

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**THE IMPACT OF CHANGE: A WHOLE SCHOOL STUDY TO INVESTIGATE
IF CHANGE IN APPROACHES TO TEACHING WRITING HAS AN IMPACT
ON SCHOOL CULTURE.**

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ABSTRACT

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The impact of change: A whole school study to investigate if change in approaches to teaching writing has an impact on school culture

by Stephanie Sharon Jefferson

This thesis examines change in school culture. It is set against a background of two concerns. One originates at the macro level of governmental policy designed to improve standards of literacy through the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The second stems from the micro level with a need for internal school improvement to raise standards of children's writing. The aim of the study is to assess change in school culture through an enquiry into the attitudes of the teachers and the children towards the implementation of new teaching approaches to writing.

The core of the study is an interpretation and understanding of the culture of the school. Ethnographic forms of enquiry were used to describe and examine the impact of the new approaches to teaching writing and to explore school culture. The methodological aim of the study is to understand the cultural meanings and understandings of group and individual experiences. Methods used included interviews with six teachers, a questionnaire for six teachers, interviews with two groups of four children. Three research techniques as described in The Cambridge Manual of Research Technique (Ainscow *et al* 1994) were employed to map the initiation of change, the experience of change and to map school culture at both the beginning and end of the study.

The binding theme is educational change with a focus on attitudes and behaviours in the teaching and learning of children's writing. The study sets out to find what the changes mean to those who undertake and undergo them. What teachers do has an impact on what they think and believe. What teachers believe is at the heart of the embedded ideology of commitment to and control of teaching and learning. Continued educational change thus influences change in school culture.

The initial identification of school culture was evident as an embedded caring 'Welfarist' culture. The educational changes have impacted on this deep level of culture to become the underlying foundation of an ideology of commitment to the continued learning of the whole child. The study leads to the development of a description of a '*nurturing learning infant school culture*' and establishes a model that takes forward Hargreaves' model of an *effective* school and Stoll and Fink's *moving* school. The findings show that nationally and internally introduced educational change can significantly impact on the culture of a school. A model for a national '*nurturing learning infant school culture*' is proposed.

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The impact of change: A whole school study to investigate if change in approaches to teaching writing has an impact on school culture

Chapter 1

The introduction to the study

The purpose of the study

The school culture of Waterstone Infant School became an interest to me as Headteacher in the of spring 1998 when I mapped the school culture prior to any introduction of national educational initiatives. Waterstone Infant School, like many other schools in the country, introduced new approaches to the teaching of writing through the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) in September 1998. The school was also focused on aiming to raise standards of writing through introducing a school-based approach of teaching phonics, *Jolly Phonics* (Lloyd 1998). Additional teaching time outside the Literacy Hour was allocated to the teaching of extended writing. These changes to the teaching of writing were the focus for school improvement as set out in the School Strategic Plan (see Appendix1). Although other structural changes were introduced in September 1998 the study sets out to map the changes in teaching writing in order to see if such changes had an impact on changing the school culture. The purpose of the study is to describe the culture of Waterstone School before and after the introduction of new approaches to teaching writing. The changes to the teaching of writing are also explored over the two-year period to see if there was a significant link between such changes and change in school culture.

An ethnographic method of inquiry will be used to describe the culture and explore the introduction of change in teaching writing, which will result in a picture of a cultural shift. A selection of ethnographical methods were chosen that involved observing group behaviours (what people do) and language (what people say) which provide the evidence to both describe and interpret the culture of the school.

Educational change is a theme that runs through the study. The study is not focused on the structural alterations described in Appendix 1, but on the less obvious, more socially complex change that is dependent on the behaviour and attitudes of teachers. Fullan argues that 'Educational change depends on what teachers do and think - it's as simple as that'. (1991 p117). It is the intention of this study to explore the deeper, social level of educational change. In other words to investigate what teachers think and what they do, to delve into the deeper recesses of school culture to find out the intrinsic values and embedded basic assumptions. These two characteristics of change, what teachers think and what teachers do, will be used as key indicators of change in the study. I have sought to determine the change in school culture through examining evidence collected over a two-year period to ascertain the extent of change in school culture. The importance of theory as a framework for understanding and interpreting events of educational change as defined by Fullan (1991) and Whitaker (1993) is discussed in Chapter 2. The writings of Schein (1997) Hargreaves (1995) Stoll and Fink (1997) are also discussed to provide the conceptual underpinning of school culture.

The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to assess the change in the underlying school culture through an inquiry into the attitudes of the teachers and the children towards the implementation of new teaching approaches to writing (see Appendix 1). To answer the general research question '*How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?*' five other key questions are asked:

1. What was the culture before the change?
2. *What are the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of children to the change in approaches to teaching writing? (* indicates what teachers do)
3. *What are the attitudes and practices of teachers to the change in approaches to teaching writing? (*indicates what teachers do and think)
4. What is the change in school culture?

