modelled by the AST during the rest of the week before the AST came back to deliver the next week's lesson. As time went on the headteacher envisaged that the class teachers would progress to team teaching with the AST and would eventually teach entire lessons themselves. However after a year of this modelling by the AST, Amy still did not feel confident enough to lead her own French lessons and so she benefitted from another year of this same support. By the time she became involved in my research she had therefore already received two years of French training and so Hannah (the PMFL coordinator) believed that she was now confident enough to lead her own French lessons. However once I had interviewed Amy I realised her

confidence was still very low so I did not plan to observe her teaching French, despite her initial offer to observe her at any time.

Amy was always very helpful and accommodating during my research and she also invited a trainee teacher to observe her as well. After the initial interview, and once we had got to know each other a little better, I checked whether she was happy to be observed and she admitted that she was not. In light of this I redirected the trainee (who was studying on the PGCE course) to Sarah who was confident and happy to model a French lesson. It is interesting that Amy agreed to be observed by both myself and the trainee teacher, despite feeling uncomfortable about it. Due to Amy's ongoing lack of confidence I did not observe her solo teaching French, although I did accept an invitation to observe a lesson taught jointly by her and the AST as I felt it was genuine. The first part of this lesson was due to be taught by Amy and the AST had planned to take over for the second half.

*The lesson begins with Amy delivering a power point presentation which introduces three French cities (Paris, Lyon and Marseille). A large map of France appears with dots representing the cities so the children can see that they are in different parts of the country. Apparently this presentation has been put together by the AST and the other Y4 teacher and Amy has not had a chance to look through it in advance so she has to work out what the slides are showing as she goes along. Every now and again she calls on the AST to add some more information about the cities, and the AST is very happy to join in, giving a lot of detail, sometimes talking for several minutes in French. It does not look as though the children fully understand all this information and there are lots of confused faces around the room. This does not seem to discourage the AST who takes every opportunity to speak in French to the class unlike Amy who delivers the entire lesson in English, although her French pronunciation of the city names seems authentic. Having discussed where the different cities are located, the next slide contains a link to the cities themselves so the children can see what they actually look like. However the link does not work so Amy moves on to the next part of the lesson which involves the children having a blank map of France and labelling it to show Paris, Lyon and Marseille. For those children that quickly copy this information down from the board, they go on to fill in some other cities using maps in their library books to help them. The lesson ends, the maps are put into the children's trays and it's time for afternoon play.*

This vignette highlights several important issues, the first of which being that no French is actually taught by Amy; it feels more like a geography lesson. Unlike many of the other teachers at Bankside, Amy does not identify the children's enjoyment as one of the reasons

she supports the PMFL initiative. Her view is more focussed on being able to communicate with people from other cultures. She feels that the cultural element of language learning is absolutely essential, particularly in a school such as Bankside where there is little cultural diversity amongst the children. In this way she claims that French can enhance the curriculum and broaden the children's horizons.

In her initial interview Amy was concerned about children who were lower attaining in English as she feared that adding another language would confuse them. However she changes her mind about this and goes on to comment on the positive impact language learning is having on some children who do not achieve highly in English: 'So in some ways it was good for them to actually be achieving in language when they actually didn't do that or didn't feel that so much in English.' She attributes this surprising success to the fact that there is no requirement to write in French as it is taught orally and this aspect appeals to some of the children with SEN in her class. It might also be related to the point that several teachers here make about French lessons being fun: the types of activities recommended to teach French also appeal to children who struggle to concentrate on one activity for a long period of time or who respond well to information in a variety of formats (e.g. through Information Communication Technology (ICT), songs and games). There are a few children who were not benefitting from French however and these have quite severe educational and behavioural needs; according to Amy, they find the change of routine in the lesson structure and teaching personnel confusing and sometimes overwhelming.

Amy's total reliance on English to deliver her French lessons reflects her reluctance to speak French in front of her class due to her ongoing lack of confidence. When I ask Amy at a later date about her level of confidence teaching French, she explains that in retrospect she feels that she has had almost had too much support from the AST and that in the end this is making her feel more helpless. She is worried because she compares her French teaching with that of the AST who is a native French speaker and very experienced in language teaching. She also feels self-conscious about making mistakes in French in front of the AST (despite the AST being very supportive) and this makes her feel more nervous. When I speak to Amy at the end of my research she is much more comfortable teaching French independently. She says: 'I think there comes a time when you just have to give it a go yourself, and actually, that was the time when I felt most confident because you've proved to yourself that you can do it.' During the French lesson jointly delivered by Amy and the AST there are several occasions where the AST adds detailed information about the cities that are on the map, using vocabulary and concepts that the children clearly do not understand. This illustrates one of the possible concerns with the

model of using a secondary school French specialist with limited primary school experience. On other occasions I observed objectives for lessons and resources that were pitched at an inappropriate level for the age of the children in the lessons, and the class teachers also found this to be true. Amy gives an example in her class where:

some children had glazed looks on their faces, especially the ones that were lower in literacy because they don't understand it in English ... things like compound sentences ... I think that [the AST's] expectations were quite high in terms of what they would know in literacy.

Despite these issues, Amy remains very grateful for the support of the AST, even though in hindsight she feels that she observed for too long. She highlights the benefits of being able to observe the AST regularly and over a long period of time as opposed to observing once or twice. She also says that she continues to find many of the resources that the AST has prepared very useful for both the Y4 classes. However when she tries to give some specific examples, Amy cannot remember either what they are used for or what the French vocabulary actually means. This is an example of the need for ongoing French support within the school (as the AST is peripatetic and only there for specific lessons each week). Amy talks about often needing to talk to the 'French experts' in the school to check vocabulary and pronunciation. Bankside has two French specialist teachers and both are mentioned as being very willing to help out with French whenever another member of staff needs some support.

Aside from her confidence in subject knowledge, one of Amy's key concerns regarding the introduction of French is timetabling. Amy's concerns were based on the practicalities of timetabling, although on reflection she admits:

I think that was really masking my real nervousness about taking it on ... With something that I felt I knew so little about, I just didn't know what it would be like. Whether we would have to do lots of written work or pronunciation and it was all quite daunting.

During the course of the research, Amy's confidence increased substantially. By the end of the research period, Amy had begun to teach her own French lessons and felt it was going quite well:

It was better than I thought. And my problem was always remembering how to say things. My accent was ok, it was never that, that wasn't a problem, yeah, I feel a lot more confident now about how to say things and ... I've found that my level of understanding has grown. So that's really good.

However, despite this increase in confidence, she still considered timetabling to be 'the biggest challenge' to implementing the PMFL initiative at Bankside particularly as it is not only French that has to be accommodated in an already crowded curriculum. Amy goes on to talk about

SEAL and extra PE as well and explains how they are tackling this by trying to teach in a cross curricular way, for example the upper school are teaching SEAL through literacy. She says the number of different subjects that have to be fitted in to the school day 'is just crazy!' and makes her think 'can't do it, can't do it.' At one point in the final interview she concludes that if any more initiatives are introduced then that will definitely prevent the successful embedding of PMFLs at Bankside and she adds: 'But I can't think of much more that they could add in; rock climbing or something!' Despite the pressure on the timetable Amy explains that French does not get pushed off in favour of other subjects as she feels it has equal status. This situation might have come about as French lessons have had to be timetabled and kept to enable the visiting AST to deliver them. Therefore teachers are used to timetabling French lessons in and keeping them.

#### **4.4.4 Laura**

Laura is a recently qualified teacher in her second year of teaching (both years spent in Bankside). She has a GCSE in French and she can still remember 'bits of it'. From the outset Laura was not daunted by the idea of teaching French. Although she remembers struggling with the grammar when she studied for her GCSE, she is confident that the level of French she will need to teach in primary school will be perfectly manageable (although she does admit that she knows very little about the initiative other than what the AST has told her).

Laura's level of subject knowledge does not seem to concern her and she is looking forward to the challenge of teaching French. When my research began the AST was team teaching with her which Laura seemed to be enjoying, but she was equally comfortable with the idea of teaching it on her own. When I ask Laura about the support and training provided by the AST she talks of it as being a key factor in helping people feel less worried. She thinks that the teachers would have been more negative in their reaction to being asked to teach French if they had thought they had to do it alone from the beginning. She claims that the AST support has really helped in this regard particularly as she is 'so nice and easy to get on with and friendly. I think that's really helped.' However, just like Amy, she talks about finding it easier to teach when the AST is not in the room:

In a way it was really good having the AST at the beginning to see how she did it but then in a way it's nice to just have it on your own because you're a lot more confident when there's not somebody listening ... it's not as though it's the children because they don't know, but with other adults, yeah, it can be a bit embarrassing.

Laura explains how, to avoid being overheard talking in French, she sometimes finds a task for the AST to do outside the classroom. This is noteworthy as Laura always claimed she felt

confident that her level of French was sufficient to teach it in primary school and that she felt the linguistic demands on her would be minimal at this level. However her actions imply less confidence in this regard.

It transpires from further conversations and observations that Laura is very aware that gaps in her own subject knowledge are evident in her French lessons, but she is happy for the children to help her on these occasions, as she has a few in her class that go to French club and who therefore have better subject knowledge than she does. She is not concerned that the children will see that she is not an expert, unlike her embarrassment about speaking French in front of the AST. At times Laura admits to missing out elements of French lessons she does not understand. Laura's alternative is to consult her colleagues who seem very willing to help and she mentions this support on several occasions (both support from those with French expertise, but also from Amy):

I think if I was on my own as the only Y4 teacher then possibly I might find it more daunting but because I've got Amy, we can do things together and share resources and things so it's not as daunting cos we're together.

As Amy's subject knowledge is less strong than Laura's, it may be the moral support and help with the preparation of resources to which Laura is referring here. For subject specific support she goes to those members of staff with more French expertise.

Just like Amy, Laura is finding the number of initiatives somewhat overwhelming; she adds the drive to share success criteria and the use of working walls to Amy's list of new initiatives. She agrees with Amy that the French lessons are not usually dropped from the timetable and that they have the same status as other foundation subjects, although she does admit that the amount of time spent on the lessons may be reduced (which is also the case with other foundation subjects). She currently timetables French on a Tuesday afternoon alongside ICT which she acknowledges is 'a bit of a squeeze'. So, as timetabled on a Tuesday afternoon I arrive to watch Laura's French lesson.

*As I enter the classroom I immediately see a picture of a painting on the IWB and the children have already started guessing what the picture might be about. They correctly identify that it is something to do with fighting and war and this is the lead in to the lesson on the French revolution. Laura then goes through a sequence of pictures alongside which there is a lot of text in French which Laura reads out. Her accent is reasonably authentic and she encourages the children to repeat some of the words after her. They do this and I am impressed by their accents and reflect on the benefits of being taught by a native speaker (the AST) in this regard.*

*The children are keen to join in and enthusiastic in their efforts to copy the teacher. However when Laura starts translating the vocabulary they soon lose interest and begin looking at each other, some of them pulling silly faces. There is some complex vocabulary and ideas in this power point presentation and even Laura is struggling to make sense of it. It is clear that Laura hasn't seen this presentation before and that the AST has prepared it instead. Laura asks me to help translate and explain some of the trickier words and we work together to make the content more accessible to these Y4 children.*

*With visible relief (for Laura and the children) the power point comes to an end and the lesson moves on to a revision of body parts. Laura is much more confident with this although again she has clearly not used this resource before. She seems unsure as to what will happen when she clicks on the picture of a body part, but hopes the correct word in French will be said by the character on the screen. This is indeed what happens and the children join in trying to guess what the word might be in advance. All the children play this game in pairs for a while, working hard to remember the correct vocabulary. Once again I am impressed by their French accents. When they have all had a chance to play, Laura continues with the power point presentation which contains a link to another game where the name of the body part has to be matched to the correct part of the body of the characters. Again this interests the class who all want to have a go at dragging the words across the IWB screen.*

*To end the lesson they all learn a well-known French song. In groups the children practise the words for five minutes and they then have the choice as to whether they perform their version to the rest of the class or not. They all want to do this and one group even manages it without referring to the words which are printed out on sheets for them. This brings the lesson to an end and the class file out to go to sing folk songs to the volunteer parent helpers who are being given a cream tea to thank them for their help to the school over the past year.*

Just as in Amy's lesson described earlier, Laura's lesson relies heavily on a PowerPoint presentation that has been written by someone else and, like Amy, Laura is uncomfortable with its content due to her own lack of subject knowledge but also to the inappropriate pitch of the content. It is perhaps surprising that neither teacher has looked through their resources prior to the lesson but they both explain that they have not had sufficient time. Perhaps they are relying on the AST being in the room to help out where necessary. This could be interpreted as a willingness to appear as a learner in front of the children (indeed both Laura and Amy say in their interviews that they are happy for the children to see them in this learner role). Laura explains how she sometimes has to look vocabulary up in the French dictionary in front of the children and that the children themselves have to correct her French, but she does

not consider this to be a problem. It may also be the case that Laura and Amy feel such a degree of helplessness that they have decided that looking through the resources in advance would not be of much assistance to them. These observations raise questions over whether having appropriate resources will be effective in supporting a teacher whose subject knowledge is limited. Laura herself comments that, in her opinion, a good scheme of work and access to appropriate expertise within the school will be sufficient support for her to teach French effectively. However she also says that both she and Amy are using a particular scheme, but 'within each lesson plan there's always a few things that we're maybe not sure of that we maybe leave out.' As I have already mentioned, when time allows, both Amy and Laura find colleagues who have greater French subject knowledge to check the content of the lesson with them, but as can be seen from my fieldwork, this is not always possible.

In Laura's initial interview she states that one of the main benefits of teaching modern foreign languages in primary schools is the fun that the children have learning them. When I ask her what she thinks about the introduction of PMFLs she replies: 'I think it's great. I think we should definitely be starting it in primary schools. My class love it. They just really enjoy every single part of the lesson ... they love the games.' During my fieldwork I witnessed many children clearly enjoying their French lessons (with the notable exceptions of the long and detailed PowerPoint presentations). When it is announced that French is on the timetable for that day, the news is greeted with enthusiasm and the children are generally very keen to join in with the activities in the lessons. In my final interview with Laura her view that the children have fun learning French remains and she talks both about her own and the children's enjoyment learning French. The enjoyment of the children in French lessons seems to be a result of the teaching strategies used. The majority of French lessons involve lots of ICT, songs, games and short, kinaesthetic activities which are more engaging than some of the other lessons the children are taught.

Although initially Laura does not mention the cultural aspect as one of the key benefits of PMFLs, she gives a few examples which imply that she does also value this aspect of language learning. She mentions a particular occasion when the AST encouraged the children to talk about their experiences abroad and she also mentioned a 'question and answer' session that a visiting language assistant had taught with her class. In the final interview she also talks specifically about the children learning about other cultures as a highlight:

They just really love it and they just like learning about other cultures as well I think and maybe we don't tend to do that very often. Even in geography we never seem to, because in French we've covered European capital cities and things like that, stuff that maybe we wouldn't cover otherwise, so yeah I think it's great.

So it seems as though in Bankside in Y4 the main aim of the French lessons is to let the children have fun through learning the language using a variety of approaches and also to ensure the children learn about other cultures. Although as can be seen from the vignettes, the teachers' lack of subject knowledge sometimes prevents this being enacted, the aims entirely concur with Hannah's (the PMFL coordinator) opinion on the value of teaching PMFLs. The main benefit of teaching PMFLs for her is the cultural development: 'I think it's important from the word go with children to teach them that there are other cultures and there are other languages that are just as valuable as ours.' She also wants the children to develop a good enough level of language competence so they can try out their language skills when they go abroad with their parents or meet someone who speaks a different language. As the coordinator of PMFLs Hannah has an impact on how the school develops its French provision and so I now focus the case study on Hannah and present her views in more detail.

#### **4.4.5 Hannah**

Hannah has been teaching for several years and has been the PMFL coordinator for a year already as Bankside took up the PMFL initiative sooner than many others. The previous headteacher had expertise in French and introduced the idea of PMFLs early as she wanted to implement it slowly, giving teachers time to adjust before the initiative became statutory. Initially she organised a staff meeting in which she outlined the government's plans for the future of PMFLs and asked the staff to share their feelings. According to Hannah, some of the staff were enthusiastic, herself included. Hannah's enthusiasm was noted and later on that year the headteacher asked her to take on the role of PMFL coordinator. Hannah reflects: 'That's how it started out if you like. Not really knowing much about what I was doing or what was involved, but just having an interest in the subject really.'

It transpires that Hannah does not have particular expertise in French (apart from a GCSE) but she loves travelling and is interested in languages. She has recently been to Mexico and when she came back she attended evening classes to learn Spanish. Hannah would have preferred Spanish to have been the language chosen at Bankside rather than French but this decision was made by the previous headteacher and Hannah 'understands and respects the decision'.

Before leaving Bankside Junior school the headteacher arranged the support from the AST with the LA and developed the approach the school would take: to introduce French in Y3 with the AST supporting those teachers for an hour per week, and then move up to Y4 and so on. A key component of this particular model is that the class teachers must stay in the classroom to

observe the AST and take notes so as to develop their own subject knowledge, enabling them to teach French independently in time. In some schools with a similar model, this is not the case and the class teachers leave the classroom as the French lessons form part of their Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time (the legal entitlement for teachers to set aside ten per cent of their timetabled teaching hours). Hannah took over the implementation of the plan to introduce PMFLs enthusiastically and with a clear idea of how to go about it but with little confidence in her own French subject knowledge. She spent the next year observing the AST teaching French once a week in her class.

*I arrive at Bankside fifteen minutes before Hannah's Y3 French lesson is due to begin. It is lunchtime and there are a few free spaces in the car park so I park and walk across past the infant school playground and up to reception. The reception staff know me now and they wave at me and buzz me through the outside door. I sign in, help myself to a visitor's badge and go upstairs to find Hannah. She welcomes me enthusiastically with a broad smile and we have a quick chat about her day so far and what she is planning for her French lesson. She reminds me (laughing) that she does not really speak French and the children come in from their lunch break and sit at their tables with a book. When she is ready to begin the lesson Hannah introduces me to the children and explains that I am interested in French so they greet me with a 'Bonjour'. On the other side of the room I notice another adult who I later realise is the visiting French language assistant. It transpires that Hannah was unsure whether she was going to be there or not but she is clearly known by the children as she is not introduced and the children take no notice of her.*

*Hannah does the register in French and the children are all confident answering. Hannah then brings out a teddy bear and I hear the children whispering excitedly: 'It's Albert' (said with a French accent). Hannah revises how 'Albert' is spelt, using the French letter names accompanied by actions for each letter which the children copy. Some are invited to the front of the class to have a go by themselves and I see that the majority of the class are keen to do this. Hannah then revises their last French lesson where they learnt 'Tu t'appelles comment?' and Albert is passed round the class for the children to practise asking another member of the class their name whilst they are holding him. They obviously enjoy having Albert in the lesson and they eagerly await their turn to hold him. In the next part of the lesson Hannah introduces the new French question and answer combination of: *ça va?* (how are you?) *ça va mal/ça va bien/comme ci comme ça* (I'm well/not well/alright). Firstly Hannah shows some cartoon characters on the IWB who are acting out small scenarios where it is clear from their faces and what is happening whether they are well or not. Some of the clips are funny and the class enjoy*

*watching them and guessing what the answer will be. Then the children practise the question and possible answers in pairs, putting a lot of expression and dramatic flair into it. Hannah then draws the lesson to an end with some of the children demonstrating what they have learnt.*

The children enjoy this lesson and Hannah seems confident with the French content, modelling the phrases accurately and with a reasonably authentic French accent. However she does not use any other incidental French apart from the phrases that are specifically being taught and practised. For example she does not give classroom instructions or praise in French, a strategy I have seen used by those more confident with their level of French and which the AST does consistently. This surprises me given that Hannah has observed the AST for the whole of the previous year and I had expected her to be confident using common classroom phrases. It could be that my presence (and/or that of the language assistant) affected Hannah's confidence to do this in this particular lesson as during our initial interview she talks about how she uses French in other curriculum subjects by incorporating classroom phrases such as 'croisez les bras/écoutez and regardez moi' (fold your arms/listen/look at me). Although she does add: 'I don't know if that's correct', again showing her insecurity with her French subject knowledge. It is unusual to give someone with little subject knowledge the role of coordinating it, but Hannah is confident that her level of subject knowledge is adequate to teach the class and she is enjoying teaching French. Unlike Amy, she found observing the AST to be an entirely supportive experience which made her see 'how easy teaching French could be'. She says: 'having seen the AST do it none of it seems scary or unfamiliar.' She also appreciates the ownership that teaching it independently is giving her however, as she is now able to incorporate her own ideas into her teaching.

I ask Hannah about her perception of her role as coordinator in the context of her talking about her lack of French expertise, and it becomes clear that she perceives her role to be supporting colleagues and making sure they feel confident about teaching French. She tries to communicate with all those teachers who are either currently teaching French, or going to teach it the following year, to find out how they feel about it on a personal level. If a teacher is not confident and is feeling nervous about the idea of teaching French, Hannah reassures them that they will get the support they need from the AST as well as from other colleagues with appropriate expertise. She is able to offer support to other teachers by making sure resources are available for them to use, and this she does.

Hannah has also observed the AST alongside different class teachers, modelling how to take notes and annotate the French planning which will enable them to remember the key points

when they come to teach it on their own in the future. She has also observed some of the class teachers delivering French lessons and videoed those that were more confident which she plans to use as training material in future staff meetings/INSET days. When I speak to her at the end of the year, Hannah has managed to deliver a little training in a couple of staff meetings.: 'I've started doing bits and bobs in staff meetings, just the sort of doing little bite sized bits here and there at the beginning or the end of a staff meeting.' These 'bits and bobs' cover topics such as classroom instructions just like those Hannah mentioned before in her first interview. Interestingly when she talks about this in her final interview she still seems unsure of her own subject knowledge: 'we might as a staff look at instructions in French you know *asseyez vous*, not *asseyez vous*, um, yeah, it is *asseyez vous* isn't it? Sit down.' It appears as though despite the training she has received she is also still unsure of some basic subject knowledge.

Hannah is very aware of the need to work with colleagues who have more subject knowledge than she does in her role as coordinator, and she mentions working with colleagues to support other teachers. Indeed part of her strategic plan for the next couple of years involves several of the more confident teachers explicitly taking on supporting roles to their colleagues in each year group. Her unquestioning assumption that this will take place suggests that the staff in this school work well together and that they are willing to both ask for and give help. Hannah also alludes to this when she talks about the new appointment of Val (a primary French specialist) teaching French with the AST. Hannah mentions the benefit to the AST of being able to pick up 'more of the primary way of teaching things with languages', whilst Val is 'picking up more of the technical things from the AST.' This collaborative approach which benefits both parties is referred to on many occasions throughout the research.