5. What is the impact of change?

To ascertain any change in school culture there has to be an initial baseline from which any change in culture over time can be compared. The first key question asks *'what was the culture before the change?'* This is addressed in Chapter 5. The perceptions of teachers will be considered to provide evidence of their values and basic assumptions that are taken for granted (Schein 1997) (Rzoska 2000).

Key question 2 asks *'what are the attitudes and behaviours of the children to the changes in approaches to teaching writing?'* This question is asked to establish indications of what teachers do from the perspective of children. Children are the recipients of the changes in approaches to teaching writing. It is therefore appropriate that their perceptions are sought to enable an insight to be gained into the central purpose of the change, children's improvement in learning to write. Children's perceptions of learning to write, their perception of the teaching of writing, together with the attitudes and beliefs they have towards learning to write, will all be explored using evidence from group interviews. Chapter 5 considers the perceptions of children in the first cohort of the changes in teaching writing. Chapter 6 sets out to assess the perceptions of children of the second cohort in the second year of the study. The findings from two group interviews will be compared and contrasted in Chapter 8 to provide indications of change in teachers' practice.

Key question 3: *'what are the attitudes and practices of teachers in relation to the change in approaches to teaching writing?'* is asked to provide information pertaining to the key indicators of educational change, to find out what teachers do and think. This key question addresses both key indicators of change. It also sets out to investigate the changes in practice that may have occurred. What it is that teachers do will be reflected in their practice. It is, therefore, significant that this area is explored to appraise any change in practice. To find out teachers' attitudes to the changes the teachers' feelings will be explored to understand and give insight to teachers' values and beliefs. This will not only provide an indication of educational change but also of any change in the fundamental

basic assumptions held, that is, at the deepest level of school culture. Such evidence will show if the implementation of changes to approaches to teaching writing has impacted on change in school culture.

Change in teachers' practice will be examined through using interviews in Chapter 5 and a follow up questionnaire in Chapter 6. Teachers' perceptions of the new approaches to teaching writing will be examined through identifying teachers' responses to professional development, the implementation of the new teaching approaches, their perceptions of their practice of teaching writing processes and skills and using extended writing time as a new approach.

Teachers' attitudes to the change of new teaching approaches to writing will be examined by mapping their responses. This will be done by using specific mapping change techniques. Teachers' responses to the initiation of school based changes and government initiatives will be investigated. Teachers' feelings towards the experience of change will be mapped through uncovering positive responses that include attitudes of commitment, enthusiasm, optimism, stimulation, and interest. Negative feelings will also be analysed. Finally Chapter 7 will conclude by indicating the likely impact of teachers' attitudes on school culture.

Key question 4, '*what is the change in school culture?*' will be answered in Chapter 6. The culture of Waterstone School is mapped again at the end of the two-year study period. This will provide the final benchmark to which the original baseline can be compared and contrasted to describe any cultural shift.

The 5th key question, '*what is the impact of change?*' will show the relation of the key indicators of change, namely what teachers do and think, to the shift in school culture in relation to any modifications of the basic assumptions of the teachers. Chapter 8 will explore the outcomes of change by comparing and contrasting the findings of what teachers did and thought with the evidence from the children's focus groups. Teachers' perceptions of change in practice and attitudes will provide the evidence of any impact of

change on school culture. The conclusion of the study will show whether the impact of change in the teaching of writing is linked to any shift in school culture.

Significance of the study

Stoll and Riley (1999) assert that there is a need for future studies to examine and evaluate the change in strategies and the capacity schools have to change. To assess the impact of both school and government initiated changes on the culture of a school will not just be of interest to me, a Headteacher, researching the effects of change on the school culture in the quest for school improvement. It is significant that the majority of schools in England and Wales will have experienced similar changes as the professional training was disseminated at a national level. There seems to be a national problem in raising standards in writing. Lloyd (2000) acknowledges that the 1999 National Curriculum tests overall show 46% of children managed to achieve level 2C or above in writing. He claims that for standards in writing to rise, there is a need for writing to be taught, not caught in passing. The experiences that occurred at Waterstone will have been unique to the school; there are however, numerous schools like Waterstone that also had an emphasis on raising standards in the teaching and learning of writing. If this is so, there is the possibility that schools in similar situations may also have undergone a cultural shift. The study will therefore be particularly significant to other teachers and headteachers in understanding the changing culture of their school. Government policy makers too may be interested in how educational policy has affected school culture. Finally the participating teachers, and governors of Waterstone School will have an increased understanding of what has happened to the school over the two year study period.

Limitations of the study

The study of school culture will focus on the values and basic assumptions that Schein (1997) describes as the second and third levels of organisational culture. Whilst I acknowledge that artefacts indicate the first level of culture (Schein 1997) and that the traditions, symbols and rituals of a school are critical components that signify 'how things are done' (Peterson and Deal, 1998), it was the deeper levels of culture that I wanted to learn about to identify effects of change in practice and attitudes to teaching writing. The typologies of school culture that will be used are those of Hargreaves (1994 and 1999) and Stoll and Fink (1997). The concept of collegiate collaborative teaching cultures (Fullan & Hargreaves 1998) will not be discussed in the study although I acknowledge that this too is an important component of school culture. The effects of internally and externally introduced change and the effects the change had on school culture are the focus of the study. The study will be limited to the introduction of new approaches to teaching writing outlined in the National Literacy Strategy, the external educational change and the introduction of developing phonics and extended writing time, the foci of internal changes to teaching writing.

Summary

In summary the purpose of the study will be to describe school culture before and after the introduction of educational change that focused on the teaching and learning of writing. The impact of the change will be explored in terms of how teachers' behaviour and attitudes changed over a two-year study period and how that has affected the attitudes and behaviours of children in learning to write. The aim is to link Fullan's (1991) attributes of educational changes of what teachers do and think, to any shift in teachers' basic assumptions that will affect and be reflected in change in school culture.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that changing approaches to teaching writing will make on the culture of Waterstone Infant School. This chapter seeks to explore the theoretical issues that will underpin this research by exploring the literature on the topics of school culture and educational change. I will discuss the concept of school culture, a seemingly intangible topic, to determine the nature of school culture and see if school culture can be affected by change. Then I shall explore the concept of change. This will enable key indicators of educational change to be determined, which will be applied in the study to help illuminate the change process undertaken.

Recent research into school culture

Prosser (1999), who researched visual culture and also school effectiveness and school improvement, divides school culture into four categories. Firstly there is 'wider culture' which reflects the relationships schools have with local, regional and national influences together with socio-cultural systems. Secondly, schools, like hospitals, belong to a group that have a collective identity or 'generic culture'. Thirdly, schools create their own 'unique culture' depending on the shared systems and values. Finally 'perceived culture' is one visitors may 'pick up' or sense. Research into the second and third categories of school culture to date has seemed to explore the generic or unique cultures of secondary schools or primary schools not infant schools.

The research of Busher and Blease (2000) considered collegiality of secondary school science departments. At the core of departmental culture were two values, the teaching and learning of science (the purposes of the department), and the respect for people, both as individuals and for their skills. The common purpose of the unique culture of a science department is one that can be narrowly identified. In the context of this present study this

raises for me the issues of what the core values are in an infant school and whether they can be so discretely categorised.

White (2000) reports on the importance of classroom culture in the teaching of writing in primary schools. It is interesting that significant differences were found in two classes in terms of children's attitudes and achievements. The conclusion White draws is that the implementation of new approaches to teaching 'cannot ensure that children develop into effective and enthusiastic writers' (White 2000 p.16). White is essentially saying that the implementation of the NLS (National Literacy Strategy) may not have the planned effect of raising standards in children's writing which he puts down to individual teachers' role in the classrooms. White argues that classroom culture is dependent on the role of the teacher and the nature of the pupil / teacher relationship. Although he uses the term 'classroom culture', it is not readily defined. The two teachers implemented strategies that applied a writing process approach and conformed to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The professional development the teachers received relied on teacher's individual studying. It is not clear how they initiated the chosen strategies. What is clear is that what teachers say and do affected the quality of learning in classrooms and that teachers' attitudes and behaviours can be different from teacher to teacher.

Although there are elements to White's study that are similar to mine, i.e., the effects teachers have on their pupils' attitudes and behaviours, culture and the implementation of teaching strategies of writing, this study has a different focus. My study will define what is meant by school culture. It intends to explore the effect on school culture, the changes in teaching approaches to writing that were implemented through the introduction of the NLS and internal developments. Although this study will not assess the quality of learning to write, it will show the effect such change will have on a school as a whole.

Wideen (1994), who researched the struggle of change in one school, noted a change in culture in Lakeview Elementary School in the pursuit of school improvement through implementing a writing project. Wideen, in explaining the change in the school, describes a continuum of culture change the school experienced. Over the four year period the school

changed from one that was described as '*little shop of horrors*' where survival was the overriding attitude, to a school that was described as a '*good school*'. This combined features of harmony, collegiality and openness leading to a '*We can take on the world*' attitude where there was trust and a capacity to deal with issues and problems. The capacity to change and the impact of change was essentially measured through the change in school culture. This case study shows the importance of school culture as an indicator of the impact of change in the search for school improvement.