The other important role that Hannah plays in the implementation of PMFLs at Bankside is to secure the ongoing support of the AST, as their strategic plan is largely dependent on this. In this respect Hannah says she has needed to be assertive and determined. In order to observe the AST with the other teachers Hannah needs to be released from her own class and she tells me: 'Unfortunately by the time you've talked about release time and so on, the term has sort of gone but it's sort of one of those things that you just need to push for a bit more.' The previous year she says, she had to both 'fight' and 'beg' with the LA to keep the AST. The negotiations this year have been much easier and the LA have been willing to allow the AST to stay for another year because, Hannah believes, the LA could see that Bankside would be willing to share its experience with other schools and in the future the school could be used as a model of how to implement PMFLs in others.

Hannah's role, then, does not involve her modelling how to teach French as she is still learning this herself, but it does involve liaising with her colleagues, organising appropriate support for them, ensuring resources and personnel are available as well as tracking how French is progressing through the school. She is very aware of the feelings and experiences of her colleagues with regards to their French and she is very confident that they are moving forward and that PMFLs will be successfully embedded into all year groups in KS2 over the next two years. Her only remaining concern is the level of subject knowledge that will be required by class teachers by the time children have been learning French for three years and arrive in Y6. At the present time she believes the language demands are minimal and can be mastered by all the teachers relatively easily. This may not be the case in the future, so she sees a definite need for subject specific training for staff in the years to come.

Just as with Heron Primary school there are two additional aspects that are key in the implementation of a new initiative and I now highlight these separately. The first of these is the approach of the headteacher.

#### **4.4.6 Emerging issue: Leadership**

Several references were made by the staff to the headteacher at Bankside and his influence over the introduction of PMFLs in his school. A year ago he took over the role of acting headteacher until his recent appointment as headteacher. The model for implementing the PMFL initiative had already been established by the previous head and he is continuing with it. He is very supportive of Hannah in her role and she finds him accommodating and helpful when she asks for support (either for time to support training or funding to allow her to be released from class or to buy resources). He sees his role as supporting to keep momentum going: 'My role is not getting involved personally but me being in the background building Hannah's capacity as a subject leader so that she can build the capacity of everybody else in terms of teaching French.'

The headteacher also talks in terms of auditing and tracking the French being taught and although this might begin to sound more like surveillance, it does not appear to be understood by Hannah as such. He talks about building up teachers' confidence levels by including small chunks of French in staff meetings and the expectation that teachers will:

do action points from each little snippet. I'm going to keep all the action points and every now and again I'm going to get them out and say, well did you actually do it? If you didn't, why not? And if you have, well done, what's next?

This is understood by Hannah to be helpful in terms of him supporting her identifying where support is still needed.

The headteacher is very enthusiastic about the PMFL initiative in general, even though his own level of French is not high. He jokes with me about an Eddie Izzard sketch he has seen which sums up his level of spoken French i.e. an assortment of useless phrases, including: 'le singe est dans l'arbre' (the monkey is in the tree). He sees the key benefits of PMFLs as twofold: most importantly the children will enjoy it and have fun, and also the enthusiasm the children have for speaking another language might transfer to motivate them in English. His commitment to French and the PMFL initiative extends to recently intentionally appointing an NQT with a French specialism. This is important as the school's approach to introducing PMFLs relies heavily on the teachers supporting each other in terms of their professional development with French in the absence of the AST. He also has ideas of his own with regards to developing languages in the school and involving parents is one of his priorities.

The headteacher acknowledges that teacher confidence is one of the key issues to address, but is confident that the staff are all 'very keen'. He believes the incremental way it is being introduced into the school should help staff feel 'less apprehensive or scared'. He sees support as absolutely key when introducing something new and wants staff to know that support is there if they need it. His approach is collegiate and he likes to involve his staff in decision-making. An example of this is when interviews were taking place for new members of staff. He invited all the current staff to join the candidates in the staff room for a cup of tea so they could feed back their impressions to him before he made any appointments. When the teachers in Bankside mention the headteacher, they seem to do so with confidence that he will consider their needs and feelings when he makes decisions. When Hannah talks about the potential issue of staff changing year groups and the increasing linguistic demands on the class teachers as they move higher up the school, she says: 'I'm sure [the headteacher] will consider this when he moves people around you know ... I don't think he'd put Amy in Y6 to teach French.' The style of leadership in Bankside Junior is markedly different from that of Heron Primary and the potential implications of this are discussed in the next section.

The second issue highlighted by the data is that of the teachers' compliance and this was equally evident in Bankside Junior as it was in Heron Primary School.

#### 4.4.7 Emerging issue: Compliance

Of all the participants in my research Amy is the least confident with teaching French but at no point does she express any doubt about whether she should be expected to teach it. It seems that the previous headteacher has had a big impact on Amy's willingness to try teaching French:

Because I was quite resistant to start with, but obviously she'd seen it working in Canada so she could kind of bring that. It wasn't just a case of well, we're just going to have to do it, she had some good arguments as to why it was a good thing to do.

Amy therefore has a rationale for teaching it, rather than just being told that she has to whether she agrees with it or not. Amy does not consider herself to be compliant per se as in another conversation she claims that she would refuse to comply if the government tried changing the school hours to increase teaching time.

Hannah was always aware of Amy's feelings and concerns about teaching French, but despite this, she did not question whether it was a reasonable expectation to have of her. When talking about other teachers in Y6 who are going to be teaching French the following year, Hannah expresses concerns over their level of subject knowledge in terms of how it might affect the teachers' confidence, but not in terms of how it might affect the children's learning experience. She is pleased that the majority of teachers have the pragmatic approach of 'it's just like any other subject, we'll learn it and give it a go'. None of the participants raise the issue of whether the quality of the French being taught is a concern given the limited French subject knowledge of some of the teachers. When I ask Hannah about this she comments that her aim is for everyone to be competent at teaching French but that it will probably take several years before this is a reality, particularly given that teachers frequently move year groups. She does not make it clear what will happen to the children's learning in the meantime. These teachers are willing to teach French as long as they are provided with resources, as this will save them preparation time, even though they have not actually seen the PMFL Framework containing the rationale and suggested teaching and learning objectives. They accept the guidance and advice of the headteacher, the PMFL coordinator and the AST without seeking or necessarily understanding the broader context and rationale for PMFLs. They also assume that their role is to teach French as best they can despite very limited subject knowledge in some cases.

These descriptive vignettes and comments highlight the key factors that emerged as influencing the implementation of the PMFL initiative in the two case study schools. Many issues have arisen and I discuss these in relation to relevant literature in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

In this chapter I discuss themes arising from the data across the whole study. This is possible as the issues that arose in the interviews highlighted themes that would emerge in more detail in the case study schools so there is considerable overlap and accordance. I organise the chapter in themes based loosely on those in the literature review, although I also explore additional issues that emerged as the study progressed. Having carried out an initial review of the literature relating to the key issues I envisaged would be relevant to the teachers, the ongoing data analysis led to further reading around particular themes of more importance to the teachers. Consequently, initially the literature review provided a context for the data, but then the data began to lead the literature review, resulting in them becoming mutually influential. As a result the themes I now present for discussion are: the role of culture, subject specific issues and CPD, teachers as professionals and the process of change.

### **5.1 The culture of primary education in England**

I have highlighted the large number of reforms introduced into schools in England since the 1970s and the speed in which this has been done. The top down manner in which the majority of these reforms were introduced has also been discussed, alongside an exploration of the impact this can have on the implementation of the reforms and the possible impact on the teachers themselves. The findings from my research highlight two major concerns about the current culture of primary education: firstly the assumption held centrally (by the government) that schools will implement many initiatives concurrently and secondly, that this is possible alongside the constant rise in expectations in school targets and accountability.

All participants expressed concerns over the sheer number of initiatives cascading into primary schools which causes a number of difficulties for teachers. Alongside the number of initiatives, the speed of the introduction of new initiatives impacts on how much time individual teachers have to dedicate to understanding, planning and upskilling themselves to incorporate the initiative into their teaching. There is also the practical difficulty of fitting everything into the weekly timetable, which has been an issue for primary teachers since the introduction of the National Curriculum (Webb 1993). The initiative overload in this instance resulted in insufficient time available for the less confident teachers to prepare themselves to teach French. I discuss specific examples of this later in the chapter, but the consequences of the class teachers having insufficient time to fully understand and prepare to implement the PMFL initiative clearly had a negative impact on the quality and quantity of French teaching taking place in the schools. This is explored later in more depth in the context of Fullan's (2007)

notion of readiness: an important element in the process of effective change. Already however, the overall culture of Primary Education at this time suggests that any new initiative would struggle to get a school's attention amongst so many others. Hargreaves (2008: 24) refers to the number and the pace at which initiatives are implemented as 'initiativitis'. This 'initiativitis' was not the only problematic aspect for the PMFL initiative to be taken seriously in participating schools: the continuing rise of accountability also played its part.

Accountability in primary schools has been on the rise for fifteen years, since the launch of the National Curriculum in 1988 followed by the introduction in 1991 of standardised assessments associated with it which resulted in the publication of primary school league tables. In their discussion of the development of the National Curriculum assessment in England, Wyse & Torrance (2009: 224) conclude that there is evidence:

that suggests that the current intense focus on testing and test results in the core subjects of English, maths and science is narrowing the curriculum and driving teaching in exactly the opposite direction to that which other research indicates will improve teaching, learning and attainment.

Green (2011) agrees, noting teachers inadvertently narrowing the curriculum by teaching to the test whether or not they personally agree with the testing procedures. This narrowing was clearly in evidence in the case study schools, particularly in Heron Primary where the build up to SATs had begun. No French was being taught in Y6 and even the French coordinator who was a Y6 teacher herself admitted that it was unlikely to be taught in the near future. Many teachers commented on the emphasis on English and mathematics as high profile tested subjects. This finding corroborates Ball's (2013) conclusion that since 1997, standards have mattered more than all else, where standards actually mean attainment in literacy and numeracy. The topic of school accountability resulting in different subjects enjoying a different status is discussed in more depth in a later section concerning subject specific issues.

A narrowing of the curriculum is not the only negative consequence of the focus on SATs as Whetton (2009) points out. He claims that the pressure schools feel as a result of such high accountability not only results in children receiving a narrower curriculum, but also a narrowing of learning processes. This is also referred to by Harlen et al. (2002) who argue that the high stakes testing system also results in teachers adopting a more transmissive style of teaching as opposed to a child centred and active style. This was evident in the lessons I observed in Heron Primary school. The teachers themselves expressed dissatisfaction about teaching the way they were, but felt they had to due to the nature of SATs. Some teachers even apologised to the children about the boring nature of these lessons. It is therefore not

surprising that one of the aspects the teachers felt the children enjoyed most about French lessons was the 'fun' and 'interactive' way in which they taught (compared with core subjects perhaps). Ball (2013: 221) discusses this issue of teachers feeling forced to sacrifice their own judgement for performance, which he terms 'values schizophrenia'. Those teachers who were delivering lessons in ways which made them feel uncomfortable and which they did not believe were in the best interests of the children, are good examples of this. The teachers were sacrificing their own beliefs for the school to reach its literacy and numeracy targets all in the name of performativity and accountability.

The culture of primary education in England at the time of this research was one of constant change with numerous initiatives being imposed and additions being made to an already overloaded curriculum. At the same time, schools were highly accountable for children's performance in the core subjects and high attainment in these areas was essential. As a consequence, the culture of primary education in general meant that the emphasis in all the participating schools was clearly on English and mathematics and any other initiative fought for attention after these priorities. This culture permeated every pore of the data.

## **5.2 School culture**

Some of the other factors that influence a school's culture were introduced in the literature review and several are particularly pertinent in the context of the two case study schools. One of the key factors in determining how effectively a school supports change is how collaboratively it functions (Hargreaves 2005; Osborn et al. 2000). This does not imply that all parties in the school should agree with each other, but that the school can foster and accommodate diversity (Fullan 1999). The attitudes of the headteachers towards collaboration clearly influence a school's culture (Mintzberg 2004) and in this respect the headteachers at Bankside and Heron perceived their roles and their staff very differently. At Bankside the headteacher considered himself to be part of the staff team and was very aware of the emotional response teachers may have to being asked to teach French. He expressed a degree of pastoral care towards his staff and a concern about their well-being. There were examples of this kind of concern in interview data from the other five schools, which showed some trying to protect their staff from the excesses of initiative overload, for example in Uplands Primary the headteacher had not introduced French into one particular year group so as not to overload a new teacher. Ultimately, headteachers (and to a certain extent, the senior management team as a whole) play the role of intermediaries between policy and the teaching staff. They must decide what can and cannot be done and how it will happen. Ball et al. (2012: 50) discuss heads and SMTs needing to find a balance between 'making policy happen and

making it palatable'. Data showed that there was a difference between the headteachers with regards to how much effort they made in order to make the PMFL initiative 'palatable'. The headteacher at Bankside seemed to empathise with the teachers in his school and attempted to support them by ensuring the provision of training for the teachers lacking in confidence. He also supported the PMFL coordinator by allowing her to deliver staff meetings, funding her release from teaching to support colleagues, and helping her track French provision thus raising the perceived status of French in the school. There is evidence therefore that this headteacher placed importance on the development of people (Leithwood et al.2004) by trying to ensure they received the appropriate training and support before expecting them to adopt a new initiative. The AST played a key part in this and was considered to be vital by all the teachers I talked to in this school in supporting them in teaching French (although some questioned in retrospect whether she spent too long supporting them). In general the headteacher at Bankside was seen as empathetic towards his staff and approachable. He also understood the value of developing leaders in the school and showed signs of scaffolding and supporting this process.

The majority of headteachers however, whilst expressing some sympathy for their staff, also expected them to take on French teaching without complaint, and they showed a degree of pride in their staff for being able to take on every new initiative asked of them. This second approach is a better depiction of the management approach at Heron Primary. The headteacher delegated responsibility for the introduction of French to her PMFL coordinator who was well qualified to do this. She talked of teachers who might not be immediately willing to take up new initiatives as 'resistors' and commented that she could not understand why anyone would find it difficult to teach French as every teacher should be able to teach any subject at primary level. She put herself in the same position as her teachers by using the example of being asked to teach Maths in the top set in Y6. She said that she would ask another teacher if her own subject knowledge was not sufficient. However although this was a strategy mentioned by the teachers who were struggling with French, their view was that heavy workloads precluded time to work collaboratively. She also said that teachers could ask for further training if necessary, but again in reality this was not provided due to funding issues. There emerged a mismatch between what this headteacher and her staff would like to happen and the lived reality. This could be explained either by taking a literal line in that not enough time was available to collaborate and ask for help from colleagues, or by using a version of the concept from Argyris & Schön (1974) of people promoting a particular behaviour based on one set of values whilst in reality carrying out another, based on a different set of values. This could also provide an explanation as to why some teachers (for example Lucy in

Heron) claimed to be in favour of teaching French but then did not actually teach it during the year.

In addition to setting the direction of the school, Leithwood et al. (2004) consider one of the core practices of successful leaders to be developing people. One way to do this in a school is to develop leadership in others, and evidence from interviews suggests that the headteacher of Heron Primary believed in a distributed style of leadership, encouraging staff to take on new responsibilities. In her school there were many dynamic members of staff eager to introduce new ideas and some of them were given opportunities to do this. However comments made by several teachers implied that the extent to which the coordinator could lead their particular subject effectively depended on how determined and influential the individual was. Martin for example managed to negotiate spending time training the whole staff in P4C but Sam was unable to do the same for French. Once the headteacher had delegated responsibility to Sam for introducing and managing the French programme she left it very much up to her to oversee. As a result, Sam tried to convince the staff in relevant year groups to teach French, but without funding (and therefore time), she was not able to monitor provision or support those teachers that needed it. Consequently, some (for example Lucy) stopped teaching it and this was unnoticed. Mary, who had very little subject knowledge of French, was left to 'muddle through' unsupported for the whole year. In our initial interview, the headteacher said that she would support the introduction of PMFLs into the school 'by not blocking it', and this was indeed the extent of her intervention. Her talk of the importance of teachers working together and effective CPD activities indicated she was aware of these as beneficial approaches, but these were unfunded. It might also be the case that she was reluctant for Sam (as a Y6 teacher and therefore currently involved in preparing the children for SATs) to be released from her class to train others in French. Once again the issues of accountability and performativity were having a clear and negative impact on other areas.

Ball et al. (2012: 44) discuss the importance of how policies are shared with staff and how the way in which this is done in staff meetings or training days are 'moments of recontextualisation, different points of articulation and authorisation that make something into a priority, assign it a value, high or low.' The lack of this process in Heron led to the low status of the PMFL initiative whilst in contrast the involvement of the headteacher and CPD activities that were taking place in Bankside gave French a higher status. This comparison further illuminates the ways in which an overall school culture could be more or less conducive to incorporating PMFLs at this time within the same national context.

### 5.3 Year group culture

In both Bankside and Heron, the teachers presented as very keen to work collaboratively. All talked about the importance of support (both emotional and subject specific) from their colleagues. I return to Hargreaves' (1994a) presentation of five broad forms of teacher culture: fragmented individualism, balkanisation, collaborative culture, contrived collegiality and the moving mosaic. Data gathered from the interviews and the case studies show some of these more in evidence than others. Fragmented individualism was not present in the researched schools as the teachers were not working alone; on the contrary, they were working in a variety of collaborative ways. The way in which French was being introduced one year group at a time in some instances may depict a degree of balkanisation. Whilst some year group teams were dealing with the challenges that teaching French was bringing, other teams were not involved in the initiative at all. Those yet to be involved did not appear to be resentful about lack of involvement, and those that were seemed either pleased or accepting, indeed several expressed the hope that they would be in a position to help their colleagues as French extended up through the year groups. There was no official guidance relating to the most effective way to introduce PMFLs at the time, and the timescale made it possible for the schools to introduce it slowly in this way. However Cable et al. (2010: 50) argue the need for 'a school wide commitment and strategy towards teaching languages' for the initiative to be successfully implemented. This seemed to be lacking in the case study schools, as many of the teachers not currently directly involved in teaching French were unaware of how and when this would happen. The approach of introducing French one year group at a time may also be said to threaten the development of Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 2005) and Professional Learning Communities (Senge 1990; DuFour & Eaker 1998; Fullan 2001), considered to be important approaches in effective CPD. Although some of the year group teams, for example the Y4 teachers at Bankside, were able to create their own small communities, they still lacked the time to discuss their French teaching meaningfully.

Despite the limitations of time, of the different types of culture outlined by Hargreaves (1994a), collaborative cultures were those most in evidence in both case study schools. Teachers shared work through joint planning and resourcing and were happy to share expertise: where one teacher was more confident with French they talked about supporting colleagues who were less so (for example in Heron, Martin talked of supporting Lucy who in turn hoped to support others, and Laura was prepared to support Amy in Bankside). However, once again, the lived reality was that time pressures severely limited this collaboration. Hargreaves (1994a) discusses the importance of joint work being encouraged but not enforced in true collaborative cultures and whilst no one in a position of authority forced teachers to

work together, it was often expected, and necessity drove them to do this as many would have been unable to teach French without the support of their colleagues. Indeed at times the children themselves provided this support (Laura referred to this explicitly, and I observed it happening on many occasions in both schools). Therefore the element of choice that teachers had in working together was not as available as it might have appeared and some of the teachers explicitly stated that they needed to work together to 'get by'. However none of the teachers I spoke to seemed to resent, or object to, working together.

Contrived collegiality (where staff are forced to work together but where the management is controlling the conditions and outcomes) was not evident in my study (unless one takes my previous point concerning the necessity of working together as being the driving factor behind the apparently collaborative cultures rather than a genuine desire to collaborate). Equally, examples of the moving mosaic were not obvious. As time goes on this may well happen, as teachers move year groups and some gain more experience at teaching French than others, resulting in more flexibility in the models of delivery. Collaborative school cultures, therefore, were the most common (in the case study schools and also in the other schools represented) and according to Hargreaves (1994a), this type of culture is more likely to result in effective change. However, working collaboratively in this way is not free of difficulty, and two of the potential concerns relate to time factors and the sharing of resources. Finding time to collaborate properly was described as an issue in both case study schools, despite intentions to do so. Teachers spent the majority of their time planning core subjects and French was not therefore planned in detail. This resulted in one of the less confident teachers feeling unable to teach the lessons that were on the weekly plan. Lucy at Heron, despite feeling very enthusiastic when I first spoke to her, ended up repeating the lessons she had been shown how to teach the previous year in Y3 even though she was now in Y4. Despite working in a year group with two other French specialists, she did not have sufficient time to be supported by her year group colleagues. So although there was a desire to work collaboratively, frequently sufficient time was not available.

Other example of the lack of sufficient time for collaborative working were the French lessons I observed by Amy and Laura in Bankside Junior school. The lessons had been planned by the AST but neither Amy nor Laura had found the time to check the lesson content and rehearse it, with the consequence that the PowerPoint presentation was meaningless to them (and therefore the children). This is also an example of sharing resources as a form of collaboration. However, if the teacher is not familiar with the resources, or does not have the subject

knowledge to effectively teach with them, the collaboration cannot be effective. The issue of subject knowledge is an important one, and is discussed in more detail in the following section.

The theme of culture is a complex one. This study lends support to the understanding that there are many levels and many factors that impact on how culture will affect how individuals implement a new initiative. This was an instance in action of the influence of the headteacher determining the culture of their school and therefore the attitudes and actions of their staff, and of the headteachers in turn being heavily influenced by the general culture of primary education pressures of accountability, performativity and the statutory requirements to implement a range of initiatives. I now discuss the next theme emerging from the literature and the data which concerns subject specific issues.