In their article concerning culture in school improvement, Angelides and Ainscow (2000) notice a common theme in previous school cultural studies inasmuch as the cultures in the workplace 'influence school practice and failure to recognise their existence will affect any improvement efforts.' (Angelides and Ainscow 2000 p.150). The crux of their argument is a need to find quick and efficient ways to examine cultures. They propose that reflecting on and analysing *critical incidents* will enable managers to understand their contexts and inform the process of school improvement. Importance is also placed on school managers understanding the nature of culture in schools and the impact school culture has on the teachers' practice.

Endeavouring to study the way a group solves problems through examining *critical incidents* will provide the evidence of that deepest level of culture, that of understanding basic assumptions. *Critical incidents* are described as 'everyday events that that happen in every school' (Angelides and Ainscow 2000 p.152). Such examination enables *critical incidents* to be analysed and interpreted to produce an overall description of the schools' practices, which become part of an intervention process to improve practice. The authors recognise that the collection and analysis of such evidence is almost always very sensitive. This presupposes that school participants will be ready and able to have themselves exposed and that the initiators of the method, who may be interested outsiders, will be ethical and sensitive in their practice. It thus protects the interests of the stakeholders. This technique may be an effective way to understand culture but could be one that is full of pitfalls if dealing with, coping with and changing individuals innermost feelings, beliefs and principles is not sensitively addressed. Angelides and Ainscow conclude that

attempting to discuss school culture will lead to barriers in communication whereas focusing on critical incidents will enable incidents to be unpicked and also highlight the incident itself, including the way people reacted to it.

In my study I intend not only to discuss teachers' perceptions of the school's culture by comparing these perceptions at the beginning and end of a two-year period. But also to endeavour to understand these teachers' attitudes and their behaviour towards the initiation and implementation of planned improvements to the teaching of writing. The inquiry into change in teachers' practice and attitudes will be the instrument of focus rather than the pinpointing of critical incidents. It will be executed in a way that will be easily administered by a school manager (Headteacher). It will not candidly uncover individuals' innermost feelings relating to critical incidents. To do so may be too confrontational for the participants. The intention will be to gain an understanding of teachers' attitudes and practices through probing, yet sensitive and unobtrusive methods (see Chapters 3 and 4).

This summary of studies that explored cultures of schools raised the following issues.

- In a study of culture the concept and context of culture must be made explicit.
- Managers need to be aware of school culture if school improvement is to occur.
- Core values are at the heart of school culture, for example the purpose of the department and relationships.
- Classroom culture is greatly influenced by the teacher's role, attitudes, behaviours and understandings.
- Change in school culture can indicate the impact of the implementation of educational change.
- It is important that methods employed are sensitive and acceptable to all involved yet yield rich data.

These studies researched schools with children of an older age group. My study sets out to explore the 'unique culture' of an infant school that has young children ranging from 4-7 with a view to gaining a deeper understanding the changing 'generic culture' of infant

schools by taking into account the above issues highlighted in the literature of recent research. The impact of the change in teaching approaches to writing will be assessed through noting any observable change in school culture by exploring core values and the behaviours and attitudes of both teachers and pupils. The concept of school culture is defined in the next section, which will show the significance of these highlighted issues.

School Culture

Those researching in the field of school improvement (Fullan 1991; Hargreaves 1994; Hopkins *et al.* 1994; Hopkins *et al.* 1997) recognised that school culture is a contributory factor both to change in the form of improvement in schools and to the capacity of schools to change. School culture is a widely used term that is not necessarily clearly understood. This section attempts to clarify what is meant by school culture and what school culture looks like in practice. One of the difficulties of writing about school culture is defining the elusive concept of culture. It is interesting that in literature concerning school culture it is also difficult to find a clear concise agreed definition. Indeed terms such as 'climate', 'ethos', and 'character' of schools are seemingly synonymous with the term school culture, but have been used uncritically and so convey varied meanings. The term school 'climate' has been used in school effectiveness research. Rutter *et al.* (1979) used the term 'ethos' for secondary schools and Mortimore (1988) used the term 'school climate' for primary schools.