#### **5.4 Subject specific issues**

The Framework endorsed by the government at the time of the fieldwork advocated a range of models of delivery for PMFLs. Schools were encouraged to adopt the approach that best suited their own particular situation. The case study headteachers chose to use the generalist class teachers (with the support of the AST in Bankside and almost unsupported in Heron). This was also the case in the majority of schools participating in the initial stage of this research. Most headteachers indicated that using the generalist class teachers was the most strategic way forward as this would enable a critical mass to be trained and would therefore minimise the disruption caused by staff turnover. The model of delivery is also influenced by the perceived aims of PMFLs in the curriculum. Although the opinions expressed by the headteachers varied in this regard (with some mentioning linguistic progression), the majority stressed broader goals such as inclusion, raising children's confidence with regards to future language learning, feeling less embarrassed about 'having a go' and having fun. The class teachers' opinions echoed those of the headteachers, although they did place more emphasis on linguistic progression. None of the headteachers mentioned teachers' subject knowledge as a concern whilst the majority of the class teachers themselves did. As discussed in the literature review, the NfER report (Burstall et al. 1974) claimed that a teacher's linguistic proficiency was of less importance than their general teaching proficiency when it came to effectively teaching PMFLs. However, evidence from the case studies shows that there is a minimum amount of knowledge of French needed to teach it effectively, or even to attempt to teach it. Amy (at Bankside) did not feel confident enough to try to teach French on her own for nearly two years and Lucy at Heron did not actually teach French during the year despite intending to, as her confidence ultimately let her down. What constitutes subject knowledge has already been discussed but it is timely to reiterate key elements here. Shulman's (1986) deconstruction of

subject knowledge into the components of subject matter knowledge (SMK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and curricular knowledge (CK) are again relevant here. For these less confident teachers it was primarily their subject matter knowledge and consequently also their pedagogical content knowledge of French that was preventing them from being able to teach it to the children. Shulman's (2013: 127) comment that 'we assume that most teachers begin with some expertise in the content they teach' is not applicable in these cases.

There has been an acknowledgement from recent governments in England that a particular level of subject knowledge is essential in certain subjects. For many years prospective teachers have had to hold a GCSE or equivalent in English, Maths and Science and have also needed to pass skills tests in English and Maths (and previously ICT). For the last two years, these tests have to be passed before training can even commence. As core subjects, English and mathematics enjoy the highest status in primary schools in England and teachers' subject knowledge in these areas is seen to be vital. As the findings from this study have shown, French does not enjoy high status and is frequently the subject that gets pushed off the timetable in favour of others.

Other foundation subjects (Geography, History, Art and Design, Physical Education and Music) are also considered to be of lower status, in that they are not designated core subjects. Consequently they have not received such explicit attention from the government and there is currently no official minimum requirement in terms of teachers' subject knowledge for any subject other than Mathematics, English and Science. This does not mean however that teachers' subject knowledge has not been highlighted as a key issue in high quality teaching and learning in English primary schools. All the most recent Ofsted reports covering foundation subjects have made direct reference to this: improvements in Geography were deemed to be slowed due to insufficient teacher subject knowledge (Ofsted 2011a); in the summary of findings for History it was stated that 'many primary teachers did not themselves have adequate subject knowledge beyond the specific elements of history that they taught' (Ofsted 2011b: 4); the teaching of art, craft and design was deemed to be good in only one third of primary schools and a key recommendation was that teachers needed to be supported in securing subject specific professional development (Ofsted 2012a). Feedback and recommendations made as a result of the Music lessons observed by Ofsted between 2008-2011 (Ofsted 2012b) were very similar, and it was claimed that in PE, 'In primary schools, some teachers lack the specialist knowledge needed to teach PE well and outcomes for pupils are not as good as they could be' (Ofsted 2013: 4).

It is not only in Ofsted reports where concerns over teachers' subject knowledge are raised. Sloan (2010:270) summarises research supporting the lack of specific subject knowledge in PE which leads him to claim that 'many (non-specialist primary teachers) do not possess the expertise or confidence to contribute effectively to the provision of a broad and balanced PE curriculum'. Blankman et al. (2015) similarly claim that an adequate foundation of subject knowledge is a prerequisite for effective teaching in Geography and also suggest that this has been lacking in the Netherlands and also in the UK for some time. My teacher-participants often drew a parallel between teaching French and teaching Music and Beauchamp (2010: 306) supports this view, claiming that teachers in primary schools lack confidence in teaching music. Although he does not claim that 'knowledge' of music is, in itself, sufficient to teach it effectively, he contends that 'such knowledge is one of the vital foundations on which confidence and successful pedagogy can be built'. Clearly there are concerns surrounding teachers' subject knowledge in all foundation subjects, and some schools have started to address this through the use of subject specialist teachers (often external to the school) delivering these subjects instead of the generalist classteacher.

There is an obvious correlation on behalf of policy makers between the status of a subject and the emphasis placed on teachers' subject specific knowledge. This study shows this is not the case for the teachers themselves with regards to French as they are very aware of the need to develop their own subject knowledge in order to teach it confidently. Legg (2013) found that even teachers who were subject specialists in PMFL and who had received additional training were not confident in their own subject knowledge and were worried about modelling the target language. Several teachers in the case study schools were teaching French and doing their best with limited knowledge (Mary at Heron is a good example of this, as are Amy and Laura at Bankside). Similar findings were reported by Woolhouse et al. (2013) in their case studies involving 43 teachers in the process of introducing primary French in their schools in England. They found that teachers were concerned about their subject knowledge (Shulman's SMK), as well as their specific language pedagogy (PCK). I observed many occasions where, due to a lack of SMK, teachers were unable to correct children's mistakes, pre-empt possible misconceptions and model correct use of French. In contrast, where a teacher's SMK was strong, they were able to use children's responses as further teaching points, for example Martin's teaching of adjectives in Heron. The majority of teachers I observed did this routinely when teaching core subjects as their SMK and curricular knowledge was stronger. Therefore, although I have presented literature/research that claims that a teacher's own linguistic proficiency is not the determining factor in their effectiveness to teach, I argue, based on the

data, that it was a key factor in the teachers' willingness to teach, and ability to teach French accurately in these schools.

Similarly to the teachers studied by Woolhouse et al. (2013), the teachers in Bankside and Heron seemed to have confidence in their cultural capital in terms of general pedagogical skills in primary teaching, despite their lack of subject specific expertise in French. Consequently they seemed able to retain confidence in their identities as good primary teachers despite the possible threat to this embodied in a lack of confidence in their competence to teach French. They seemed able to compartmentalise their insecurity with French teaching so that it did not impact negatively on their overall identity as a competent primary teacher. Bourdieu (1977: 47) explores this notion of 'cultural capital' referring to the knowledge, experience and specific skills that a teacher, in this case, possesses. As with the findings of Woolhouse et al. (2013), participating teachers were able to sustain dual identities. Indeed some of the less confident teachers adopted a new identity as a *language learner*. Those teachers who were comfortable adopting this second identity (for example Mary at Heron and Laura at Bankside) felt more confident teaching French than those who wanted to maintain the more traditional identity of teacher (such as Lucy at Heron who wanted to be completely accurate with her pronunciation of French, and Amy at Bankside who felt the need to be as accurate as the AST). Teachers' self-identities are therefore important contributing factors in their responses to new initiatives and 'are powerful mediators in terms of their interpretations of, and responses to, imposed changes' (Webb & Vulliamy 1999: 118). There is evidence of this in the interviews and the case studies where some teachers downplayed the linguistic demands of the PMFL initiative, and the expectations of the children's attainment (claiming its benefits to be more related to the children having fun). These teachers were more likely to engage with teaching French as they did not feel the need to be experts or use accurate French as much as those who were keen to model correct French. Sam (the PMFL coordinator at Heron) explicitly encouraged this idea, hoping that downplaying the amount of subject knowledge required to teach French would make teachers more likely to try teaching it. This raises the issue of how teachers themselves mediate reforms depending on their own competencies, their perceptions and understanding of the reform in question. In this way they can change a reform considerably from the initial intention of the policy makers. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

The lack of teachers' subject knowledge in French was a concern expressed by teachers in all the schools that participated in this study. The evidence from the case studies and the interviews in the additional four schools indicate that there were three main approaches to addressing teachers' lack of subject specific knowledge. Firstly, some teachers (for example

those in Bankside) received specific support and training from a language specialist. Landmark also used the AST to model teaching French to up-skill the teachers before they were expected to teach their own French lessons. Other teachers launched straight into teaching French and used resources and planning provided by specialists (the AST or internal specialists) to support their lessons. When time allowed, these teachers consulted their colleagues or PMFL coordinators to check pronunciation and other details in advance and they then taught the lessons independently. The third approach adopted was to be seen to be learning alongside the children. These teachers (for example Laura and Mary) used the expertise of children who attended French clubs to support their lessons and they made it explicit to the class that they were learning French with them.

Although the exact level of SMK required is debateable, it transpires that a basic level of French is necessary if the aims of PMFLs include an element of developing children's linguistic competence. Having observed lessons where basic vocabulary and pronunciation were not modelled accurately I argue that in these instances the children's linguistic competence was not being developed. This is particularly relevant given evidence that pronunciation is one of the key elements of language learning that can be most enhanced by starting learning at a younger age (Singleton 1989; Low et al. 1993; Vilke 1998). If, in contrast, the aim of learning a foreign language at primary school is to have fun and to motivate children for later language learning, then it could be argued that specific SMK is not essential. In the majority of the French lessons I observed, and according to the teachers in the interviews, the children were enjoying their French lessons. Despite the broad range of benefits that participants articulated, the PMFL initiative and the Framework includes a large element dedicated to improving aspects of linguistic competence, and without this it would seem more appropriate to adopt a 'language sensitisation' model of PMFLs (Hunt et al. 2005) where progression in linguistic competence is not required. I now discuss in more detail how the two schools approached the training of the teachers.

Unsurprisingly given other differences, Bankside and Heron adopted very different models of professional development for teachers. In Heron there was little evidence of a strategic approach, possibly because the headteacher did not perceive teachers' subject knowledge as being a concern. Sam did realise it was an issue, but lacked the time and resources to address it, despite believing it was necessary. Adey (2004) claims that effective CPD is more likely to be provided if the innovation has a theoretical foundation with evidence to show its success; he also argues that teachers need to be involved rather than treated as technicians. This understanding of the theoretical basis for PMFLs was not apparent in either of the case study

schools, and the teachers were not involved in discussions about the benefits of PMFLs (with the exception of Amy at Bankside). On several occasions Mary at Heron questioned why foreign languages were being introduced into primary schools and she even consulted her secondary colleagues. It might have been helpful for her to have understood the rationale for teaching French at the outset. Ball (2013) supports this and seems to summarise Mary's insecurities when he talks of teachers feeling that they are being constantly judged and monitored but without being sure of what they are expected to do. In this particular instance Mary interpreted the expectations of her as teaching some French lessons to the best of her ability, but at the same time she was expecting someone to come along to tell her that she was doing it all wrong.

Another element of Adey's (2004) model of effective CPD is the provision of well-constructed support materials. To this end, the government provided the original Framework for languages. However, rather than introducing this Framework in its entirety to the teachers, the AST working at Bankside devised a large number of individual lesson plans together with resources for the class teachers to use in her absence. There was less support in Heron where the PMFL coordinator planned a few lessons for the Y3 teachers to use as a basis for their French lessons but the teachers were then expected to plan either independently or as a year group. The class teachers in Heron therefore had access to very limited resources, compared with those in Bankside.

The CPD available in these two schools could not, therefore, be more different. Amy in Bankside received three years of support from the AST who planned, modelled and team taught the weekly French lessons before she was expected to teach French on her own. In contrast Mary, who had equally little subject knowledge, was given a few lesson plans, observed the PMFL coordinator teach one French lesson and was then expected to teach French independently. Interestingly, on reflection, Amy felt that she had been supported too much and had become too accustomed to not taking the lead role; she had developed the learned helplessness that Seligman et al. (1968) describe. Despite the opportunity for Amy to co-teach with the AST, an approach which Rytivaara & Kershner (2012) found to be an effective in developing teacher learning, this did not seem to yield positive results. Rytivaara & Kershner (2012) argue that one of the key determinants of the success of co-teaching is that both the participants are truly sharing the planning and teaching; this was not the case with Amy, which might explain her enduring lack of confidence. Although Mary felt more confident in her ability to teach French than Amy, there were issues over the accuracy of what she was teaching. It would seem from these examples that there is an optimum amount of support and

training needed to ensure the quality and accuracy of the delivery. Three years of modelling is too much, whereas observing one or two lessons is not sufficient for teachers lacking in subject knowledge. Again, much will depend on what the teacher is intending the children to learn from French lessons, but it can be seen from the data that even if fun is one of the desired outcomes of teaching French, Mary needed more CPD to deliver any more than this.

The need for further CPD for teachers is echoed in later, larger scale studies into the introduction of PMFLs into primary schools in England such as those carried out by Cable et al. (2010) and Wade et al. (2009). Whilst neither of these outlines exactly what constitutes the most effective approach to CPD, they both highlight the need for it to be ongoing and funded by local authorities. One of the key recommendations from Cable et al. (2010) is to support teachers by upskilling them in terms of their own subject knowledge and foreign language pedagogy (SMK and PCK).

More than ten years after the introduction of MLPS in Scotland, the issue of what constitutes effective CPD for foreign language teaching is still ongoing. MLPS was initially introduced in 1999 in the form of a pilot study when a model of visiting secondary language specialists working collaboratively with the primary class teachers was adopted. Once the initiative was expanded to more primary schools, 27 days language training was originally offered to non-language specialists but later, funding for training was handed over to local authorities resulting in varying training models of between twenty days to thirty hours (Crichton & Templeton 2010). Interestingly even the initial model of 27 days training was not considered sufficient to give the teachers enough subject knowledge and ten years after its introduction it was claimed that the MLPS initiative in Scotland had not reached its potential due to inconsistent training given to primary teachers (Crichton & Templeton 2010). No teacher at Heron received any systematic, ongoing CPD to teach French and at Bankside, only Amy seemed to have received training to the extent advocated by the Scottish pilot study, and even this was not comparable in terms of the format it took. Whilst the coordinator at Heron realised the need for CPD for some of the staff, lack of funding and therefore lack of time made it impossible and so Mary and Lucy were left to continue alone. Although more CPD was made available in Bankside, it was in two formats only and did not seem to have the desired effect; Amy found it difficult to break free of the modelling of the AST and Laura was left to use resources which she could not do with confidence.

It might appear that the approach to CPD at Bankside was in accordance with the latest guidance on effective CPD as it was delivered in the workplace and teachers were actively

involved and collaborating with colleagues (Van Veen & Meirink 2012). However they also point out that there is no empirical evidence to support the idea that more contemporary activities such as these will be more effective than traditional ones (which would involve lectures, workshops and conferences). Indeed several of the less confident teachers in the study expressed their wish to attend some French language classes which implied a desire for a more traditional model (at least initially in order to increase their SMK). Based on data from Bankside and Heron I argue that a combination of traditional approaches to learning the French language (to develop SMK, PCK and CK) combined with some modelling from a French specialist (to further develop PCK) might be a more effective way forward. It would also be preferable for the French specialist to have a primary background or some primary training, as it was sometimes found that the secondary trained AST was not familiar with the attainment levels of the children which resulted in the lesson content being too advanced.

To summarise, and return to Adey's (2004) model of key factors for effective professional development, the evidence from the case study schools indicates that the theoretical basis for the PMFL initiative was not made explicit or shared with either the headteachers or teachers. The CPD programmes available to the teachers varied enormously and could be argued to reflect the degree of empathy the headteacher felt towards their staff in terms of their concerns about teaching French. Importantly, in Bankside Junior the headteacher was committed to the initiative and the issue of in-school coaching had been fully prepared for. In Heron however, although the headteacher was committed and both she and the coordinator had a shared vision for the introduction of PMFLs, the CPD activities originally planned were not funded and did not come to fruition.

The teachers themselves are the final variable in Adey's model. In both case study schools, there was evidence of groups of teachers sharing experiences and communicating with each other over the introduction of French. Some of the more confident teachers (for example Martin and Sarah) were able to develop a sense of ownership of the PMFL curriculum and had the freedom to practise and reflect on their teaching of French. However the less confident teachers (such as Amy, Laura and Lucy) were not able to take any ownership as their SMK (and consequently PCK) was not sufficient to divert from the planning they had been given, nor did they have the time available to prepare different lessons. In contrast, Mary, who was not confident, did take ownership of her French teaching, despite her lack of SMK and this raises an interesting question about why this was. It could be related to her identity as a primary teacher. She was a very experienced teacher and it may be that she was so confident in her abilities to teach in general that she felt more able to take risks in her French teaching.

However it may also be a result of her relative security in her position in that she was due to retire in two years' time and was confident enough to explain to senior management if necessary that she was not able to do more than she was attempting.

The perception and response to taking risks for teachers is an important one and this may provide an explanation for the different responses of Mary, Amy, Laura and Lucy. Lefèvre (2014) argues that a teacher's perception of and possible reluctance to take risks can prevent them from engaging with a particular pedagogical practice. It may be that Mary's acceptance and apparently relaxed approach to being considered as a learner alongside the children in French led her to feel a reduced sense of risk, whereas Lucy for example may have expected herself to be an expert as a teacher and therefore her sense of risk was heightened. The risk in this case might be the threat to her sense of identity as expert knower in the eyes of the children as well as herself. Lefèvre also draws attention to the possibility of teachers fearing the risk of not enhancing the education of others, which is their usual ambition. Therefore the risk may not necessarily be to the teacher directly, in the sense of looking less like an expert, but to the children's learning and therefore indirectly to the teacher's own ambition. Perhaps Lucy's expectations of herself and her awareness that her own French was not of a high standard resulted in her feeling it was better for the children if she did not teach new French lessons. It is impossible to be sure, but the importance of a teacher's self-identity is explored in more detail later in this discussion.

Finally, an interesting element in Adey's (2004) model is the extent to which teachers are supported in questioning their beliefs about teaching and learning. This was very clearly missing in both case study schools and whether teachers were encouraged (or even allowed) to question expectations of them became an important emerging theme of this research. This issue is the focus of the following section.

### **5.5 Teachers as professionals**

I return to what constitutes a profession in light of the teachers' comments and actions in response to being expected to teach French and using the three essential traits of a profession (Locke et al. 2005) already outlined. The first trait is that of having a *subject specialised knowledge base*. For those teachers who were confident in their own subject knowledge there were no real challenges to their sense of being a professional and their main concern about PMFLs seemed to be how to fit them into the weekly timetable. However those who were less confident and who lacked a specialised knowledge base could have experienced a negative impact on their sense of themselves as professionals as a result of having to teach French. I

have already outlined the concerns about many of the teachers' SMK (raised by the teachers themselves) and their subsequent PCK, and so I do not reiterate this here.

A second essential trait of a profession has been argued to be that of *altruism* (Locke et al. 2005). There is clearly evidence that this sense of altruism was seriously challenged at times in the case study schools, as can be seen in Heron Primary where the teachers were very uncomfortable about teaching SATs lessons and in Bankside where the deputy head taught spelling lessons she did not agree with. In both these cases the teachers felt these lessons were not altogether in the best interests of the children and this was causing them some anxiety, but they felt they had no choice but to continue teaching these lessons. In Heron, the pressure seemed to be coming from the senior management team through their desire for high SATs results. It was less clear in Bankside as the deputy head was herself a member of the SMT and so could possibly have influenced the approach to teaching spelling. She seemed to feel the weight of tradition in teaching in this way despite her own misgivings. Ball et al. (2012) discuss teachers having to find a balance between what is in the best interests of the children and the school, relating this to the standards agenda.

In terms of teaching French, all the teachers said they saw benefits for the children in terms of linguistic or cultural learning as well as the element of having fun and being an inclusive subject thereby offering the possibility of raising some children's self-esteem. Therefore the evidence initially suggests that this second trait of altruism was not challenged specifically by the introduction of French into the curriculum (although it seems to be under threat at other times). However, although the responses of the teachers demonstrate a clear sense of wanting to do their best for the children, as I highlighted in my review of the literature, where teachers lack sufficient depth in their subject knowledge they may defer to the expertise of others. If the headteacher or PMFL coordinator deem it to be a good idea that they teach French, despite in some cases a clear lack of competence in the subject, they may defer to this despite their better judgement. I argue that there was evidence of this and, moreover, that some teachers looked for benefits for the children (such as having fun) in order to justify their agreement to teach French.

*Autonomy*, the third trait, was seen to be threatened more explicitly in all the schools in the research. At the time of data collection, the schools themselves had little choice as to whether they introduced PMFLs although there was an element of choice in terms of exactly when (as long as it was introduced throughout KS2 by 2010). The teachers in turn seemed to feel that they had no choice about agreeing to teach it. The compliant response of all the teachers

irrespective of their levels of confidence was noticeable. All those who took part in the research were willing to teach French and even those who seemed to have doubts and concerns about the initiative did not express any intention of either refusing to teach it, or even of openly expressing their doubts about teaching it. Indeed across different stages of data collection there were many instances of teachers who said they were uncomfortable about their SMK but felt that they had no choice but to teach it. In Heron there seemed to be a more explicit fear of the headteacher who would not tolerate non-compliance. Mary mentioned repercussions when she talked about teachers being 'made to feel uncomfortable' and even alluded to teachers losing their jobs. Lefèvre (2014:61) also found that teachers talked of negative consequences as a result of their not succeeding in taking on new teaching approaches, and in these cases, Lefèvre used the term 'urban myth' to explain these fears. However it is not clear whether, in the case of Heron, these fears were justified.

In Bankside however the headteacher was not feared and yet the compliance was total, even from teachers who lacked confidence in their own competence to teach French. During the interviews with all six headteachers there were many references to them being proud of their teachers for getting on with things and taking on all the initiatives as best they could. It seems as though over a period of time, perhaps due to the overload of initiatives, reforms and the erosion of trust in the teaching profession (see Ball 2013), teachers feel less able to question, challenge and resist. The dilemma for some of the teachers in Bankside and Heron was the perceived necessity to comply with expectation but also to maintain their sense of professionalism by doing the best for the children. Osborn et al. (2000) highlight the reluctance of teachers to resist change as this might have a negative impact on the children or colleagues and ultimately the school (this relates back to the issue of teachers' sense of altruism). Consequently, in order to maintain their sense of identity and professionalism, where teachers were aware that their own SMK was not sufficient to enable progress in linguistic competence for the children, they relied on other beneficial aspects of their French lessons, such as fun, inclusion and having the opportunity to see the teacher as learner.

Returning to the issue of autonomy, due in part to their lack of SMK, many of the teachers were not in a position to be autonomous as they did not have sufficient expertise to plan their own French lessons. Even if Hargreaves'(2000: 162) definition of 'collegial professionalism' (which moves the emphasis from individual autonomy towards collegiate autonomy) is applied, the year group teams working together were not acting autonomously as they often followed a specialist teacher's plan.