By examining some of the definitions that have been proposed over a period of twenty years it is possible to identify the main elements of school culture that will advance understanding. Fullan and Hargreaves provide the following description that originates from their research studies based on school improvement:

We use the concept 'culture' to refer to the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates, particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to relate) to each other. In simple terms culture is 'the way we do things and relate to each other around here'. (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992 p.83)

Deal and Kennedy's definition: 'what keeps the herd moving west' (1983, p141) emphasizes both the purpose and action of the group whereas Fullan and Hargreaves' definition seeks to explain patterns of behaviour. These definitions seem too simplistic as they may *reflect* culture but do not fully grasp the essence or depth of culture. If the assumption that culture refers to the unseen, elusive but pervasive qualities a school holds, then a definition should incorporate these intangible phenomena. Peterson and Deal seem to focus on both the seen and unseen dimensions of culture. There is more emphasis on peoples' attitudes as well as behaviour, which helps to gain a deeper understanding to culture.

Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools. (Peterson and Deal 1998 p. 28)

Schein puts forward a definition of group culture that seems to expand on the set of informal expectations, which evolve through the solving of the groups' problems that have been influenced by both external and internal factors.

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein 1997 p. 12)

Peterson and Deal's definition, however, has more clarity as it suggests that culture is evident in people's attitudes and behaviour. To understand a culture, it is implicit to study, observe and interpret people's attitudes and behaviours. Both Schein and Peterson and Deal's definitions accept the concepts of common shared understandings. Schein's definition has more emphasis on the unseen forces that are understood and accepted by people who work together to solve problems where there is an accepted way of

perpetuating the culture through the integration of new members. Both definitions assume that the communication within the organisation is effective and collaborative. Schein claims that when groups share their experiences of problems and determine to fix the problems jointly, they become more likely to be in a position to internalise the answer. This internalisation becomes unconscious as behaviours become second nature.

In resolving these issues, the group members also learn how to work and how to solve the problems of survival in the external environment. As solutions are worked out they become shared assumptions that are passed on to new members and eventually become taken for granted and unconscious. (Schein 1985 p.312)

It is the resolution of issues, of how group members work out problems, what they learn, and how shared experiences become embedded second nature that is central to the study of school culture.

Schein who used ethnographical research to explore the organizational culture of two companies conceptualized culture as having depth. He therefore determines culture as having three levels. In his capacity as a consultant to two companies he made close observations and suggested ways in which the companies could improve. His own assumptions were challenged when he realised that although his ideas were agreed in principle, they were not implemented. He discovered that the assumptions of the participants were being challenged by his ideas and therefore rejected. From this standpoint Schein devised a theoretical model of the levels of culture in an organisation.

Three levels of culture

Schein (1997) determines culture as having three components. These components can be explored at different levels. The first level is one of *artefacts*. These are the visible constituents of culture. He warns they should be carefully analysed to ensure that the common meanings are a reflection of the culture. He also notes the longer the observer lives with the group the clearer the meanings of the artefacts become. Although I accept

that the first level of culture can be found in the visual components of an organisation, it is not the visual part of culture that I aim to explore but the elusive less evident second and third levels of culture that are described as follows. My study will investigate the impact of change in approaches to teaching writing, a theme that is more suited to an in depth investigation of attitudes and behaviours.

Values, the second level are the goals, the vision and aims of the group, the principles of which provide the worthiness of the group. These values can originate from the founder of the institution but gradually these values can generally be understood and non- negotiable. They become the norm, which guide the members of the group how to behave and deal with certain situations.

Finally the third level embodies *Basic Assumptions*. Basic assumptions are formed when the solution to problems becomes second nature, taken for granted, and patterns of behaviour become ingrained. These provide a 'mental map' that the group share and are comfortable with.

This study, like Schein's research, will explore the concept of change brought about by external and internal factors. To understand the effect of change on culture, how the group solves the challenges, to see if the teachers in the school assimilate the change, it is the deeper levels of culture that will need to be explored. If the unconscious 'taken for granted' assumptions and the beliefs of teachers signify the deeper levels of culture, then uncovering the second and third levels of culture will thus reveal the essence of school culture at Waterstone School.

The concept of culture as I intend to use the term in this thesis is expressed as follows: Culture is a way of doing things, which is underpinned by a set of understandings that are deeply embedded and that evolves over time. The understandings are constructed from people's own realities, from shared experiences and histories. It is through shared experiences that group members make sense of the world. The sense made of their experiences becomes internalised. The shared values, beliefs and assumptions are lived

through unconsciously, so culture is taken for granted by the insiders. The common understandings enable members to adapt and meet future encounters based on their previous patterning. These understandings can be passed on to new members.

Types of school culture

Stoll and Fink who researched school improvement, agree that a school's history, the context and the people belonging to the organisation, all influence a school's culture, as do other internal and external forces. To respond to the pressure of change they also recognise the importance of flexibility and adaptability. They ask the question 'is school culture flexible or is it a permanent feature once established?' This debate contends that a culture is fixed if the old ways of doing things are perpetually regenerated. If new teachers learn and reinforce these ways, it will then produce a fixed culture. Stoll and Fink (1999) argue that cultures have the potential to be flexible and change through the influence of the participants.