During our interactions, I explored with the teachers how they interpreted professionalism and the lack of apparent opinion on this issue was striking. In general there was a strong feeling that being professional was synonymous with 'getting on with it' (Class teacher Southerley Primary Interview 1). This sentiment pervaded the interviews I carried out in all six schools and I continued to see evidence of this throughout the case studies. Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage (2005: 11) maintain that it is essential for teachers to consider themselves as professionals in order to prepare students 'for equitable participation in a democratic society'. It is potentially concerning, therefore, that the participating teachers did not seem to have strong views about their sense of being a professional. When asked specifically, the teachers seemed to be unsure of what to say and they often answered in terms of doing their best. The interviews suggested that many of them were familiar with being told exactly what to do and the PMFL coordinator at Southerley described the teachers there as 'enjoying being spoon-fed'. This would seem to suggest that many teachers were not explicitly unhappy about having a lack of autonomy in their teaching. It is too early to consider whether the introduction of PMFLs into the curriculum and the Framework that accompanied it will eventually enhance teachers' sense of professionalism, despite the perceived reduction in autonomy (as described by Webb et al. 2004 as a result of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies). This may well not transpire as the situations are very different, but if the teachers see that the introduction of French enhances the children's learning experience then there is the possibility that their sense of professionalism will be enhanced as a result.

The findings of this research seem to concur with Darling-Hammond's (1990) concept of professionalism implying unquestioning compliance. It appears that the teachers have developed what Sachs (2003: 5) refers to as 'entrepreneurial' professional identity where teachers are efficient, accountable and compliant in the face of imposed initiatives (as opposed to 'activists' who would try to mobilise teachers in order to best serve student learning). The data indicate that these teachers have ceased to question centrally driven directives. All the interviewees showed a lack of resistance to new initiatives and they expressed the view that the most desirable response to new demands was to try to carry out whatever is asked of them, no matter whether they felt able to or not. The issue of 'initiativitis' (Hargreaves 2008: 24) may have reduced many teachers to unquestioning, uncomplaining implementers of initiatives, as Locke et al. (2005) warned would happen. The majority of teachers chose to be contractually compliant and meet expectations of them rather than reflecting personally on whether the expectations of them were reasonable. It was only Mary (an older teacher, close to retirement) who even considered questioning it. The data from the interviews and observations suggest that Humphreys and Hyland (2002) are correct when they

point out the danger of teachers becoming technicians rather than reflective professionals. An important finding from my research was that the teachers did not articulate feeling troubled by the possible threats to their professionalism as they were more concerned by the practical aspects of how to incorporate the new demands as quickly and easily as possible. In this way, perhaps the teachers behaved as 'bodies that are docile and capable' to which Foucault (1979: 294) referred. Green (2011: 11), in a discussion concerning how teachers currently demonstrate their professionalism and accountability, claims that teachers: 'will be obliged to bring about ends that are *already* decided upon and therefore their accountability ultimately lies in fulfilling the audit and funding requirements which secure an institution's survival'. Perhaps due to this, the teachers' own feelings about whether it was reasonable or feasible for them to be expected to teach French were not considered relevant. It is possible that the teachers in my study understood this and, moreover, that they understood their role as professionals to be more in line with being contractually compliant (Locke et al. 2005).

Continuing with the theme of accountability, it is noteworthy that there are very few references to the quality of the teaching of French in any of the six schools. The most important aspect of implementing the PMFL initiative seemed to point towards French being taught, irrespective of the quality of the French teaching and learning. There were many examples of teachers being concerned about their own grammar or pronunciation but these were overridden by the need to be seen to be teaching it. Niemi's (1999) alternative approach to professionalism, which focusses on the notion of teacher empowerment with teachers contributing to reform, was not in evidence at any point during this research. This lack of emphasis on the quality of the PMFL teaching and learning seems to have continued more broadly, with the focus on how many schools will meet the government's target of delivering the PMFL entitlement (see Wade et al. 2009), seemingly irrespective of the quality of this experience.

The findings from my research support the notion that professionalism in terms of the essential triangle of traits as proposed by Locke et al. (2005) is not applicable in the primary schools that participated. The views of the headteachers and the teachers themselves suggest that Darling-Hammond's (1990) concept is much more accurate in that unquestioning compliance has become the most important characteristic of professionalism. However, I argue that teacher compliance alone will not be enough to ensure effective implementation of the PMFL initiative as it is counterproductive to implement an initiative that does not benefit the children's learning due to poor SMK and PCK affecting the quality of teaching. Compliant attitudes of teachers are also not enough to ensure that change actually happens, as can be

seen from the example of Lucy at Heron who had every intention of incorporating change and was keen to comply but who then did not carry out change in practice. I now therefore explore the process of change in relation to the schools in the study.

## 5.6 The process of change

The change process is generally accepted to be complex and multi-faceted and as some of the main factors that impact on effective implementation of change have already been outlined in the literature review, I now return to some of the key issues that arose in the case study schools. Fullan (2007) published a broad set of guidelines that are helpful in contextualising the change process overall. He talks of three phases of change, *Initiation, Implementation and Continuation*, although only the first two are relevant to the focus of this study considering the introduction of PMFLs. To structure the exploration that follows, I take the first phase of *Initiation* and use Fullan's (1991: 63) notion of the '3 Rs' (*relevance, readiness and resources*) as the key indicators of whether the case study schools were in a position to begin the initiation phase.

Despite the very different nature, size, staffing and leadership of the two schools, there was a strong similarity in the perceived benefits of incorporating PMFLs into the curriculum. This seemed not to be attributable to the clarity of overarching aims in the languages Framework itself, as these had not yet been explicitly shared with the majority of teaching staff. The shared beliefs seemed to be based on individuals' personal beliefs, instincts and experiences and two commonly cited benefits also seemed to be as a result of received wisdom (these being that it is easier to learn a foreign language when younger, and that a child will be more open and accepting of other cultures if they are taught about them at a young age). Both these assumptions have been questioned by research evidence (see review of the literature for discussion). Nonetheless, the teachers did claim to have a clear vision of the need and utility of the PMFL initiative which are important aspects in the first element of the 3 Rs, *relevance*. The teachers in the study held positive beliefs about the PMFL initiative before they even began to teach French. However, bearing in mind the compliant attitude of the majority of teachers, and their perceived lack of choice, it may be that they adopted these beliefs in order to rationalise their decision to teach it. Taken at face value, therefore, both Heron and Bankside could claim that the teachers had accepted the *relevance* of the initiative, and were therefore in a position to begin the initiation phase

The second and third prerequisites of the initiation phase, *readiness and resources*, are the areas where the weaknesses of both the schools in terms of taking on the PMFL initiative come

to light. From an individual's perspective, despite having the conceptual capacity to teach French and the belief that it was a reasonable concept, the majority of the teachers did not possess the required knowledge or have the time to acquire this. Bankside provided resources (both practical resources and extensive AST training), but this did not result in some teachers' subject knowledge improving sufficiently to be able to deliver PMFLs confidently. There were several occasions in Bankside when I observed French lessons that had been planned by the AST which were then delivered by class teachers who were non-specialists in French and who had not had the time to go over the lesson content in advance. This resulted in the class teacher struggling with the linguistic content and relying on those children who had some knowledge of French from French club to support them. This also happened in Heron on occasions where the French coordinator had planned the objectives and resources for the lessons and then expected the class teachers to deliver them. On these occasions the class teachers looked to others (for example the TA) for support. Therefore neither school could be said to fully satisfy these two criteria and I therefore question whether they were in a position to implement the PMFL initiative effectively at this time.

The data showed that the headteachers were keen for their schools to be ready, possibly because the government deadline for implementation was looming, and therefore the PMFL initiative was implemented regardless of whether or not the teachers themselves felt ready. This reiterates the issue of increasing pressure of accountability, potentially at the expense of professionalism (Green 2011). Using Fullan's (2007) criteria for initiation as a framework, neither of the schools satisfied the criteria for the initiation phase of change at the time of fieldwork. The government requirement seemed to be leading the agenda for and the pace of change, superseding the capabilities of the schools themselves. On an optimistic note, Fullan (2007) points out that change is a process not an event and that schools can fluctuate between initiation and implementation and back again; if the change is not successful the first time aspects can be altered and the change tried again. It may be that Bankside and Heron will revisit some of the aspects (particularly the issue of teachers' subject knowledge) if they are not successful this time.

Having ascertained that the schools were not in an optimum position to implement the changes required of them, I now explore the factors affecting the implementation phase of change. Fullan (2007: 87) includes nine key factors under three headings. Many of the factors he identifies have already been discussed so I do not reiterate them here. However, given the findings I now highlight two key aspects most pertinent to my research: the importance of individual teachers' responses to change and whether the change is mandated or self-initiated.

Osborn et al. (2000) suggest that teachers rarely receive mandated change positively, but there was no real evidence of that in this study. The teachers seemed so accustomed to implementing initiatives that they did not distinguish between those which were externally mandated and those which came from within the school. This was certainly the case at Heron where there was a range of initiatives being introduced concurrently (both externally and internally driven) and they were received in the same way by the teachers.

Other factors that are worthy of note are the teachers' age and career stage. It has been suggested that more mature, experienced teachers are more cynical and less willing to engage with new initiatives (Hargreaves 2005; Reio 2005; Darby 2008), but my findings did not support this assertion. Mary was the most mature teacher (close to retirement) in the study, and although she appeared more cynical at the beginning of the study, she engaged the most with the initiative and taught more French than her younger, less experienced colleagues both in Heron and also in Bankside. Although Mary was the oldest participant by some years, the other more mature teachers did not appear less willing to try teaching French than their younger colleagues either. Martin (Heron), Hannah and Amy (Bankside) were also more experienced teachers and they were no less enthusiastic than their younger, less experienced colleagues. Therefore age and career stage did not appear to have an influence over teachers' willingness to engage with the new initiative among this limited sample.

It is clear that CPD for the teachers is one of the most important aspects of introducing PMFLs into the two primary schools in this study. According to Louis & Miles (1990), most training takes place before the implementation phase to prepare staff, but I did not find this. There was very little training or information given to teachers in advance. According to the coordinators in the two case study schools, the preferred approach was to introduce French incrementally in order to downplay the potential demands on teachers when they began to teach it. This was a strategy mentioned by several PMFL coordinators as a way to encourage staff to engage and not be 'frightened off'. There was some initial training in terms of introducing some new materials (initial planning materials and resources), but these were shared superficially, meaning that teachers could only repeat what they had been taught rather than transferring any deeper understanding to other contexts. However, this lack of in-depth initial training may not itself prevent the implementation of the initiative. Although some professional development needs to take place initially, like Fullan (2007), Guskey (2002: 383) claims that teachers need to engage and implement a new initiative before they start to truly believe in it:

The crucial point is that it is not the professional development *per se*, but the

experience of successful implementation that changes teachers' attitudes and beliefs. They believe it works because they have seen it work, and that experience shapes their attitudes and beliefs.

Guskey (2002: 383) presents an alternative model of CPD and teacher change where professional development starts a process that leads to a change in teachers' classroom practices which result in a change in student outcomes, finally causing a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Mary at Heron could be seen to be an example of this model of CPD. Originally she expressed reticence about having to teach French. She could imagine some potential benefits for the children in theory, but did not seem convinced by the initiative itself. After only one short period of training where the PMFL coordinator modelled a lesson for her and left her with some resources to use, Mary began trying to teach French with her class on a weekly basis. She had the least subject knowledge of all the participants and said she was not confident about teaching French. However she became very enthusiastic about it having seen the enjoyment of the children and the progress she felt they made. With very little professional development therefore, Mary's beliefs towards the PMFL initiative changed as a result of her own experience teaching it.

Amy at Bankside however seemed to get stuck at the first stage in the Guskey's (2002) model. She received so much training that she did not feel able to begin teaching French herself as she would not be able to do it to the same standard as the AST she had been observing. She was not therefore able to see the response of the children to her French lessons and so her attitudes towards teaching French did not change over the course of the study. Some of the other more confident teachers (such as Martin at Heron and Sarah at Bankside) did not need the professional development at the beginning and their positive attitudes towards PMFLs were strengthened with their experiences of teaching it and it was only the practicalities of fitting it into the timetable that threatened its continuation in these classes. Other less confident teachers, such as Lucy at Heron and Laura at Bankside, were perhaps not as determined to squeeze French into the timetable and so they did not teach it as frequently with the result that they did not see such gains in the children's understanding which in turn might have adversely affected their attitudes towards teaching it. Although both claimed they were keen to do so, Lucy at Heron had not taught any new French lessons at all and Laura at Bankside was relying purely on resources left by the AST which she did not fully understand, had not had time to adapt to her own style and so did not lead to visible progress being made by the children.

Another factor only briefly mentioned so far that may affect to what extent teachers will engage with the new PMFL initiative is the presence of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. When monitoring the effectiveness of implementing change, Louis & Miles (1990) claim that less successful schools use shallow strategies (such as denial, procrastination and moving staff around), whereas more effective schools engage with the monitoring process at a deeper level and look at ways in which long term improvements can be made to the change process (such as providing extra time/assistance or creating new roles). The monitoring process was virtually absent in Heron where the coordinator was not aware of how little French was actually being taught. The headteacher had no plans for monitoring this either as she delegated responsibility to the coordinator. At Bankside, Hannah had planned for ongoing support and monitoring of the implementation phase and the headteacher was also planning to be part of this. Guskey (2002) claims that a combination of support and pressure is required for continuing improvement and without a monitoring process it is difficult to envisage momentum being kept up and improvements in support being made available where necessary. Indeed, by the end of the study, momentum at Heron was already waning, due possibly in part to this lack of monitoring leading to ongoing support.

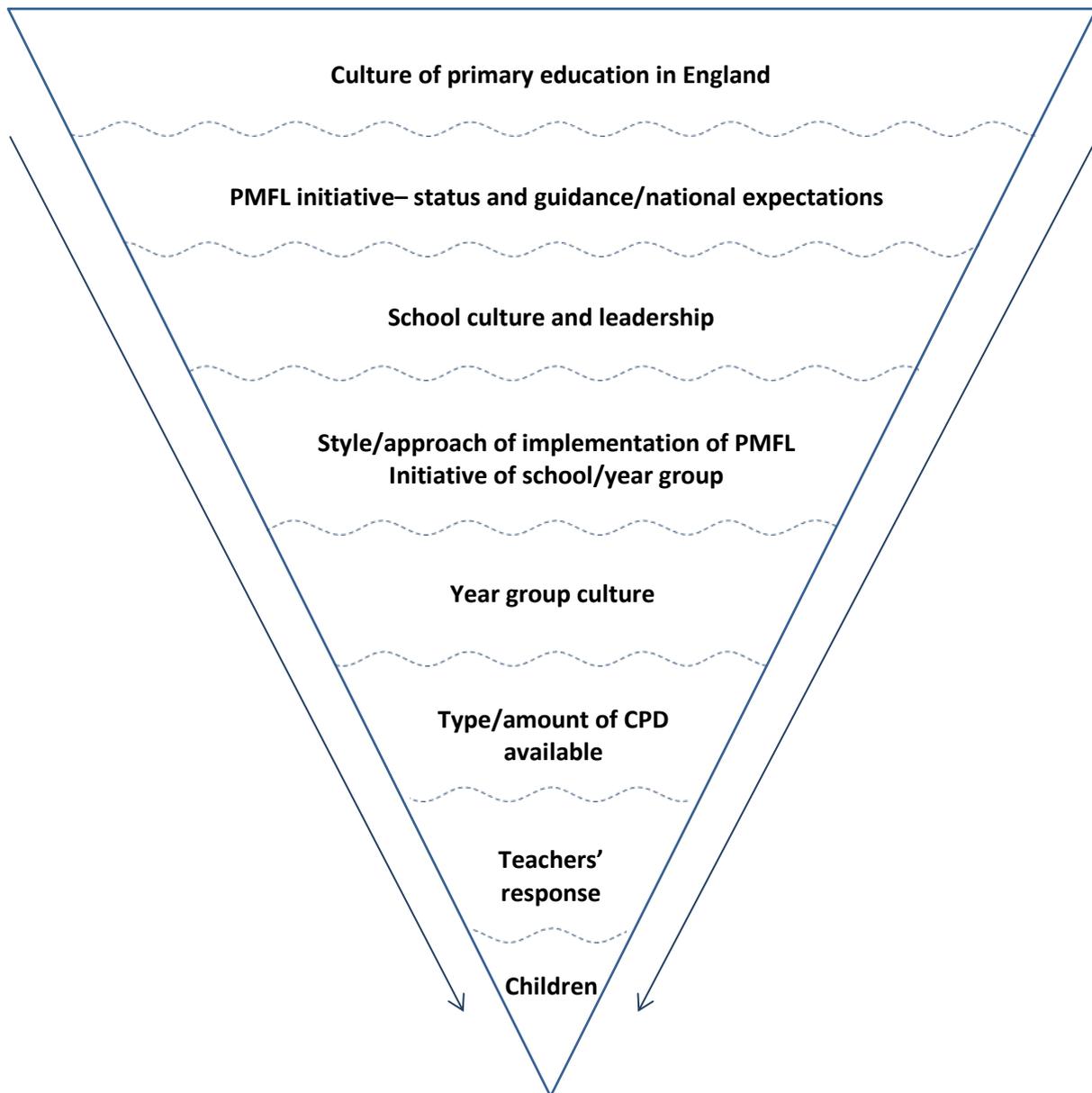
Having considered the factors that might affect how and whether an initiative is initiated and implemented and how reforms can impact on the teachers themselves, I now consider the reverse: the impact of the teachers on the initiative. It has been claimed by many that teachers mediate reforms; Osborn et al. (2000: 81) use the term 'creative mediators' and Croll et al. (1994: 333) refer to teachers as 'policy makers in practice'. Osborn (2007) reports on comparative research studies examining teachers' work in England, Denmark and France and concludes that the teachers had the potential to change, mediate and even subvert the policies they were expected to implement and in this way the teachers in her study were not merely 'passive victims of imposed educational reform' (p.11). In the same way, the teachers in my study interpreted the PMFL policy in their own, individual ways and, as a consequence, the French teaching that resulted may well not be what the policy makers had originally envisaged. Moving beyond the potential benefits of this type of 'creative mediation' (Osborn 2000: 81), there is the concept of 'lethal mutation' (McLaughlin 2008: 183) that can occur when a reform concentrates on structures, materials and routines without fully sharing the knowledge and beliefs that underpin it. McLaughlin (2008:181) reflects on the meaning of 'effective implementation' and what this actually means, that is, whether the term implies 'fidelity to the reformers' intent and specific directives' or whether it reflects more what happens as a result of the teachers implementing it in their own way. This difference in definition of effective implementation echoes the discussion I introduced earlier concerning

the aims of PMFL: can the PMFL initiative be deemed successful if the children are enjoying their French lessons, or do they need to be making linguistic progress in order for it to be evaluated as successful? Given the aims of the recently updated National Curriculum, which includes the intention for children to make substantial linguistic progress in a foreign language, enjoyment is clearly not enough. Therefore if this is the case, the PMFL initiative will have failed.

Of particular relevance to this study is McLaughlin's (2008) further querying whether a policy can be deemed to be successful if it is to the detriment of another. In the case of the introduction of French it appears that several initiatives were in direct competition with each other for curriculum time. It was possible therefore that the introduction of French could have been detrimental towards other initiatives (such as Music, Physical Education, Sex and Relationship Education) as they were all being introduced concurrently. However due to the relative low status of French, my study found it was French that was suffering as a result of the other initiatives.

Having discussed the main themes that arose in the literature and in the data from the initial interviews and the subsequent case studies, I conclude the discussion with a model of the factors that have affected implementation of the PMFL initiative in my study and shown in Figure 5.1. It is intentionally simplistic as the detail can be read in the discussion, but it provides an overview of the key issues and visually highlights how I perceive the teachers to be at the bottom of a precarious inverted triangle, with the weight of many other factors above them. I discuss the implications of this in the conclusion. I have also included children in this model: even though they are not the focus of the present study and have not featured in the discussion, the aim of every new initiative should be to enhance their education in some way, and so I acknowledge here that they are the ultimate focus of every new initiative and policy.

Figure 5.1: Actual model of implementation of the PMFL initiative



## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and implications**

This study has highlighted a range of issues that arose when the PMFL initiative was introduced into primary schools. There are several key areas that are the focus for some concluding remarks in this final chapter, and the basis of these are primarily, but not exclusively, the data gathered in the course of the two case studies.

### **6.1 'Initiativitis', accountability, the impact on teacher professionalism and compliance**

One of most frequently expressed opinions in this study was that there has been an overload of initiatives introduced into primary schools in England over a very short period of time and this corroborates a well-documented phenomenon which Hargreaves (2008: 24) refers to as 'initiativitis'. Many of the headteachers and teachers talked about the tiredness they felt and their 'battle weariness' in the face of an ongoing barrage of initiatives and change. This 'initiativitis' resulted in schools in this study introducing PMFLs hurriedly and without sufficient preparation. The initiative was mainly introduced to teachers without providing a theoretical background for its inclusion in the curriculum or an overview of the aims described in the Framework provided by the government. This led to teachers drawing their own conclusions about the objectives of teaching PMFLs which meant that the overall approach and lesson content varied widely even within the same year group. This will in time lead to difficulties with transition into secondary schools, a known hurdle for the effective introduction of PMFLs and one of the key reasons behind the failure of the previous attempt to introduce French into primary schools in the 1970s (Burstall et al. 1974). Instead of a school-wide strategic sharing of the PMFL initiative, selected teachers were given some (but usually very little) training to support the immediate delivery of French lessons. Insufficient time was dedicated to introducing PMFLs to the whole staff amongst numerous other competing priorities. Even for those schools who responded quickly, as Macrory & McLachlan (2009:268) point out: 'schools are faced with the need to implement a major national strategy with very variable resources....time is needed for teacher knowledge and understanding to be acquired...' The timescale for the introduction of PMFLs was set by the government but the evidence from this study leads me to question whether 2010 was ever achievable if schools were to implement the initiative thoroughly, with due regard to quality and longevity of provision, particularly if other initiatives were being introduced concurrently.

Wyse and Torrance (2009) argue that the primary curriculum in England is being narrowed as a result of the rise in accountability and this study corroborated this. School effectiveness concerns were so focussed on children's achievement in English and mathematics that these

subjects were usually those identified in schools' development plans, to the detriment of others. These subjects were given priority over all others both in the number of hours timetabled to teach them and the amount of monitoring and training. Consequently, other subjects, including French, were often squeezed out of the timetable. Green (2011) suggests that the rise of accountability (and particularly the importance of test results, for example SATs results in Year 6) has also led to some teachers feeling coerced into teaching in ways in which they are not entirely comfortable, such as teaching to the test. I witnessed this on several occasions and suggest that this has resulted in some teachers becoming more accustomed to teaching in ways in which they would not choose. This phenomenon has potentially paved the way for teachers agreeing to teach French even though they may not feel confident about it. This study has shown that several teachers were indeed continuing to teach French despite not being satisfied with their French lessons. This acceptance on behalf of the teachers heightens the likelihood of compliance in general and this leads me to conclusions relating to teacher professionalism.

The findings of this study support the argument that the concept of what it means to be a professional as a primary school teacher in England has changed radically and has become increasingly difficult to define. Indeed I argue that it may no longer be a relevant or useful term in this context. It appears that Sach's (2003: 5) notion of teachers developing an 'entrepreneurial' professional identity is entirely appropriate in the participating schools and this is so far removed from the classic definition of a profession involving knowledge, altruism and autonomy (Locke et al. 2005) so as to make the term defunct. Many teachers were unsure of their own beliefs concerning being a professional, and they spoke in terms of doing the best they could to comply with what was asked of them. I conclude that some teachers have become unquestioning, unresisting, compliant and sometimes fearful technicians, who attempt to meet the demands of accountability and in so doing, suppress their own educational values and acquiesce to those of the school and the government. Headteachers welcomed the compliance of class teachers without acknowledging the risk of poor quality teaching as a consequence, that is, teachers agreeing to teach French when they were ill equipped to do so effectively. This is not to suggest that compliance is necessarily antithetical to teachers' professionalism (although I have already highlighted the threat it poses to the trait of autonomy in the essential triangle); rather I argue that the definition of professionalism for teachers has changed. Fullan (2007) challenges the view that compliance is always desirable and he recognises that there are occasions when the most responsible action may be to reject a non-implementable innovation. Maurer (1996) concurs and claims that resisters should be taken seriously as they may have good reason to resist.

I do not suggest that high level of compliance found in this study is necessarily the teachers' fault, as throughout the research it was clear that they felt powerless and at times anxious of the consequences if they did not teach French as expected. They talked in terms of having no choice but also of their desire to do their best in difficult circumstances. The headteachers' responses showed that they too felt there was little choice for them in accepting new initiatives, and that the best approach was a pragmatic one. Rationalising this, both headteachers and class teachers sought to mediate the PMFL initiative to turn it into something they were more confident with, in some cases by skewing its aims and outcomes. This echoes the notion of 'creative mediation' (Osborn 2000: 81) but in some cases also led to 'lethal mutation' (McLaughlin 2008: 183), for example some teachers either stopped teaching French altogether or reduced the subject to a few songs and games. In essence this study has explored the 'micropolitical story' of what happens when 'policy on paper finds its way into school life' (Benjamin 2002: 135). The conclusion I draw echoes that of Ball et al. (2012: 2/3) when they make the distinction between 'policy implementation' and 'policy enactment'. They argue that the latter implies a degree of interpretation as a theoretical policy is translated into a set of actions in the context of a classroom. Therefore, how the case study schools have *enacted* the PMFL initiative may be a more appropriate question for this study.

In the enactment process, many of the teachers and headteachers emphasised the importance of fun and enjoyment for the children when learning PMFLs, thus downplaying the status of linguistic progression (which is more prominent in the original Framework). In this way teachers 'creatively mediated' the initiative and justified the lack of teaching linguistic progression in French by focussing on other, wider aims of PMFLs (including promoting cultural awareness, inclusion and motivation for future language learning). I argue that this change of emphasis serves to protect their identities as educators and enables them to introduce something worthwhile, even though it may not be what the policy makers originally intended. For many participating teachers this was essential as they did not possess sufficient SMK to teach language specific content of French.

## **6.2 Subject knowledge and Professional Development**

The majority of class teachers involved in this study claimed they were not sufficiently competent in their own subject knowledge of French to teach it confidently. At the time of the fieldwork there was an assumption in much of the rhetoric that generalist class teachers would be able to teach PMFLs as long as they were enthusiastic and willing. The focus on the teachers' subject knowledge in core subjects (exemplified by the need for teachers to have

GCSEs at least at Grade C level in English and Maths) serves to highlight the relative low status of PMFLs (as well as other foundation subjects) as no particular level of qualification/experience is needed to teach them. McLachlan (2009) also makes this point and highlights the implications of this for the status of primary languages. Although my study was not intended to be evaluative in nature, on the basis of observations and interview data I argue that in the majority of instances, teachers with a higher level of subject knowledge in French were more confident and competent, delivering French lessons more effectively through teaching correct vocabulary, modelling more authentic accents and using resources more confidently. These teachers were also able to use more of the target language, build on children's misunderstandings and use more incidental French, which helped them solve timetabling difficulties. Cable et al. (2010: 148) also concluded that teachers' linguistic skills were one of the main conditions for effective teaching and learning of PMFLs; they found that children made the most progress in their learning of PMFLs where they had received 'consistent provision, where teachers were experienced and where teachers' linguistic skills were strong'.

There has never been any central directive as to who should be responsible for teaching PMFLs, although many researchers (for example Burstall et al. 1974; Driscoll, Jones & Macrory 2004; Wade et al. 2009) have outlined the benefits of the generalist class teachers (such as being in the best position to use the MFL in cross curricular ways, knowing the children best, understanding the primary curriculum and knowing effective, age appropriate pedagogical approaches). While a certain level of linguistic proficiency is often acknowledged as desirable, I conclude more strongly that it is essential in order for the children to benefit adequately from learning French from their class teachers and for the teachers themselves to feel confident in teaching it. Unlike Cable et al. (2010), who found that the headteachers in their study acknowledged the issue of a lack of staff expertise in terms of language skills, I found a lack of concern about this both from the headteachers (who did not mention class teachers' subject knowledge as being an issue) and the PMFL coordinators who down-played the level of specific knowledge of French needed so as to encourage the teachers to engage with teaching it.

It was the teachers' lack of subject knowledge in French that presented the biggest threat to the successful implementation of PMFLs in the schools involved in my study. Although the majority of the class teachers were willing to try teaching French, as McLachlan (2009: 196) states: 'limited linguists can only teach to their own limits.' However as change is an ongoing process rather than a one-off event, it is possible that these schools will go back a stage in the implementation process to revisit the issue of teachers' subject knowledge. The approach

attempted in both the case study schools was to introduce teaching French before teachers were sufficiently upskilled in their language proficiency, in the hope perhaps that the teachers would then realise that the level of French required was not initially very high and that this would raise their confidence. This echoes the model advocated by Guskey (2002) which I presented in the previous chapter, where teachers' classroom practice changes before their beliefs. However the teachers in my study were already positive about the idea of PMFLs; it was their insecurity over their expertise that was the issue and this was not solved by starting quickly and in some cases this caused the reverse to happen. CPD is therefore a key issue and I now consider what this study has shown in this regard.

Ten years after the implementation of languages into primary school in Scotland, Crichton & Templeton (2010) summarise the situation and provide some advice for LAs in England as they attempt to introduce PMFLs. One of their key messages was the need to be aware of the training needs involved, but it appears that this warning was not heeded. Funding was non-existent in one LA and minimal in the other. The CPD available in the schools themselves also differed, with more provided by Bankside Junior than Heron Primary. The PMFL coordinator in the latter envisaged more support for class teachers than actually materialised, due mainly to funding issues resulting in her not being released from her own class commitments to train others. Similarly whilst several teachers in both schools talked of being able to ask for support from their more knowledgeable colleagues, in the event, insufficient time prevented them doing this. The lived reality for the class teachers was therefore very different from the original intentions. In other studies (see Wade et al. 2009) the training and funding from the LAs seemed to be more in evidence than in the study reported here, where it was often non-existent as a result of being distributed on an ad hoc basis not understood by the majority of PMFL coordinators or headteachers.

I have previously presented two different approaches to CPD: the more traditional approach which includes activities such as attending seminars, lectures and one-off INSET days led by external specialists, and the more recent approach which has superseded it, using strategies such as modelling and teachers collaborating with each other in meaningful, relevant activities on site (see Hunzicker 2011). The plan for staff development and training in both the case study schools was to adopt an embedded approach relying mainly on modelling and team teaching. In the case of Bankside this was done with the AST and in Heron the plan was for the PMFL coordinator to do this. However I found limited evidence of success of this approach. Where the AST regularly modelled and team taught with the class teachers in Bankside, although initially grateful for the support, some class teachers began to feel uncomfortable

about having an expert in the room with them as this made them self-conscious about their own, often less than perfect efforts to speak French. This concurs with Field (2011) who claims that mentors and mentees need to be carefully matched to avoid too great a gap in knowledge between them. The initial improvement in the class teachers' confidence concurs with Johnson's (2003) summary of the key benefits of teacher collaboration, claiming that providing teachers with moral support is one of its key advantages. This was also identified by many of the respondents in this research. However, I also found (like Johnson 2003) that there are disadvantages associated with collaboration as CPD. I argue that the team teaching approach became stifling for some teachers, preventing them from regaining ownership and delivering French lessons independently. Having the support of the AST certainly seemed to give the class teachers a feeling of security at the outset, helping them feel less daunted by the initiative, as time went on it seemed to lose potency. I conclude therefore that some modelling and team teaching may be beneficial initially for enhancing class teachers' confidence and competence in using particular French vocabulary and constructions but that this approach would have been more effective in Bankside if the person in the mentoring role had not been a native French speaker as this represented too wide a gap in expertise.

Teachers lacking confidence in their own French subject knowledge were also unable to make the most of the resources prepared for them. Field (2011) argues that where teachers adopt the ideas and materials without reflection, they can become over-reliant on other people. I add a further disadvantage of this phenomenon as I observed how the lack of ownership resulted in confusion for teachers and children. I argue that the loss of autonomy outweighed the possible advantage of a reduction in workload and led to some teachers stopping teaching French altogether. I therefore conclude that a combination of an embedded, collegiate approach to CPD coupled with some more traditional strategies might offer greater promise in improving teachers' subject knowledge in French. An important finding with regards to CPD is that the teachers were not consulted about their preferred approach; the strategies were decided by the PMFL coordinator sometimes in conjunction with the headteacher. More consultation with teachers at the outset might lead to more effective strategies.

There are further considerations with regards the delivery of CPD, particularly the experience of the person delivering it. All the teachers who worked with the AST at Bankside appreciated her helpfulness and friendly approach, but her lack of experience of teaching in primary schools was a disadvantage. She was a secondary school MFL teacher appointed by the LA to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of PMFLs across the city. Due to her lack of experience in primary schools, class teachers expressed several concerns including the view that some of the

content of the French lessons planned by the AST was not age appropriate, she was not familiar with the rest of the primary curriculum and so was not able to link the French lessons with other subject areas and that at times the AST assumed they had greater knowledge than they actually did so information was not given to them or the children in a way they found accessible. I conclude from this that with limited time and resources available to support the PMFL initiative, teachers with primary school experience are needed to deliver the CPD to be effective.

In Heron there was not enough modelling observed to allow comment on the effectiveness of this approach in this school. Although many participants talked of their willingness and a desire to collaborate, in reality a lack of funding and time made this impossible. The disparity between the CPD needs and responses to CPD of individual teachers in both schools leads me on to outline the conclusions that can be drawn with regards to the importance of the individual on the implementation of the PMFL initiative.

### **6.3 The importance of individuals and their voices**

The case study approach enables the researcher to explore in-depth the reactions and responses of individuals and this was particularly important to this study. The individual responses to the PMFL initiative both within and across the case study schools varied enormously. Amy and Laura in Bankside and Mary and Lucy in Heron all had a very low level of subject knowledge in French but each responded very differently. Despite being in the same school and sharing a lack of French subject knowledge, Mary approached teaching French enthusiastically and taught it regularly, whereas Lucy began optimistically but then stopped teaching it altogether. Similarly Amy was loathe to begin teaching French whereas Laura (who had a little more confidence in her own French SMK) was happy to give it a try and was keen to teach without the support of the AST. One of the striking differences between these teachers was their willingness to be seen by the children as a learner. Mary and Laura both commented that they were very happy for their class to see them in this role, whereas both Lucy and Amy referred to doubts about performing in front of the children and seeming unsure about what they were teaching. I therefore suggest that willingness to relinquish the traditional image of the teacher being the expert had an impact on whether the teachers attempted teaching PMFLs. This is also related to the teachers' individual identity and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 2000): Mary and Laura were more secure in their cultural capital as teachers and felt it was less of a risk to be seen in a different role. Related to this issue of security, a teacher's attitude to risk also seems to influence willingness to try teaching French despite having little

subject knowledge. I did not find age to be influential, unlike other studies mentioned previously. It may be that because the oldest participant (Mary) was close to retirement she felt enabled to take risks. As all teachers are individuals with their own personal feelings, dispositions, insecurities, strengths and previous experiences, I argue that these factors need to be taken into consideration when planning the introduction of a new initiative and I expand on this later in the implications section.

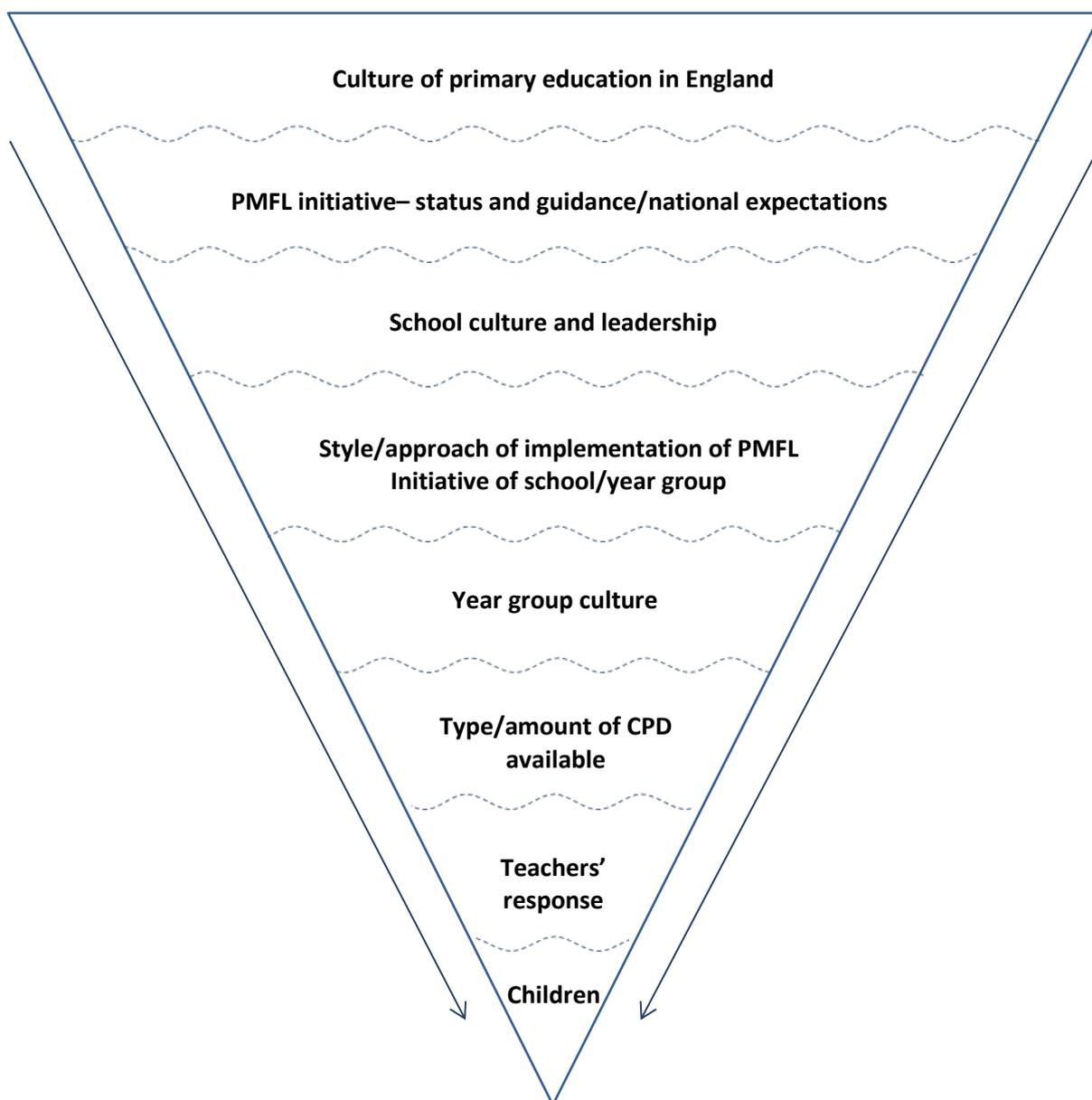
The headteachers involved in this study also had their own personal approaches and beliefs. Some spoke of a need to be empathetic towards their staff and protect them from excessive demands, whilst others seemed to value this less, expecting their staff to be able to teach anything asked of them. Ultimately, with an initiative that is due to become statutory, the headteacher has little choice but to transmit this to the staff, although the way in which this is done can be more or less supportive. In Heron, where the headteacher seemed to have less empathy for teachers' insecurities, one of the class teachers who stopped teaching French did not admit this to anyone, possibly fearful about what may happen as a result. Conversely in Bankside where the headteacher was considered by the staff to be very supportive, Amy was open about her attitude towards teaching French and as a result received more training. Being seen as empathetic and involved in this instance led to the headteacher being able to intervene where a teacher was experiencing difficulties. In the example of Heron, the approach of the headteacher led to a more distant approach which meant that she was unaware of the feelings of her teaching staff and consequently not in a position to intervene and support. The size of the school may have been a contributory factor in this, but this distance reflected the chosen management style of the individual headteacher in this instance.

Cable et al. (2010: 148) found in their longitudinal study that to effectively introduce and sustain primary languages, 'the enthusiasm, commitment and vision of the headteachers were critical.' They conclude that it is important that a school wide commitment is adopted and that a firm strategy is in place. The strategic approach adopted by all the headteachers in this study was to develop leadership in others by appointing a PMFL coordinator to oversee the implementation of the initiative. In many cases only those teachers directly involved in teaching French were informed of the PMFL initiative in any detail, whilst other teachers were not involved at all. The potential benefits (outlined by Macrory 2008b) of adopting a school wide approach and involving all teachers, additional adults, parents/carers, were not realised as French was being introduced in silos. Momentum for the introduction of the PMFL initiative therefore relied on the enthusiasm and commitment of a few key individuals (particularly the PMFL coordinators). Many of the respondents commented on this and highlighted the

importance of the personalities of the PMFL coordinators in terms of enabling its introduction and then sustaining it. In Heron particularly, it was important that the subject coordinators were confident, determined and assertive in fighting for the status of their subject. In Bankside the initiative itself had more support from the headteacher and so it was less important for the individual coordinator to take sole responsibility for driving the French agenda. The attitude of the headteacher is therefore key in how supported the coordinator and staff feel and therefore how coherent and sustainable the approach to implementation is.

In the previous chapter I presented a model of the factors that influenced the implementation process of primary languages in my case study schools where the teachers and children are placed at the bottom of a triangle with all the other factors weighing down on them ( Figure 5.1 reproduced below).

Figure 5.1: Actual model of implementation of the PMFL initiative



During this study it became clear that policy makers were not listening to the voices of the teachers and nor were they seeking them. My findings corroborate the claim of Lefstein & Perath (2014) that the rise of political and public involvement in educational issues has marginalised teachers' participation. I see this as unwise and unjust as it is the teachers who are initially impacted most directly by policies and initiatives, and it is they who then mediate the impact on the children. It is the teachers who are ultimately responsible for how initiatives are implemented (or not) in their classrooms. Rather than the inverted triangle in Figure 5.1, I suggest that the alternative model below (Figure 6.1) would be more desirable in several ways.

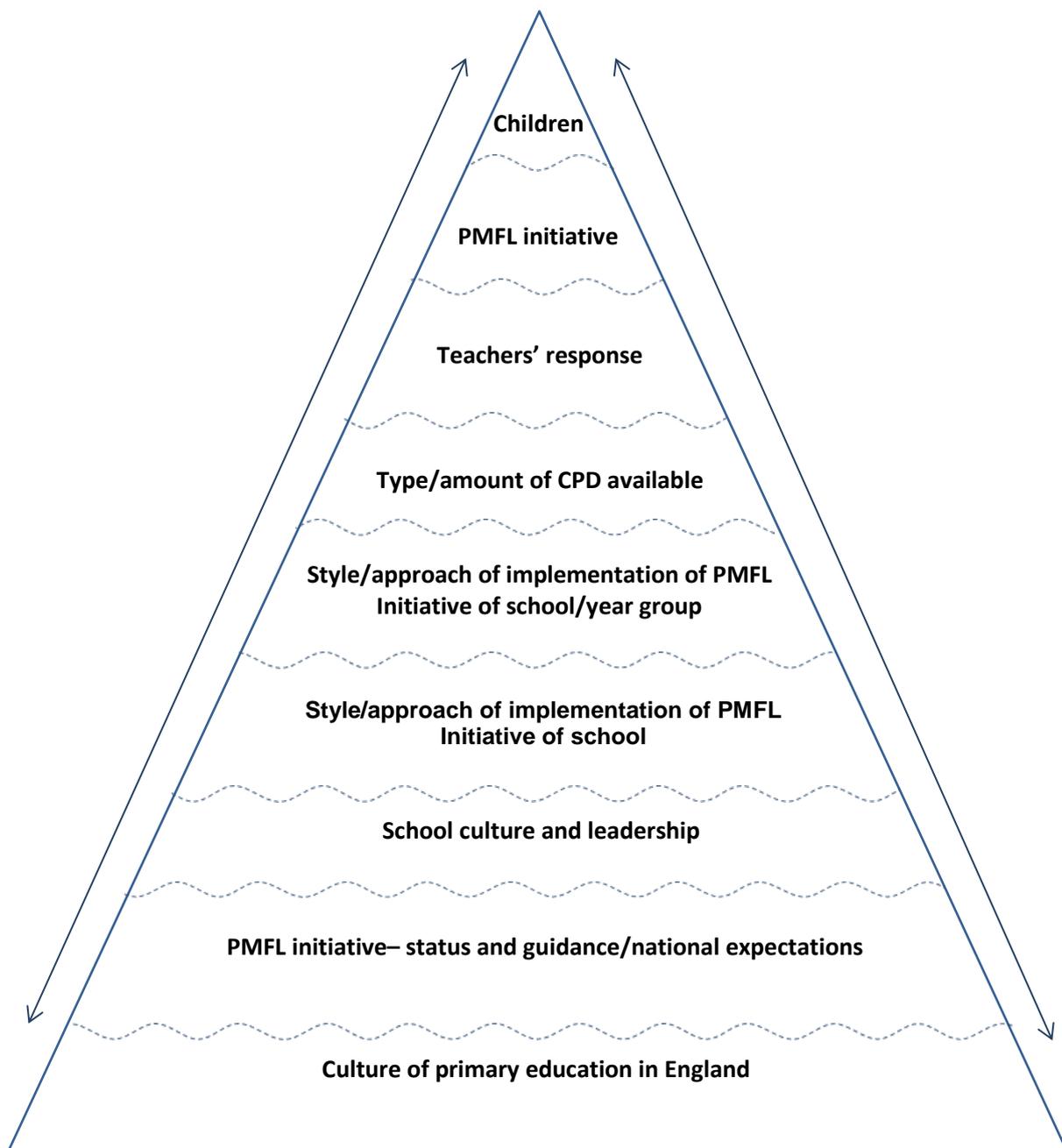


Figure 6.1: Alternative model of implementation of the PMFL initiative

The model I propose places children and teachers at the apex of the triangle with their opinions influencing the other factors beneath them. In this model opinions, ideas, initiatives and pressures ebb and flow. The two directional arrows represent a mutually influencing approach rather than the one-way flow of Figure 5.1; I suggest that this two-directional flow of influence will be enabled by more and better communication and by consultation between policy makers and headteachers, teachers and children. Teachers' opinions would need to be sought more actively and their voices given a forum before initiatives are implemented. More than twenty years ago Cohn & Kottkamp (1993: xvi) argued that 'efforts to improve education are doomed to failure until teachers become respected partners in the process' and I argue that their voices are still missing at every level. At a national level their opinions are not sought and initiatives are introduced at a very high rate irrespective of teachers' abilities to cope. Even at a school level, their individual feelings and suggestions are not always heard (for example the approaches to CPD did not reflect the teachers' self-perceived needs and there was little monitoring of their changing attitudes and concerns).