Because its participants create culture, it inevitably changes as participants change, although it can be a stabilizing force, particularly for longer standing members. It presents therefore the paradox of both being static and dynamic. (Stoll and Fink 1999 p.83)

If schools develop within different contexts and undergo varying influences then it is likely that school cultures can be different and that school culture can change. Both Hargreaves (1995) and Fink and Stoll (1999) have produced typologies that may describe different idealized school cultures. Hargreaves' model is based on two dimensions of *social control* and *social cohesion*, which are grounded in the concept that groups in solving problems maintain a pressure to stay on task and to maintain the harmony of the group. Hargreaves assumes that the tensions between these domains constitute the core of school culture. The *instrumental domain* involves social control and an orientation to tasks. In other words the culture is task orientated. The *expressive domain* reflects social cohesion through maintaining positive relationships. Here the culture is orientated to relationships.

Hargreaves demonstrates the position of four types of school culture, which can be seen in Fig. 1. The different cultural positions are positioned according to the variable influences of the two dimensions of social control and social cohesion.

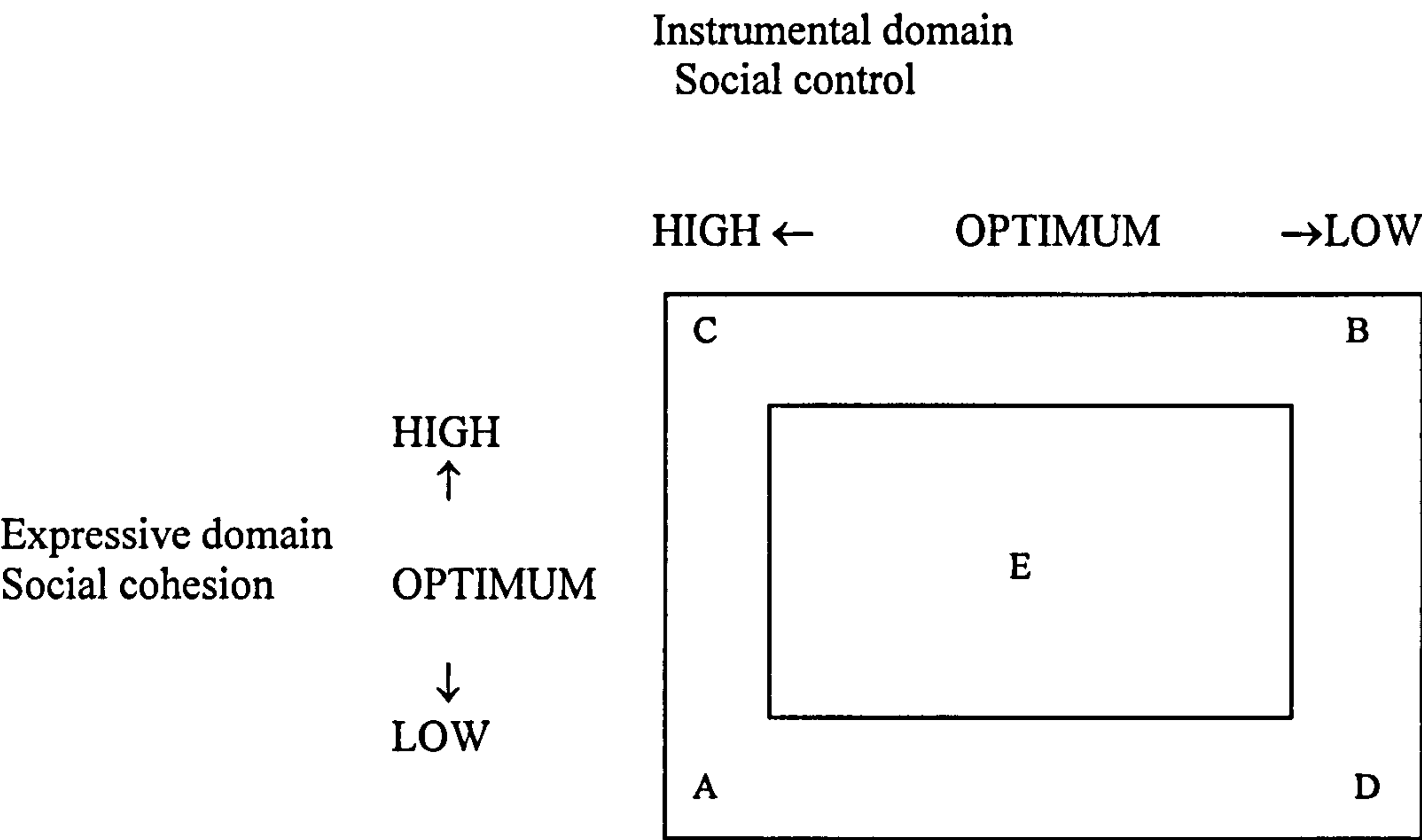


Fig. 1 Hargreaves' basic model of school cultures (Based on Ainscow et al. 1994 p.34).