#### **6.4 Reflections on the research process**

Before I go on to discuss some of the implications of this study I now reflect on some of the issues I highlighted at the beginning in my consideration of methodology. I acknowledge once again that the implications and recommendations I make, based on the conclusions I have drawn, are clearly not statistically generalisable (Yin 2012) but I argue that a degree of 'fuzzy generalisation' (Bassegy 1999: 12) can be applied. From studying two particular schools in-depth I argue that the conclusions and implications may be transferable to other contexts. My choice of schools (being contrasting from each other rather than extreme or deviant from many other schools) I hope enhances this possibility. It can be assumed that there will be many other teachers in a similar position to those I have detailed in this study. I have intentionally focussed on those teachers who were not confident PMFL teachers as their responses to the initiative were the most interesting in terms of how they approached and responded to change being imposed on them, although I acknowledge that there were some teachers in the study who were teaching PMFLs confidently who were not experiencing these difficulties or challenges. The increasing numbers of class teachers confidently teaching PMFLs are also reflected in other large scale studies (for example Wade et al. 2009).

One of the aspects of the research that I found most challenging was maintaining the role of researcher rather than advisor to the class teachers when they clearly wanted help and support. I found that at times I was unable to remain separate from the process and there were occasions when I team-taught French lessons with some class teachers. Ethically I felt this

was the most appropriate response in this situation and unlikely to threaten the validity of my research: my willingness to participate certainly enhanced my relationship with the participants, which meant I was more trusted and not seen as an external evaluator. This is one of the key differences between my study and many others related to the introduction of PMFLs. The case study approach and my position as an unpaid researcher rather than an evaluator helped the class teachers feel able to speak openly to me, admitting their insecurities and even their secret non-compliance. Some other studies into PMFLs have been on a larger scale, conducted by larger research teams, possibly by researchers unknown to the research participants. I question whether class teachers in these instances would have felt confident enough to express their lived reality of introducing PMFLs. The nature of the larger scale project also means that the individual voices get lost in the search for generalisations and nation-wide recommendations.

The aims of this study differed from others in that I sought to hear and make heard the voices of the vulnerable individuals (i.e. the less confident class teachers) rather than to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the PMFL initiative at school level. It is therefore the situatedness of this research and the focus on the individual lived experience that makes it different from other studies of the PMFL initiative. In this way I am able to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the experiences of individual teachers rather than the school or the initiative itself. Within the research process, instead of finding out whether and to what degree languages are being taught in primary schools, my aim became to highlight at what cost. Having consulted with and observed class teachers with a wide range of subject knowledge, confidence and competence in primary modern foreign languages I question whether for some teachers it might be more appropriate not to expect them to teach PMFLs at this time.

In attempting to understand and describe the lived realities for the teachers in my study I realise that at times it might appear that I am being critical of them and their practice. This is not my intention and I hope that my position in terms of my aim to make their experiences visible reassures the reader that I do not wish to criticise any individual participant. At times I have been critical of some of the practice I observed, but this was unavoidable in showing the unreasonable demands being made of some teachers and the difficult position in which they find themselves. Investigating and making known the everyday experience of these teachers was a key part of this research. Although the everyday has tended to be considered mundane (Pink 2012), I question whether this is the case for the teachers themselves (according to the Oxford English dictionary definition of mundane as 'Lacking interest or excitement; dull'). Pink

(2012: 5) argues that the everyday: 'is where we make our worlds and where our worlds make us'. She claims that to understand people's everyday lives we need to accept that it is not necessarily mundane. Wood (2012: 216) also discusses the importance of researching the 'everyday'; she emphasises the important role of feminist researchers in exploring the everyday experiences of 'traditionally disempowered' people. My argument in this study is that teachers have become disempowered and so their everyday experiences are in need of study. My belief in the importance of the everyday for ordinary teachers explains my reason for researching the introduction of the PMFL initiative in the way that I have.

I now go on to outline some of the key implications from the study. As the research was focussed on the enactment of policy into practice I combine implications for these two areas to avoid overlap. I then present implications for further research.

### **6.5 Implications for policy and practice**

The high level of accountability based predominantly on children's performance in English and mathematics had a direct negative impact on the status of the PMFL initiative and consequently the schools in this study did not prepare sufficiently for its implementation. The majority of headteachers were not directly involved in the implementation of PMFLs in their schools as it was not considered to be a priority in terms of accountability. Given the importance of the role of the headteacher in successfully implementing new initiatives, this study has shown that policy makers need to convince headteachers of the aims and the rationale of PMFLs in order to encourage them to fully support their introduction. This would raise the status of PMFLs within schools and could result in a whole school commitment to their introduction with a school-wide understanding of their aims.

In the current political climate, it is unrealistic to expect a reduction in school accountability, and as the focus is likely to remain on the core subjects, there is a need for teachers to find a forum to voice their concerns and difficulties when expected to implement additional initiatives in this context. Currently in England this forum does not exist. In 1998 the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) was set up to act as the professional body for teaching and there was potential for this body to serve as the forum for the consultation which my study has shown is needed. It originally had three aims: to maintain a register of teachers in England, to regulate the teaching profession and most importantly for this study, to provide advice to the government and other agencies on a wide range of policy issues affecting the teaching profession. However the GTCE was disbanded in 2012. Menter et al. (2004) and Burgess (2008) have argued that its powers and influence were always limited and so it never actually served its third purpose, unlike its counterpart, the GTC in Scotland. One of the key

implications from my study is therefore the need to consider the reinstatement of a professional body for teachers in England which could act as a conduit for real engagement from the teaching profession prior to the implementation of new initiatives. Baumfield et al. (2010:71) provide the example of the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, where 'engagement' rather than more superficial 'consultation' was prioritised and valued and this participatory approach could serve as an example for England.

Even the existence of a national professional body would not give every individual teacher a voice, so the next implication is for individual headteachers and coordinators to consider. This study has shown that there is a need for them to discuss and be responsive to individual class teachers' concerns or difficulties in implementing a new initiative. This could lead to a wider range of CPD activities catering for the actual needs of the class teachers, rather than a one size fits all approach. The effectiveness of the CPD and the teachers' changing needs for particular types of training also needs to be tracked. To facilitate CPD, funding specifically targeted at developing teachers' linguistic skills needs to be available and made known to headteachers. Teachers would then need to have time to engage with the CPD which also potentially has funding implications or could be addressed through careful organisation of PPA time and consideration of school priorities.

A key recommendation from this study is that CPD needs to be appropriate and relevant to the individual teacher for the specific learning that needs to take place. Ongoing discussions between coordinators, headteachers and class teachers are therefore essential. Associated with this issue of CPD is the implication that the importance of teachers' subject knowledge in primary languages needs to be acknowledged and policy makers, headteachers and PMFL coordinators need to accept that a degree of subject knowledge is essential if the PMFL curriculum is to contain an element of linguistic progression. I found a tendency to downplay the importance of subject knowledge to justify the lack of training available and to encourage class teachers to be positive towards teaching languages resulting in teachers with insufficient subject knowledge trying to teach PMFLs. A public/official acknowledgement of the importance of teachers' subject knowledge in PMFLs is needed for CPD to be taken seriously.

This leads to the aims of languages in primary schools in general. There needs to be a clearer rationale and focus shared with teachers if issues of quality and transition are to be addressed. In this study, teachers interpreted the aims very loosely and many teachers considered fun to be the most important aspect of PMFL teaching and learning. If this is not the case and linguistic progression is desirable (as was stated in the PMFL Framework at the time), PMFL coordinators need to share this more explicitly with the class teachers to reach a consistent

approach within and beyond the individual school. In the absence of this, class teachers will reinterpret the initiative to match their own linguistic skills. A more consistent, less flexible approach to the teaching of PMFLs may therefore be needed.

Finally, where teachers are seen to be non-compliant (whether overtly or more subtly) rather than considering these teachers to be unhelpful or unprofessional it would be more constructive to explore the reasons and reasonableness behind this. It may be the case that some teachers should not be expected to teach PMFLs if their own subject knowledge is not sufficiently developed. Although the generalist class teacher is often considered to be the person in the best position to teach PMFLs, this is dependent on their individual level of language proficiency and this should be reflected in schools' approaches to the delivery of PMFLs.

### **6.6 Implications for further research**

During this study I have occasionally referred to the responses of the children during French lessons, and I have acknowledged their importance in the discussion chapter; however I have not specifically focused on them or their views and this would be an area to develop in future. I have purposely explored the views of those responsible for implementing the PMFL initiative as they are the mediators and will determine the learning experienced by the children. A next step would be to listen to the children's voices to better understand the impact of the PMFL initiative on them.

There is also a need for more in-depth studies of this type which focus on individual schools but which are more longitudinal in scope. I have explored the experiences of a group of teachers in two particular schools over a period of a year, but these experiences will evolve and change and it would be interesting to see how teachers' feelings and actions develop over a longer period of time and using a wider range of school contexts.

Teachers' subject knowledge has emerged as an important issue in this study but it is unclear as yet precisely what level of subject knowledge a teacher needs to deliver the language element of the PMFL initiative confidently and competently. This will of course depend on the exact content of the curriculum and will differ depending on the individual teacher but further research into what specific subject knowledge is desirable would be helpful.

## **6.7 Post script**

*At the time of this research, schools in England were working towards primary modern foreign languages in key stage 2 becoming an entitlement in 2010 and the government at the time had indicated that this would become a statutory requirement in 2011. Due to a change in government in 2010, the status of PMFLs became unclear until the new curriculum to be implemented from September 2014 was published. This new curriculum has made learning a foreign language in key stage 2 compulsory (although this language may be modern or ancient). The Languages purpose of study section of the new curriculum (DfE 2013: 212) states that: 'Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world.' However the more specific aims do not reflect this sentiment and are focused entirely on developing aspects of linguistic competence and the subject content guidance specifies that the teaching should enable children to make 'substantial progress in one language' (DfE 2013: 213). The need for teachers to have adequate subject knowledge has therefore become even more important with the explicit linguistic requirements outlined in the new curriculum. Whereas the original PMFL Framework was not statutory, the new curriculum is and therefore teachers and schools will not be able to reinterpret it so easily. The more prescribed approach of the new curriculum may ease transition into secondary school as primary schools have less flexibility interpreting the aims of PMFLs in general. However this will depend on the teachers being equipped to meet these expectations. The development in the status of languages in the new primary curriculum makes this study highly relevant as schools now try to deliver the new languages programmes of study. The issues faced by teachers in the original research have perhaps been on hold for a few years but will now once again come to the fore.*

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Factors necessary for effective professional development (Reproduced from Adey 2004: 194)

1. The Innovation
  - 1a has an adequate theory-base
  - 1b introduces methods for which there is evidence of effectiveness
  - 1c is supported with appropriate high quality materials
  
2. The PD programme
  - 2a is of sufficient length and intensity
  - 2b uses methods which reflect the teaching methods being introduced
  - 2c includes provision for in-school coaching
  
3. Senior management in the school(s)
  - 3a are committed to the innovation
  - 3b share their vision with the implementing department leaders
  - 3c institute necessary structural change to ensure maintenance
  
4. The teachers
  - 4a work in a group to share experiences
  - 4b communicate effectively amongst themselves about the innovation
  - 4c are given an opportunity to develop a sense of ownership of the innovation
  - 4d are supported in questioning their beliefs about teaching and learning
  - 4e have plenty of opportunity for practice and reflection

## Appendix 2: Example of headteacher interview first level analysis

### 1. AP – Sequential content analysis

#### Emergent themes:

General Theme	Sub-theme	Specific	Line no
Current situation re PMFLs	Current level of implementation	Incorporated into all KS2 yr groups	7 onwards
Strategic planning	Type of model adopted	Expert-novice model  AST modelling  Incremental + planned	12 onwards  104  219  273
Potential issues/difficulties	Teacher confidence	One CT in particular	58
	Teachers feeling scared/apprehensive		262
	Staff turnover	If AST left-need to train critical mass  Contingency plan in place if PMFL coord leaves  General staff turnover	290  515  574
	Transition	These chn go to a variety of secondary schools (4). Some assessment at end of Y6 will be needed	464
	Momentum	Sees his role as keeping momentum going	491
Benefits	Parental involvement	Using PMFL as a springboard to get more parents involved with more things	23  606
	Links	Links to secondary school AST + one other	228
Teacher/chn response	Enjoyment	Y6 secondary teacher visiting	80

	Enthusiastic	CTs in general and children CTs very keen	121 157
View of PMFLs in general	Personal response to PMFLs	Very positive: enthusiasm	189
Sensitivity to teachers	Understanding teachers' position and feelings	Aware of teachers' feelings and the impact of this on the way he's introduced it: gently and scaffolded	262
Logistics/practicalities	Timetabling	Cross curricular approach makes more time in timetable-taking time from other subjects	305
Approach to implementation	Leadership style Delegation	Providing support and monitoring  Appointed PMFL Coordinator  Build capacity of PMFL coordinator	348  366  354 496
Decision for specific language	Audited staff expertise	Staff had most expertise in French Previous HT decision  HT keen to see progression	389   438
Communication	Between LA and primary school	This HT was only one of a few to contact the LA requesting support Haphazard: first come first served	477

**Appendix 3: Example of headteacher interview second level analysis**

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
Personal response to PMFL initiative	Positive response	All*** Heron: sees it as a need and has been trying to include some French in the curriculum for several years already-no support available. She says she can't see where the problem is.**  Southerley: "It's crazy not to" as long as it's done properly**	All agree with the idea in principle: for different reasons.
Benefits to children	Inclusivity	Landmark: Encourages chn with SEN***	
	Impact on learning	Bankside: benefits on so many levels Southerley: helps with literacy skills	
	Confidence building	Landmark: build self confidence*** Uplands: good to change "can't do" attitude	
	Fun and enjoyment	Bankside: believes chn and teachers are enjoying it*** Smithfield: found chn enjoyed it when she used to teach it in the past	Bankside comment" They're keen...very keen" (ref the teachers)

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		Uplands: needs to be fun-wants teachers and children to play with it-worried assessment might spoil it*	
	Embarrassment if unable to speak another language	Smithfield: talked about English people shouting at foreigners when abroad. Wants children to become linguistically proficient.**  Uplands: ashamed of reputation of English people not speaking others languages*	
	Utilitarian need	Southerley: important to have a command of another language to make travel easier  Uplands: good for business with other countries*	
	Cultural reasons	Smithfield: helps challenge stereotypes (unlike in the past)***	
Perception of head teacher role in model of adoption	Current level of implementation  Strategic plan	All appointed PMFL coordinator: Landmark-completely delegated but provides money for resources** Heron: confident in delegating*  Smithfield: would like to delegate more but staff turnover makes this impossible currently so HT is overseeing it. Aware of need to plan strategically and has plans for the future(but flexible ones) for the longer term.  Bankside: Expert-novice approach- capacity building-critical mass of staff trained Heron: mentoring and coaching approach  Southerley: strategic plan to start in Y3 and then follow through-having lots of teachers doing it eventually will make it more sustainable. Currently pockets of French	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>being taught depending on the CT. Worked out that half the teachers need to teach French so other half don't have to if they choose not to.</p> <p>Bankside: Adding one year group at a time</p> <p>Heron the same: Y3 &amp; 4 first then 5 &amp; 6 next year</p> <p>Smithfield: PPA in each yr gp-1 afternoon per week. Peripatetic French teacher Y3 &amp; 4, secondary French teacher in Y5 &amp; 6.</p> <p>Landmark: unsure of level of implementation, unsure why French**</p> <p>Southerley: Sucking and seeing. Doesn't want to make it a three line whip.</p> <p>Heron: delegated decision making to PMFL coord and will advise when necessary. She says she hasn't blocked PMFL coord bringing it in. Wants others to have ownership. Distributive leadership style.</p> <p>Heron: everyone should be able to teach everything. PMFL coord going into classes and modelling: coaching is the way to increase confidence</p> <p>Heron: strategic plan is to have a number of people who can support initiative so not dependent on 1 person: big enough staff: succession planning. Difficult due to high staff turnover in big school.</p> <p>Uplands: Succession planning hard in small schools (as everyone has 2/3 subjects already)</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>Heron: learnt from bringing in past initiatives: introduce from Y3 and work up school slowly to learn year on year</p> <p>Smithfield: led by HT so far. Not involved rest of staff-explained the initiative to them. Would like to get all CTs to deliver French but not sure if that will actually happen</p> <p>Southerley: Thinks all teachers can teach anything as they're intelligent people so they can learn but this may not be enough if you want excellence-he often refers to the need to do it properly** (quality and sustainability)</p> <p>Uplands: Begun in Y3 &amp; 4 in house, specialist visiting secondary teacher in Y5-not yet in Y6</p>	
	<p>Knowledge and understanding of initiative</p>	<p>Bankside-aware of requirement for implementation by 2010.</p> <p>Landmark: seems very unsure</p> <p>Heron: admits not having the knowledge of specific initiative but does have experience of implementing initiatives in general. Knows it must be brought in by 2010.</p> <p>Smithfield: HT is mainly introducing it at the moment so she's reasonably knowledgeable. Knows there are resources available to support teachers. Knows what</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>the entitlement will be from 2010 and mentions this twice.**</p> <p>Southerley: used to teach French a long time ago-French specialist in a primary school. Poor practice in the past-horrendous “En avant”-chn bored. He watched the demise of French in the 70s and has learnt that it needs to be done properly** this time-resourcing, planning</p> <p>Uplands: very knowledgeable about the initiative (knows about the assessment discussion-languages ladder). He has taught French previously in Y7 with the old initiative. Shame it failed that time-no sense of frustration.</p>	
	How to support PMFL coordinator	<p>Bankside **: sees this as his main role.</p> <p>Bankside: will monitor that staff are teaching French. Planned staff meetings for training. One held previously where audit of staff expertise took place.</p> <p>Heron: is there to advise and not block initiative. Providing funding.</p> <p>Smithfield: not really spoken to PMFL coord about it yet as she’s just taken over from the previous PMFL coord.</p> <p>Uplands: supporting PMFL coord and raising expectation that it will happen. Put on school improvement plan</p>	This was seen as supportive rather than staff surveillance