Four types of cultures are described as follows: Traditionalist, (A) Welfarist (B), Hothouse (C) and Survivalist (D). The Traditionalist culture is seen where there is low social cohesion but the control is high. Here school life is well disciplined and orderly. There is pressure to achieve learning goals and the success in achieving the goals is held in high esteem. There is little social support for either the pupils or the staff. The Welfarist culture exhibits low social control, and high social cohesion. The emphasis is on providing an informal, friendly, caring, and relaxed environment. Here the pressure to attain academic goals is weak. The third type is that of the Hothouse school culture. Much emphasis is placed on high achievement and to participate fully. There is a high level of pressure and anxiety for both staff and pupils. The final type is the survivalist culture. In schools of this culture both the social cohesion and the social control is low. Here relations are poor and both pupils and staff feel unsupported and alienated. The ethos is one of isolation, risk, and hopelessness. Hargreaves proposes a fifth cultural type; (E) that of an effective school

where there is optimal social cohesion, as well as optimal social control where both high expectations and high standards are achieved.

Capacity for schools to change their culture

Rosenholtz (1989) in her study of 78 Tennessee elementary schools distinguishes between two types of school culture, one of a 'moving school' and one of a 'stuck school'. In a 'moving school' learning is enriched. She observed that although teachers acknowledge the challenges and problems of teaching, teachers were however prepared to seek and receive help through open communication and mutual support and trust in order to effect continuous improvement. The sharing and collaboration led to confidence, competence, and a commitment to improvement. Hargreaves (1994) also claims that collaborative teaching cultures can lead to school development. It seems that the effort and energy amassed through collaborative support provides the wherewithal to overcome problems and so bring about change which can lead to improvement which in turn provides the impetus for a 'moving school'.

In the schools that were 'stuck' teachers did not experience help and mutual support. They worked in isolation and were both uncertain and unconfident. It was the combination of uncertainty, individualism, and isolation that led to a reluctance to accept and implement change. Stuck schools are ones that are often failing schools. These schools were termed as 'learning impoverished'. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992 p.59) expand on the concept of individualism as not just an attitude of teachers. 'It is rooted in the very conditions under which the teacher's role has evolved.' In other words working in isolation is bound with teachers' expectations that have become an embedded and accepted situation. Rosenholtz's findings seem to have bearing as to the capacity a school will have to change and improve. The capacity of schools to accept change in order to lead to improvement will depend on their shared experiences and the attitudes and commitment of teachers. If there is little evidence of positive attitudes and commitment the likelihood for a school culture to change will be minimal. Whereas if there is a culture of collaboration there will be a strong

likelihood that change will be accepted as part of a culture of improvement of a 'moving school'.

Stoll and Fink (1999) who have developed Hargreaves' ideas, state they were influenced by research on school improvement and school effectiveness. Their argument claims that schools cannot be static, they either get better or worse. Their model is based on the dimensions of effectiveness versus ineffectiveness and improvement versus decline see Fig. 2 (taken from Stoll 1999 p.39).