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
Communication	Between central govt, LA and individual primary schools	<p>Bankside: HT contacted LA (apparently not many HTs had)*</p> <p>Landmark getting £1000 from LA so they knew about it</p> <p>Heron: not completely sure-knows who LA advisor is</p> <p>Smithfield: doesn't go to heads conferences and has no deputy so not sure what's going on elsewhere but thinks they're ahead of some in their cluster. Knows who the LA advisor is. Says she doesn't get out much.</p> <p>Southerley: would like to make links with other primary schools but not done this so far*</p> <p>Southerley: unsure of LA advisor. Unsure of funding arrangements. Bit suspicious of current LA advisor-secondary trained with no primary experience.</p> <p>Southerley: Receives lots of emails from AST (on behalf of LA). He forwards all the emails to the PMFL coord but her mailbox is often full.</p>	
	Between Head teacher and teachers on their staff	<p>Bankside: concerned re teacher confidence. Conscious of adding it in slowly and with plenty of support.*</p> <p>Landmark: no concerns re staff subject knowledge: work through problems</p> <p>Landmark: sees staff as very positive: grumble at first but then get on with it. They have no choice. Aware staff need to feel supported.</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>Heron: believes most staff are quite confident. Talks of having no resistors.** Teachers know it's happening and have no choice. Keen on teachers finding their own solutions.</p> <p>Smithfield: thinks her staff are gritty and up for a challenge. Possibly older staff may have had bad experience with lang learning themselves (she's spoken to them about it). Generally a positive lot; not much negativity. She's not expecting teachers to react badly.</p> <p>Southerley: worried about forcing teachers to teach something they're not comfortable with. * Thinks if teachers don't enjoy teaching French this will percolate to the chn. Worked out that half the teachers need to be happy to teach it to cover all the classes.</p> <p>Southerley: very lucky to have enthusiastic staff.</p> <p>Uplands: Sensitive to teacher's needs in Y6-new to the school so he hasn't asked him to teach French yet</p> <p>Uplands: he says they're a good bunch of teachers but tired. He tries to protect them when he can.</p>	
	Between school and parents	<p>Bankside: inviting parents in for French events could be expanded to other subjects**</p> <p>Southerley: thinks parents might be concerned about getting literacy right first before learning French. Had this experience last year when parents complained about taking</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		chn to learn French in the secondary school in Y5-some thought they should stay and focus on English instead. "you can't always win" he said.	
	Between primary and secondary	<p>Bankside: hoping for more links with secondary schools as a result of teachers coming in from secondary schools to model. Pleased it's extending the school-thinks it's good for secondary teachers to see primary</p> <p>Landmark: would like more transition as in years gone by*</p> <p>Southerley: aware that secondary school colleagues might not be positive about PMFLs</p>	
Decision making	Who chose language and why	<p>Landmark: unsure who chose French or why (proximity? Links with AST?)</p> <p>Southerley: chose French because of staff expertise. He knows some have degrees or A level in French (even though he thinks Spanish would be more useful for chn).***</p> <p>Bankside: staff audit of expertise: final decision was previous HT's***</p> <p>Uplands: HT chose due to staff expertise-he would happily go with any lang, also lots of chn actually go to France</p> <p>Smithfield: HT chose French due to staff expertise, physical proximity to France, she speaks French herself and used to teach it. May decide to have several languages in the future. Depends on staff wishes/expertise in the future.</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		Heron: staff decided to go for one language rather than taster approach	
Concerns and threats	Teacher work overload	<p>Landmark: extra burden for coords to rejig timetables***</p> <p>Southerley: worried that teachers may not enjoy it and this will have a negative impact on the children</p> <p>Southerley: the older members of staff are worn out-they're burnt out. Younger teachers more enthusiastic. Says he sees an exhausted staff.***</p> <p>Uplands: talks of battle weariness of staff-he tries to protect them by taking the important bits of new initiatives and not overloading them</p>	
	Staff turnover	<p>Bankside: if AST leaves or PMFL coordinator does: potential insecurity re situation with secondary schools as becoming academy**</p> <p>Smithfield: already had issues with the previous PMFL coordinator leaving and new one taking over</p> <p>Uplands: if PMFL left it would be very difficult. Hard in small schools (as everyone has 2/3 subjects already)</p>	
	Support and training	<p>Bankside: staff meetings planned. AST supporting for several years.</p> <p>Bankside: sporadic support from secondary school</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>Landmark: AST supporting too</p> <p>Landmark: staff meetings for training. Unsure what training staff are getting from AST when observing her lessons</p> <p>Heron: big support network of teachers who are confident teaching PMFLs: not totally reliant on PMFL coord.**</p> <p>Southerley: Had several staff meetings and an INSET day for some. Bought some training resources (puppets). More devt planned.</p>	
	Funding	<p>Heron**: funding has made it possible until now. Needs ongoing funding to release PMFL coord for coaching/modelling</p> <p>Southerley: talks of expense of paying for supply while teachers are being trained. Needs to be well resourced and given status.</p>	
	Time and timetabling	<p>Bankside doesn't see this as a problem: flexible and cross curric teaching making time for French***</p> <p>Landmark: tricky: overcrowded. Taken time from foundation subjects (as she thinks some of this is inappropriate anyway).***</p> <p>Heron: finding time for teachers to upskill and be trained-finding time for teachers to talk to eachother for buddying and coaching***</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>Smithfield: timetabling a concern. Cross curric approach in the future.***</p> <p>Southerley: Timetabling an issue. HT wants to fit it into the time after assembly and before going home (story time). The time it takes to go up and down the stairs is a real issue for this school. He talks of ways to juggle break time/assembly etc to squeeze it in.*</p> <p>Uplands: timetabling needs to be flexible</p>	
	Transition	<p>Bankside: aware of need to assess chn at end of Y6</p> <p>Landmark: worried transition could be an issue. Unsure what's in place to support this.**</p>	Only mentioned this when I specifically asked about it
	Teacher subject knowledge	<p>Landmark: concerned about teachers' accents **. No other concerns. Later mentions need for staff training.*</p> <p>Heron: keen to train teachers but if no funding available it will depend on school priorities (competing with writing and maths). Coaching model preferred.***</p> <p>Southerley: PMFL specialist previously. Mentions quality and excellence-need for lots of high quality training for staff***</p>	

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		<p>Smithfield: concerns over teachers' accents being authentic</p> <p>Uplands: Y5 teacher observing specialist. No training envisaged.</p>	
Other interesting quotes/thoughts	Frustration	<p>Landmark: feels frustrated: "everything goes round in circles". Also unhappy with narrow curriculum and focus on SATs.***</p> <p>Heron: sometimes too many teachers want to bring in new initiatives and HT has to say no: very lively school*</p> <p>Heron: "it's the norm isn't it to put it on a shoestring" Funding!!</p> <p>Smithfield: involved with previous French initiative and fully supported it then</p> <p>Smithfield: "like so many of the initiatives that the Government suddenly decides we're doing"***</p> <p>Southerley: has strong feelings about parents taking chn out of school for holidays: "should put them in jail". He also says parents absorb so much of his time. Thinks parents are obsessed with league tables. Talks of younger female teachers getting pregnant and needing to be replaced. Rarely employs NQTs anymore. Some of the older members of staff who have recently retired would say: "well goodness me, what now, where's this come from?"</p> <p>Southerley: he says "I might be wrong" quite often. Seems to need reassurance despite experience. Also lots of refs to his age.</p>	She was involved in previous French initiative and was sorry to see it go: vivid memory of being inspected by HMI and then French disappearing

THEME	SUB-THEME	INTERVIEWEE/SPECIFICS	COMMENTS
		Uplands: pleased to be ahead of other schools	

Direct interpretation\* – where single instance is interpreted as having meaning (Stake 1995: 74)

Categorical aggregation\*\* - collection of instances of a phenomenon (within case)

Categorical aggregation\*\*\* - collection of instances of a phenomenon across cases

Appendix 4: University of Southampton research governance sponsor agreement

Miss Alex Woodgate-Jones  
School of Education  
University of Southampton  
University Road  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

14 March 2008

Dear Miss Woodgate-Jones

RGO Ref: 5695

**Project Title Primary Teachers in Times of Change (Working Title)**

I am writing to confirm that the University of Southampton is prepared to act as sponsor for this study under the terms of the Department of Health Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (2nd edition 2005).

The University of Southampton fulfils the role of Research Sponsor in ensuring management, monitoring and reporting arrangements for research. I understand that you will be acting as the Principal Investigator responsible for the daily management for this study, and that you will be providing regular reports on the progress of the study to the Research Governance Office on this basis.

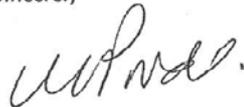
I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities under the terms of the Research Governance Framework, and the EU Clinical Trials Directive (Medicines for Human Use Act) if conducting a clinical trial. We encourage you to become fully conversant with the terms of the Research Governance Framework by referring to the Department of Health document which can be accessed at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/24/27/041224>

In this regard if your project involves NHS patients or resources please send us a copy of your NHS REC and Trust approval letters when available.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or support. May I also take this opportunity to wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Martina Prude  
Head of Research Governance  
Tel: 023 8059 5058  
email: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk

**Appendix 5: Public liability insurance**

Miss Alex Woodgate-Jones  
School of Education  
University of Southampton  
University Road  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

13 March 2008

Dear Miss Woodgate-Jones

**Public Liability Insurance**

RGO REF - 5695                      School Ethics Ref - N/A

**Project Title Primary Teachers in Times of Change (Working Title)**

Participant Type:	No Of Participants:	Participant Age Group:	Notes:
Healthy volunteers	40	Adults	

Thank you for forwarding the completed questionnaire and attached papers.

Having taken note of the information provided, I can confirm that this project will be covered under the terms and conditions of the above policy, subject to written consent being obtained from the participating volunteers.

If there are any changes to the above details, please advise us as failure to do so may invalidate the insurance.

Yours sincerely

*RM*

Mrs Ruth McFadyen  
Insurance Services Manager

Tel: 023 8059 2417  
email: hrm@soton.ac.uk

cc: File

## **Appendix 6: Invitation to headteacher to participate in the Research Study**

Dear (insert headteacher's name)

As you may know, I am a lecturer on the PGCE primary course at the University of Southampton. I am just beginning a Ph.D here in the School of Education and I am beginning the dissertation.

The study is entitled: "Primary School Teachers in Times of Change" and is focussed on the implementation of the National Languages Strategy, particularly on the introduction of modern foreign languages into primary schools. The aim of the study is to identify themes and patterns in the relationships between the implementation of the modern foreign language (PMFL) initiative, school culture, school leadership and teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

The data collection is due to take place over one year (2007-8). Over the course of this year I would like to collect information through informal interviews and short questionnaires about the above mentioned areas.

The results will be reported to Southampton's academic community and housed in its library. I am specifically asking you to participate in this study as I know that you and your school are currently developing the PMFL initiative. Your time commitment would be minimal (approx 2 hours), as would that of your staff. Your participation is entirely voluntary and confidentiality is assured as all the results will be reported anonymously without identifying participants or schools.

I would be happy to further discuss the study's goals, methods and procedures with you and your participation can be discontinued at any time at your request. I would be very grateful if we could arrange a short meeting so I could explain exactly what your involvement would entail.

Yours sincerely

Alex Woodgate-Jones

## **Appendix 7: Participant information sheet**

Provisional Study Title: Times of Change: a case study of in situ policy implementation

Researcher: Alex Woodgate-Jones

Ethics number: 5695

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research.  
If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

I am a lecturer on the PGCE (Primary) course in the School of Education, undertaking a PhD.

The research is about how the new Modern Foreign Language Initiative is currently being implemented in primary schools. The main questions guiding this study are:

1. How are schools approaching the future entitlement (by 2010) for all children in Key Stage 2 to learn a modern foreign language in curriculum time?
2. How do headteachers, MFL coordinators and class teachers feel about this initiative? For example: do they agree with the perceived need for languages to be taught in primary schools, do they feel equipped to implement the initiative, what are the motivations/concerns/constraints?

### **Why have I been chosen?**

Two case study sites have been chosen for the research. Both have been drawn from contacts already established through my role as PGCE tutor and having worked with them on other projects concerning modern foreign languages. The two sites have approached implementation in contrasting ways as one is using visiting expertise in the form of an AST teacher and the other is using “in house” expertise. The sites are also of differing sizes and are located in different LAs. Both appear to be successfully engaging with the initiative at this early stage of its implementation.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

In the first phase, all class teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire eliciting initial thoughts on including modern foreign languages in the Primary curriculum. The researcher will then negotiate interviews with the headteachers, coordinators and a sample of class teachers who are delivering modern foreign languages (French in these cases).

In the second phase, the researcher will spend five consecutive days in each case study school (observing a wide range of lessons and other activities) in order to get a feel for the culture of the schools. Later in the academic year the researcher will observe a sample of French lessons being taught to explore the different styles and approaches to teaching the language. Access will be negotiated with the individual class teachers involved.

At the end of the data collection phase the researcher will then re-interview the headteachers, coordinators and a sample of class teachers to explore any issues that may have arisen during the data collection period.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

During the data collection period the researcher will be an active participant in the lessons and will therefore be able to support the teacher in delivering the lesson (if required).

The results of the research will hopefully be of use to other schools implementing the primary modern foreign language initiative as they will provide examples of the case study schools' experiences which can then be incorporated.

The full report will be available on completion as it will be stored in the library at the University of Southampton.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

There are no risks involved. The researcher will abide by all health and safety regulations for movement in the school and already has an enhanced CRB check.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

- To comply with the data protection act, all information gathered will be stored on a password protected computer.
- Both research sites will be anonymised
- All names of sites and participants will be changed in the writing up process and confidentiality will be maintained.

### **What happens if I change my mind?**

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participation is voluntary and will be renegotiated verbally before every interview/observation.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely event of something going wrong the researcher would wish the participants to discuss this with her in order to resolve the issue. If this is not satisfactory/appropriate participants can contact:

Dr Melanie Nind (Deputy Head of School), School of Education, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1BJ [man@soton.ac.uk](mailto:man@soton.ac.uk)

**Where can I get more information?**

I am the principal researcher as the research is part of my PhD. Any questions should be directed to me:

Alex Woodgate-Jones, School of Education, University of Southampton, Highfield  
Southampton, SO17 1BJ

Phone: 02380 598408

Email: [acwj@soton.ac.uk](mailto:acwj@soton.ac.uk)

**Appendix 8: Consent form**

**CONSENT FORM**

Provisional Study title: Times of Change: a case study of in situ policy implementation

Researcher name: Alex Woodgate-Jones

Study reference: 5695

Ethics reference: 5695

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (March 2008)  
and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to  
be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw  
at any time without my legal rights being affected

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

**Appendix 9: Stages of concern questionnaire adapted for use re Primary Modern Foreign Languages**

**0                    1            2                    3            4                    5            6            7**  
**Irrelevant    Not true of me now   Somewhat true of me now   Very true of me now**

1	I am concerned about students' attitudes toward the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I now know of some other approaches that might work better than the present PMFL initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I don't even know what the PMFL initiative is.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I would like to help other schools/staff in their understanding and implementation of the PMFL Initiative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I have a very limited knowledge about the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I would like to know the effect of the PMFL Initiative on my professional status.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities regarding the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I am concerned about revising my use of the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I would like to develop working relationships with both my schools/staff and other faculty about the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I am concerned about how the PMFL Initiative will affect students.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I am not concerned about the PMFL Initiative at this time.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	I would like to know who will make the decisions regarding the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I would like to discuss the possibility of incorporating the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I would like to know what resources are available if we decide to adopt the PMFL Initiative	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I am concerned about my inability to manage all that the PMFL Initiative requires.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	I would like to know how my teaching is supposed to change given the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18	I would like to familiarize other departments/persons with the progress of the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	I would like to revise the instructional approach of the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	I am completely occupied with other things.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I would like to modify our implementation of the PMFL Initiative based on the experiences of our students.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	I spend little time thinking about the PMFL initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	I would like to excite my students about their part in the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	I am concerned about time spent working with non-academic problems related to the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	I would like to know what the incorporation of the PMFL Initiative will require in the immediate future.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I would like to coordinate my efforts with others to maximize the PMFL Initiative's effects.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I would like to know what other schools are doing in the PMFL area.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	At this time I am not interested in learning about the PMFL initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I would like to use feedback from students to change the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I would like to know how my role will change because of the PMFL Initiative.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	Coordination of tasks and people surrounding the PMFL Initiative is taking too much of my time.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35	I would like to know how this PMFL Initiative is better than what we have now.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note. Adapted from *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes* (p. 280-281) by G. E. Hall & S. M. Hord, 2006, Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Copyright 2006 by Pearson Education. Reprinted with Permission of the publisher

**Appendix 9 contd : Stages of Concern Questionnaire: additional information**

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age (please circle)    20-29            30-39            40-49            50-59            60+

What, specifically, is your current position (e.g. Primary school head teacher, coordinator, class teacher)?

How many years have you been in your current position?

In total, how many years have you been in a position similar to the one you have now?

How long have you been involved with primary modern foreign languages?

Have you received any formal training (workshops, courses etc)?

Yes            No            If yes, please explain:

Are you currently involved in implementing any other innovation?

Yes            No            If yes, please explain:

Please use this space (and back of this page) to express any concerns you have not been able to indicate in this questionnaire.

## Appendix 10: Guiding questions for interviews with PMFL coordinators

- How did you come to be PMFL coordinator?
- What training/background? Where does interest in languages come from?
- What made you take on the role of PMFL coordinator?
- Do you have any other experience of implementing a new initiative/training colleagues?
- What do you think of the initiative?  
Worries/concerns?
- What's the current situation re PMFLs in your school?
- How do you propose to implement it in your school?
- How do you see your role in the implementation of PMFLs in your school?
- How equipped do you feel to implement the PMFL initiative in your school?
- Has the initiative been discussed at staff level?
- Support from senior management? What/how?
- What would you say is the culture of the school re taking on new initiatives? Do the staff get involved/make suggestions etc?
- Have you been involved in any decision making re the initiative so far?

## Appendix 11: Guiding interview questions for class teachers

- What is your background generally/route into teaching/motivation? re MFLs?
- Have you heard about the PMFL initiative?
- What do you think about incorporating PMFLs into primary schools? Beneficial? Why/why not?
- Do you have any particular concerns about PMFL initiative? How do you feel about it?
- How equipped do you feel to deliver it?
- Has it been discussed in staff meetings?
- Have you been involved in any decision making re the initiative?
- What would you say was the culture of the school re new initiatives? Do the staff get involved, make suggestions etc?
- How do you see your role in the implementation of PMFLs?
- What made you take on teaching PMFLs?

## Appendix 12: Guiding interview questions for headteachers

- What is your background generally/route into teaching/motivation? re MFLs?
- How do you see your role in the implementation of PMFLs in your school?
- What made you take it on board?
- What do you think about incorporating PMFLs into primary schools? Beneficial? Why/why not?
- Do you have any particular concerns about PMFL initiative? How do you feel about it?
- How equipped do you feel your school is to deliver it?
- How do you envisage its incorporation in your school? What will your approach be?
- Has it been discussed in staff meetings? What was the message? How do you think the staff feel about it?
- Have the staff been involved in any decision making re the PMFL initiative?
- What would you say was the culture of the school re new initiatives? Does the staff get involved, make suggestions etc?

**Appendix 13: Example of interview transcript: PMFL coordinator Southerley Junior School**

- 1 I First of all, can you give me a bit of background as to how you became the PMFL  
2 coordinator?  
3
- 4 II When it was suggested...gosh I think it must have been 6 or 7 years ago now that this  
5 might be a possibility I said to the headteacher, oh if that comes round I wouldn't  
6 mind doing some training for that and when it came around I got given the job.  
7 (Laughs) Right, no qualifications at all, no paper qualifications at all. My only  
8 qualification is I've got a house in France.  
9
- 10 I Oh right. So you haven't studied languages in a previous life?  
11
- 12 II Well I...I...I've..I did French for a bit but I never actually qualified because in my day  
13 O levels were a damn sight harder than now. I mean I speak better French than my  
14 children do and they've both got good passes at GCSE. They couldn't string a  
15 conversation together and wouldn't even dare going across to France and we've  
16 actually got 2 people here who've got degrees in French and they reckon I speak better  
17 French than they do. But as I said O levels were just far harder than GCSEs are.  
18
- 19 I So it's not a paper qualification but you've got a house there and are obviously very  
20 keen on languages....  
21
- 22 II Well I'm not sure how keen I am (laughs). It's certainly quite frightening at times.  
23 You..you..you have been left and there's nobody comes round and says "Look I am  
24 here ummm. This is it. This is what you do." You've just been more or less left to fend  
25 for yourself and I must admit I'm sorely disappointed with the whole lot. I have found  
26 help in the end but that is very little help from the Authority to find that help.  
27
- 28 I Right. How did you find...  
29
- 30 II (Interrupts) Ummm. Mainly through one of our teachers whose husband is a head in  
31 another local authority and they have had training. All of them have had training as far  
32 as I can tell. And I was going to go out to have a look at his school and to see what he  
33 was doing and he said he had these meetings in [name of LA] that you go to and of  
34 course we've never heard of them  
35
- 36 I Are these the regional support meetings that they have early evenings...  
37
- 38 II (Interrupts) Yes but even they seem to have gone by the board cos I haven't heard of  
39 any since...since summer. And so there I met ummm...ummm...one of the ladies  
40 from the Language college and X [name of AST] who's been an absolute godsend and  
41 Y [name of AST's colleague] came with her and they helped me on a couple of  
42 Thursdays to sort of look for things and give me advice and point me in the right  
43 direction. Without them I'd have been really stuck. But it almost feels that I've been  
44 very lucky to have caught them in passing and I don't feel as though anyone's been  
45 round the schools and said "Look, this is what you've got to do. These are the people  
46 you go to. Not even...even...even emails umm don't go ahead in the right direction  
47 and I think it's very unfair of County to think that they possibly would do. I think they  
48 need to send paperwork in and everything else just to make sure it gets to the right  
49 person. I think their support has been absolutely dire.  
50

51 I Right.  
52  
53 II Really dire.  
54  
55 I So it was just a chance conversation you had at the time and someone said try X.  
56  
57 II (interrupts) A chance conversation. And she's been very enthusiastic but needless to  
58 say she's been very inundated as she's got lots of people in the same position as  
59 me...ummm. so it has been very difficult so ..uh..i mean we've done our best under the  
60 circumstances but it's not easy at the moment cos we've got a head who's on his way  
61 out to retirement and is lacking in enthusiasm and it's been very hard to push anything  
62 in and the two between them have not worked to good effect. But from what I've seen  
63 around I'm not the only person in my position that really feels as though they've been  
64 left in very deep water without any life saving equipment.  
65  
66 I So you would've liked a lot more targeted support from the local authority...  
67  
68 II (Interrupts) Oh very much so. I personally think that they needed to come into schools  
69 and pick up on every teacher who felt any form of fear of doing this, just to say look  
70 it's not as bad as you think. As it is, I'm having to do that to other people and I don't  
71 feel it's really my position to do that because I think that considering how qualified I  
72 am, which is basically not, I don't feel that I'm the best person to then turn round to  
73 other people and say "It's alright, you'll manage."  
74  
75 I Right. I can see what you're saying. So, have you had any staff meetings about it?  
76  
77 II Umm. I have had....I've been used and I knew I'd been used (laughs). Last Friday we  
78 had...ummm...ummm..a closure day to do first aid but they couldn't get anybody to do  
79 enough to provide enough places to give the whole staff first aid, so the ones that  
80 couldn't get into first aid I got to show them what we've got in the way of foreign  
81 modern languages in the school and what they could do with it. So I had 5 people.  
82  
83 I So those that didn't get on the first aid course...(interrupts)  
84  
85 II ..and I got 5 people and not necessarily from every year (laughs) which was great!  
86 There should've been at least one from every year but I reckon that at least 4 of those  
87 people should've been year leaders, yes, and at least the deputy head of the school  
88 should've been there. I think the 5 people should've been there cos they're the most  
89 important people who can make sure this get done.  
90  
91 I So it wasn't strategically planned  
92  
93 II No.  
94  
95 I It was if you couldn't get on that list you went to do modern foreign languages  
96  
97 II Yes, I've been told that at a later point they'll reciprocate and all the ones that didn't  
98 get onto the first aid course...which means that I won't get first aid (laughs) will  
99 actually do the first aid course and the rest will do the modern foreign languages.  
100

101 I OK  
102  
103 II Having said that, the people who did do it said they were quite enthused by it so I  
104 don't feel it was a waste of time and I did manage to get an hour and 40 mins worth of  
105 "this is what we've got" and let them work through and play with what we've got and  
106 they seem enthusiastic to go away and do it but I really feel that....ummm..we're  
107 using the year because of a lack of push from behind to dip our toe in the water and  
108 sort of have a little go and there have luckily been several people who have been quite  
109 enthusiastic about it. But for every person who's enthusiastic about it you've got  
110 someone on the opposite extreme who's absolutely shit scared about it. But we're  
111 lucky in some ways in that we've got 2 classroom assistants who have both got a  
112 degree in French, one of whom will happily cover PPA time for people and we'll  
113 hopefully be able to get her into the system of covering for people who really feel they  
114 can't do it and the other one who, although she doesn't feel able to cover for PPA  
115 because she doesn't feel she's good enough to cope with the behaviour side (although  
116 in this school behaviour is not a problem) ummm..she is prepared to go in and teach  
117 the language providing the teacher is there to support her.  
118  
119 I In that way I suppose the classteacher is then there to see and...  
120  
121 II (Interrupts) It all depends on whether we can timetable them all in cos the timetables  
122 in this school ...you're timetabled everywhere....  
123  
124 I Yeah. So there were several questions I wanted to ask you about what's going on at  
125 the moment.  
126  
127 II What's going on at the moment....um..the year that I'm in have all tried it to greater or  
128 lesser degrees. It could be anything from the year leader who's done 1 lesson in it to  
129 one of my colleagues who's done 7 or 8 lessons in it now, and makes sure it gets done  
130 every week and is really enthusiastic about it. I've got 1....I've got 2 that are quite  
131 enthusiastic about it in year 6. One of whom has done 3 lessons, but both of whom are  
132 now drowning in the sea of getting ready for SATS, that they don't feel they've got  
133 the time there to do it. I've got none of the year 3s doing it cos they been introducing  
134 this music for all the children, where all the children have to learn a musical  
135 instrument so they don't feel what with learning about the children themselves and  
136 getting these instruments in that they've got the time or the energy to do the French at  
137 this moment in time and I've never had time to sit down with the year 4 teachers to go  
138 through with them, and they're in the process of flux at the minute cos their year  
139 leader will be gone by Christmas and somebody else will be coming in as year leader  
140 so....sighs heavily.  
141  
142 I It's tricky I can see  
143  
144 II It's extremely tricky. And then you've got your usual thing...your timetable where  
145 everybody wants you to push their particular bit in..umm..and we are timetabled up to  
146 the hilt. The thought of another one and trying to fit it all in is quite difficult...but  
147 what we do have is ...so...so...so that the classroom assistants don't have do so much  
148 in the way of teaching for PPA we have 3 lessons in the morning and they take 1  
149 lesson in the afternoon with an assembly time after break and then there's story time  
150 after that which technically means that every day, even of you do have an assembly

151 and they always happen downstairs so it takes you 5 mins to get them down the stairs  
152 an another 5 mins to come back especially if you're on the top floor, that you have got  
153 around about 20 mins every day where you could spend some of that time doing  
154 languages but it would not be a whole session. And I will also...ummm..umm.. have  
155 to ummm..look at trying to...get it sorted out so that we can do bits and pieces in with  
156 PE and with science where we're possibly putting food in so they can name things in  
157 French and try to possibly fit it in that way. Umm..so it's going to be bitty and at this  
158 moment in time I can't see another way round it and as I say the Y3s can't at the  
159 moment cos they're really inundated and the Y6 are also now inundated so we're left  
160 with the 2 years in the middle (laughs).  
161

162 I And these people you mentioned.. a couple who had taught lots of lessons, with a bit  
163 each week, how have they found the time in their timetables to do it?  
164

165 II Ummm, well [name of teacher] and I are both on swimming. We have swimming for  
166 10 weeks so I in front of my swimming and she at the end of her swimming have both  
167 got 40 mins of extra time, and also there are times when you can look at a lesson and  
168 think "oh, I'm doing that and I'm doing virtually the same thing again next week, let's  
169 say we put those 2 lessons together and make 1 lesson and then I've got a spare lesson  
170 and I'll stick it in there sort of thing. Or, I can't so ICT today because they're in the  
171 ICT suite working on the computers I'll use that and it's very ad hoc at the minute, but  
172 it's either that or nothing (laughs).  
173

174 I You've got to do what you can really then.  
175

176 II You've got to accept what's thrown from the table I'm afraid.  
177

178 I So, how would you like it to be in an ideal world?  
179

180 II In an ideal world, I would like to see maybe 2 or 3 20 min sessions done per week cos  
181 having tried to do an hours session with them, it's too much. ½ hr to be honest is just  
182 about right. You go back over what you've done and you get time to introduce  
183 something new and there are things you can do like to on some of the videos and  
184 songs on the board and the powerpoints. We're doing the ummmm.what's her  
185 name...my brains gone dead...ummm..I can't think what she's called..the lady  
186 ..there's a scheme..  
187

188 I Is it the Catherine Cheater?  
189

190 II That's it. We're doing that. It's well supported. We've got lots of stuff..the people  
191 who've done it, we've got flashcards and things like that and we've done our own  
192 powerpoints to add to it so there's quite a bit there. And I feel very well supported in  
193 that scheme of work ..umm..and it's very much like painting by numbers. It's sort of  
194 language by numbers and you've also got this thing where you can bring people up  
195 who are actually speaking in the French language. And I've tried to tell people...My  
196 biggest thing to tell people who say to me but I might not be teaching them the right  
197 dialect, and I say Look, I go across to France and they all think I'm Irish. So as long as  
198 they're speaking French, it doesn't matter if it's perfect. It's French and they're  
199 learning something from it and other things can come later. You do have some very  
200 nice little exercises like the thing for rouge and bleu and you're got to pretend you're a

201 fish underwater and say “bleu” and things like that and people quite enjoy doing that  
202 and the kids are really enthusiastic about it and the teachers think it’s funny and this is  
203 partly why I’m trying to get these little dolls in. The one thing people were really  
204 enthusiastic about were these little dolls, and Albert talking to all the kids so I had a  
205 word with my head and he said “oh yes, by all means if it’s got people enthusiastic, go  
206 for them” so we’re getting everybody one of those little Muppet dolls to talk to the  
207 kids with.  
208  
209 I Yes, I think lots of people are using that scheme of work because it’s so well  
210 supported  
211  
212 II Yes, extremely well supported. Umm...this is another...thing..I mean Schemes of  
213 work by and large do tend to really irritate me but this one is better than you could  
214 expect at this time. In the past when we’ve moved over to the English, the literacy  
215 hour and we had the LCP files and there was so much stuff that was bought in and  
216 wasted because it was the only thing that was available and this worries me about the  
217 Catherine Cheater, although the Catherine Cheater has been supported by a lot of other  
218 people, is the fact that is there going to be more later on which is better thought out  
219 because people have had better time to do it and have we jumped too soon? Because  
220 we really did, we wasted hundreds of thousands of pounds in numeracy and literacy in  
221 stuff that was thrown at us because we were frightened and didn’t have time to do  
222 what had to be done. It all had to be done tomorrow and you end up going for things  
223 that perhaps are not as good as they should be because you just haven’t had time to do  
224 other things and it worries me about Catherine Cheater that I’m running into this and  
225 do I really know what I’m doing and have I chosen the right way because it’s a lot of  
226 money to spend.  
227  
228 I No, it’s not cheap but it is one of the only ones...  
229  
230 II (interrupts) yes, I had a look at the LCP one and I thought that was awful.  
231  
232 I Have you looked at the QCA one?  
233  
234 II Ummm...yes...The Cheater one was the only one I liked out of everything that was  
235 going round. Everything else seems to be very bitty with bits of photocopies to go  
236 with this and bits of photocopies to go with tat and not a whole and the one thing I  
237 liked about this is that it actually tells you what to do.  
238  
239 I Yes, do you think that’s going to help your less confident...  
240  
241 II (interrupts) yes, that what they want. They want painting by numbers. We’ve always  
242 had a thing in this school and it goes back 7 or 8 years now we had a deputy head who  
243 gave us a lot of free time...ummm...so that each coordinator could produce 10 lesson  
244 plans or 12 lesson plans per term. Not necessarily so that people could follow them  
245 because I was PE trained so I’d pick up the PE stuff and look at the learning objective  
246 and throw the rest of the lesson plan away cos I know very well that off the top of my  
247 head I can actually do something better than that, so it’s not a problem, but it’s for all  
248 the people at the bottom end who really don’t feel confident about PE or dance, or  
249 teaching RE or teaching music or teaching ICT so they can pick it up and just go “Ah”  
250 and follow it and get through a lesson. So because it’s always been a historical thing in

251 the past, one year you might get someone good in maths and if you're lucky you might  
 252 get someone who's good at English...cos nobody's good at everything. So you are  
 253 actually giving people the chance not to ignore what they should be teaching because  
 254 they don't like it or feel they're not good enough to teach it. And this is one thing I  
 255 liked about the Catherine Cheater is the fact that is was all there, it was painting by  
 256 numbers, it was very easy..if you want you can cut the whole thing up into little  
 257 ribbons and say I'll do 10 mins there and 10 mins there and 10 mins somewhere else  
 258 and you don't need to take it as a full lesson. You can take it as you want as you go  
 259 along and I think that gives people confidence that there's something on paper and  
 260 something that's fairly easy to follow. The big thing, as I said before is people saying  
 261 "oh I don't know if I'll get my pronunciation right" and I say it doesn't matter. People  
 262 speak French with a German accent, and Italian accent or an English accent and it  
 263 doesn't matter if you teach them French with an English accent. I'm learning Spanish  
 264 at the minute and being taught by a Frenchman so I'm obviously learning Spanish  
 265 with a French accent. But I'm not going to worry when I get to Spain and I can  
 266 communicate with people in Spanish if I'm doing it with a French accent. As long as  
 267 they understand me.  
 268

269 I So, for you, the main thing about having languages in primary schools is a  
 270 communication thing.  
 271

272 II Yeh. It is a communication thing. I also think back to my...I did French from the age  
 273 of 9. I should've done it from the age of 7 but I went to school in Scotland and when I  
 274 came down to England they'd already done 2 years and by the time o got into the  
 275 school...I don't know if you know the scheme. It was with Xavier and Nicole and  
 276 their little dog and another friend Georges...that's going back quite a bit...and even  
 277 thought I lost out quite a bit cos they'd had 2 years before me, I remember all my stuff  
 278 because I was a child and you pick things up so much easier as a child...much much  
 279 better than anyone else I know who didn't start until they were 11. I think they ought  
 280 to introduce it at infant school, right from the start in reception. I think it should be  
 281 down there. They shouldn't need to wait until they come into secondary school. It  
 282 should be down there cos that's where the kids learn about it and they do it so  
 283 naturally.  
 284

285 I Why do you think they've brought it into KS2?  
 286

287 II Why? I would like to think because it was the best idea, but they had so many drop  
 288 outs with GCSE, or people wanting to drop out of GCSE with languages that they  
 289 decided OK. They weren't going to force every child to do it, like they do with  
 290 English, Maths and Science and Tony Blair got it in the neck from his EU counterparts  
 291 so he had to be seen to be doing something to balance it at the other end and I don't  
 292 think it was ever done with the intention of putting it in at the bottom end. I think it  
 293 was a political thing. It was easier to say let's forget about the French and make sure  
 294 that everybody leaves secondary school with good maths and good English and that's  
 295 what it was done for and all of a sudden it blew up in his face and he had to be seen to  
 296 be doing the right thing and that's precisely what he did. It was all political when it  
 297 shouldn't have been. It should've all been thought out but this is what education's all  
 298 about. You're constantly on a see saw and you know damn well the best place to be is  
 299 in the middle so you don't have to move very much, but you end up running from one

300 end to the other because that's the way it is. And if you're not careful it turns into a  
301 roundabout at the same time! (laughs)  
302  
303 I So you're fairly cynical about the whole initiative..  
304  
305 II (interrupts) Very cynical. I mean I've been teaching 30 yrs now and I don't think  
306 there's anybody who's been teaching 5 years who isn't cynical. (laughs)  
307  
308 I And the way this initiative has been brought in doesn't give you any more...  
309  
310 II (interrupts) No, no. Because there's been no support with it. Nothing...nothing at all  
311 has been thought through other than the stuff that had been thought through  
312 beforehand, like what you want children to learn about which was already there in  
313 some ways...with the schemes of work...  
314  
315 I Do you mean the Framework, the actual strategy?  
316  
317 II Yes. It's been in place for a long time. I know they've changed it very slightly and  
318 they've extended the amount of pieces in it. But it's been there for some time and has  
319 been well thought out. Everything else has just been thrown in, totally thrown in and  
320 they haven't even made the pretence of pushing the money at it that they did with  
321 literacy and numeracy. To be quite honest it's a farce and anybody who looks at it and  
322 says it's not a farce is daft. But it's what should have been happening and it's the right  
323 thing to do. I do believe it's the right thing to do but it's not the right way to go about  
324 it (laughs).  
325  
326 I So you're prepared to try to work with it..  
327  
328 II Yeh. As I say I think it's a good idea and should really be from Reception onwards.  
329 The earlier you catch them the easier it is.  
330  
331 I So, what's your plan form now until the end of this academic year? What are you  
332 hoping to achieve?  
333  
334 II Hoping, as much as anything else, I want everyone to have a good look at the  
335 Catherine Cheater and see what's available, get confidence in that, have a go if not at  
336 the whole lot, have a go at a few lessons just to get themselves to realise that it's not as  
337 bad as they think it is. That they're all quite capable of doing it and if anybody need  
338 support we can pick those people up and try and organise something where they can  
339 go away for a couple of days and get whatever support they need.  
340  
341 I Right, so looking outside for some sort of training.  
342  
343 II Yes, I think there should have been so much training with this, and there hasn't been.  
344 From what I understand from [name] who's the lady whose husband is the head in  
345 Hampshire they've had so much training in comparison to us it's unbelievable. For us  
346 there just hasn't been anything there. And the stuff I've been to as a coordinator has  
347 been so far an utter waste of time. I mean that day that was up at the university, the  
348 whole thing was just a waste of time. Other than the fact that the people were there  
349 with their wares so you could go and have a poke through everybody's books at the

350 same time rather than having to send off for a pack of this, a pack of that and a pack of  
351 the other where they come at different times and you're having to look at it at different  
352 times.  
353  
354 I Did you find it useful speaking to any of the other people there? Maybe others in the  
355 same situation as you?  
356  
357 II Whether I found it useful, no. Having had a couple of times with [name of AST] I  
358 was able to point one or two other people in the right direction, but that's almost a  
359 case of the blind leading the blind! Or the partially sighted leading the blind. And I  
360 feel very much like this at school. I'm a partially sighted person having to lead lots of  
361 blind people. And we should be all moving through together. I'm not saying I'm  
362 necessarily the wrong person for the job because I feel enthusiastic and I have looked  
363 forward to and have have enjoyed doing it, but...but..enthusiasm only goes so far and  
364 there's got to be money there for the training for people to do this and there just hasn't  
365 been. We've just been....it's been a pain put it that way. I've been very very  
366 disappointed with it.  
367  
368 I Do you envisage having any training sessions within the school if there aren't any on  
369 offer outside?  
370  
371 II I don't know anybody who'd come in and do it. Nobody has...they haven't sent me a  
372 list saying these people are all prepared to come into your school. I've had a word  
373 with [name of AST] and I can't pin her down. I've said to her, would you come in and  
374 do some training? And the answers I'm getting are so airy fairy that I feel as if she's  
375 avoiding it and she doesn't actually want to do a big session with lots of people. And I  
376 can't find anybody who's prepared to come in and say I will work with all these  
377 people and we'll do some polishing sessions on what they already know. That's all  
378 some people want. Just to get them going, or just to see some videos of other people  
379 doing it in classrooms so they can realise it's not quite as bad as they feel it is. It  
380 doesn't take an awful lot to make people feel better and it's not even been thought out  
381 to do that.  
382  
383 I You made a comment earlier about support from senior management and them giving  
384 you time...  
385  
386 II (interrupts) it's not even in the school strategic plan. And I'm saying it's not a case  
387 of...it's got to be in place for everybody for 2010. You can't come up to September  
388 2010 and say right, we start it today. You've got to have done things beforehand.  
389 You've got to have introduced it to the school and people have got to have tried things  
390 out and at this moment in time, ummm, I feel as though it's not being taken as  
391 seriously as perhaps it ought to be. Everybody thinks there are other things that take  
392 priority but from my point of view I want to hit out and people and say "for f\*\*\*s sake  
393 we've got to get on with it."  
394  
395 I Because you know when the date is and how long...  
396  
397 II Yeh, but people say it's still two or nearly 3 years down the line. But it's not  
398 something that gets done overnight. Things need to be out into place. I wish people  
399 would work a bit faster on it and felt the way I do about it but I suppose they must see

400 things from a different point of view and I get so uptight because we have a mixed  
401 staff and governors meeting in June/July time to work out the school strategic plan and  
402 what we're going to be aiming at and it wasn't even discussed that this could be one of  
403 the things we got on there. What do you want?! (laughs) At the end of the day, it's not  
404 my neck on the line cos I'm doing the best I can.  
405

406 I What was the reason for not putting it on the strategic plan?  
407

408 II Because it doesn't have to be in place until 2010.  
409

410 I Right. So the strategic plan is just for the year ahead is it?  
411

412 II Well, it's a year ...yes, basically a year in advance. And there was something they  
413 took off last years plan and they feel they're going down in numeracy so they've put  
414 that on this years plan. And I said what about the French and they said "Oh we've got  
415 plenty of time for that". And I'm thinking (screams!). (laughs) I'm the only one sitting  
416 here panicking. But as I say at the end of the day I refuse to panic too much cos I've  
417 done what I can and if it's not there it's not my neck on the line, it's theirs.  
418

419 I So, from what I can gather you're not getting any financial support...  
420

421 II I've had £1000 off the school. But I hate to say I want to get at least one set of  
422 dictionaries per year and you're talking about £500 for 2 sets. So £1000 is blown in  
423 next to no time. I had £2000 where I had to put in what I intended to do with MFL and  
424 I got £2000 form the authority. Ummm..but I don't want to spend too much of it cos I  
425 want to hold some of it back cost her are going to be 1 or 2 people who are going to  
426 need training. If not all of us, it would've been nice to have had training for all of us  
427 but if I've got to choose 2 or 3 people than I will choose 2 or 3 people and the rest of  
428 us will have to survive on enthusiasm. And I don't think that's fair. It's not fair to not  
429 give people what they need because they're enthusiastic about having a go. In fact  
430 they're the people who need more support than ever because without them it wouldn't  
431 move forward at all.  
432

433 I Yes I see. Can we talk a liittle bit about the role of the senior management. Are you  
434 trying to get this all moving in isolation then?  
435

436 II I feel like that, yes.  
437

438 I Without having time or being supported. Would it make a difference if the senior  
439 management team were lending more support?  
440

441 II I'm given time. I'm given ½ day every half term for French., which goes a long way  
442 obviously! You've got your PPA time as well but I like to keep my PPA time for my  
443 class planning and being a teacher. Umm..I could have more time if I wanted to. I  
444 have on several occasions tried to go and visit other schools and things have fallen  
445 through at the last minute because we haven't been able to get supply teachers. The  
446 head who was going to speak to me couldn't manage it at the last minute..several  
447 things have just happened so we just have not been able to do it and it's been very  
448 unfortunate. But yeh, they would give me time to do that. Ummm..but it's the  
449 enthusiasm. I feel it's all very much of a joke at this moment in time.

450 I So maybe the other members of staff need to be given some time to engage with it?  
451

452 II Yes, yes. As I said I had that time, and I realised I was being used and he did tell me  
453 beforehand "would you mind?" And I went and did it with my eyes open. I would've  
454 liked to have had some say in who attended which I wasn't given. You see it's always,  
455 they give it to you with one hand and take it back with the other. That could've been a  
456 worthwhile experience on Friday if I'd have been able to have some say in who was  
457 going to attend it and I wasn't. Ummm...

458

459 I Right. In terms of the staff I general, would you say you were quite keen to pick up  
460 new initiatives or would you say you were more circumspect about...

461

462 II (interrupts) We are probably better than most schools about taking on new things.  
463 Unlike [name]'s husband who always looks to see how much he's got to do, we tend  
464 to go overboard on things. We do tend to do that. They are willing to have a go. But  
465 they have to be led by the nose at times, some people in particular. You've got that  
466 small group of people who are either very frightened or who simply aren't taking it  
467 seriously. I do get the feeling that our head and deputy head aren't taking it  
468 particularly seriously and they don't care too much at this moment in time. But as I  
469 say, that's their problem.

470

471 I So the other message I'm hearing is that you haven't really been involved much in the  
472 decision making process re how it's introduced, when etc

473

474 II No, no I haven't. I've been making suggestions but that's all I can do. I mean they  
475 had no idea about where they were going to put it in the...in the...curriculum, where  
476 we were going to find time for it and it was me that came up with those times, after  
477 our supposed assemblies and before the kids actually went off home, that perhaps 2 or  
478 3 of those times could be used to do it. And also the lessons where you can cram 2  
479 together when you look at it and think I've taught that 2 weeks ago, I'm not going to  
480 do that again. But they hadn't really thought too much about where they could  
481 possibly do it. I think they're very cynical about everything that's being introduced by  
482 government and where time is found. We've also got this thing where you're got to do  
483 extra sort of get up and dance in the classroom thing...

484

485 I Oh yes, the get up and go thing?

486

487 II Yes, something like that. We're supposed to do that for ½ hour a day. That's gone by  
488 the board cos by the time you've wasted 10 mins, look at how big the school is, we  
489 waste 10 mins by the time the kids get down to the playground, it's virtually time to  
490 blow the whistle and bring them back up again cos there are so many stairs (laughs).  
491 So it can be difficult. We've got to the stage now where we send our maths groups in  
492 in groups so at least all your group arrive at the same time rather than in dribs and  
493 drabs. You're constantly having to think creatively about how you can things that little  
494 bit better cos it is not the most easiest of situations to deal with. With the layout of the  
495 school. We have to accept the fact that it takes 7 mins to get the kids down the stairs  
496 when the fire bell goes.

497

498 Finishes with a discussion about fire engines not being able to fit through the gates of  
499 the school.



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