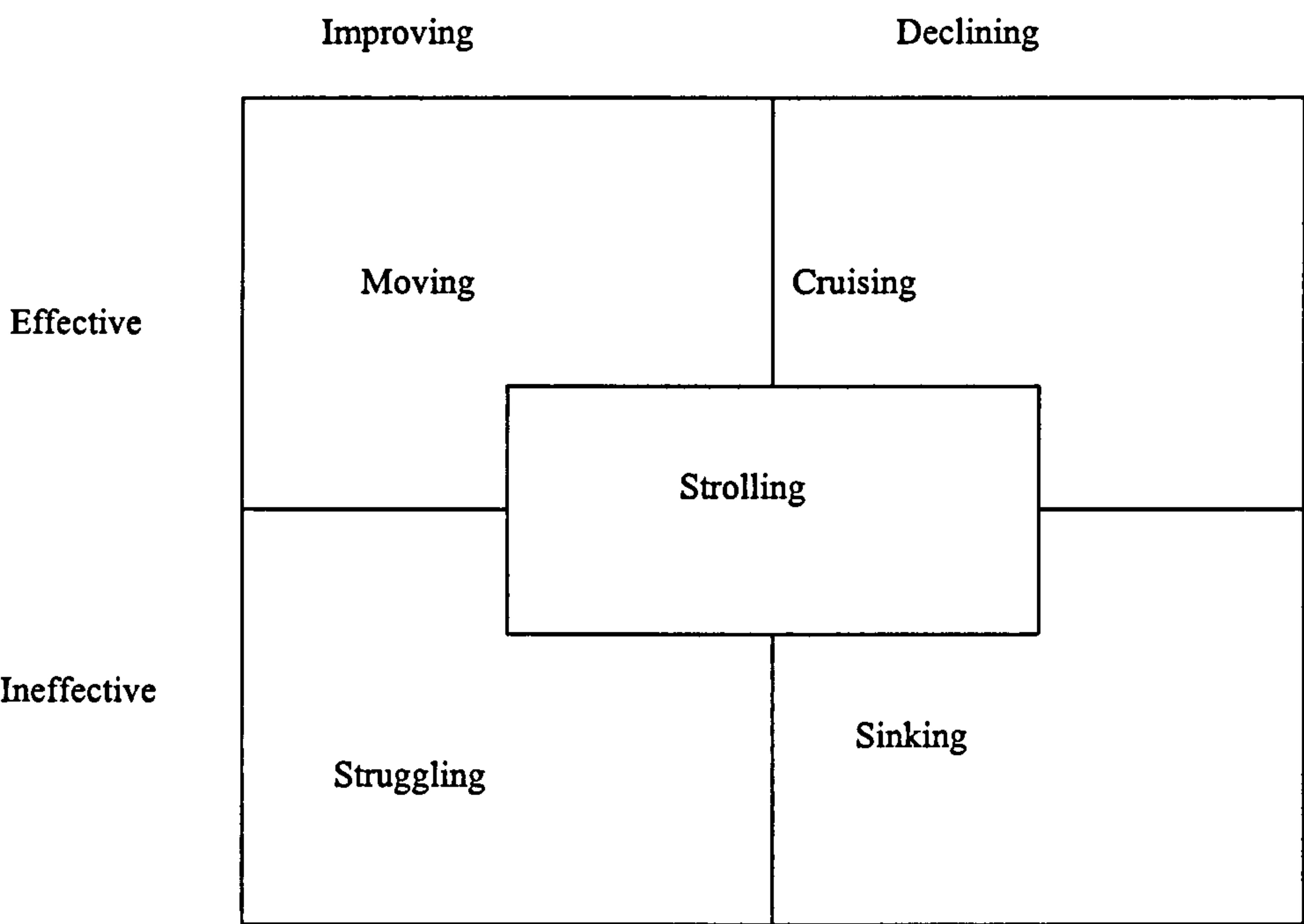


Fig. 2 Stoll and Fink's Typology of schools.

Moving schools are those which manifest effectiveness and improvements. Such schools are effective in terms of pupil successes but the whole ethos embraces working together in response to change to ensure clear directional development.

Cruising schools are schools that are perceived as effective by teachers and the external educational community. Pupil achievement however does not rely on the quality of

teaching and league tables only reflect achievement and do not take in to account value added. These are the 'good schools' of the 1960's, which seem to mark time and not respond to the changing world.

They possess powerful underpinning norms of contentment, avoidance of commitment, goal diffusion, being reactive, perpetuating total top-down leadership, conformity, nostalgia, blame, congeniality, and denial (Stoll and Fink 1999 p.39)

Strolling schools are neither effective, nor ineffective but show some movement towards improvement. This is not enough, however, to keep up with the pace of the changing world. Although league tables would show average pupil achievement there is no clear direction which has a detrimental effect on pupils.

Struggling schools are schools that are ineffective however the situation of ineffectiveness is recognised. The direction of change may be determined although an improvement to teachers' skills may be required; considerable energy may be spent through the will of the participants to improve.

Sinking schools are those which are failing. Not only are they ineffective they are also declining and do not have the will or ability to change. The following features characterize them: isolation, self-reliance, blame, and loss of faith- powerful inhibitors of improvement (Stoll and Fink 1999).

Stoll and Fink's typology has similarities to the two types Rosenholtz proposes. Both see that there is a range of movement that affects the school's capacity to change. The 'stuck' schools are at the lower end of a spectrum where teachers' attitudes are negative and they work in isolation. Whereas 'moving' schools are at the other end of the spectrum where there is collaboration and the teachers' attitudes are more positive. Stoll and Fink seem to have developed the concept and taken it one step further through proposing a second dimension to the dynamics of movement by relating it to effectiveness and ineffectiveness of schools.

It is Hargreaves' typology of school culture that will provide a theoretical framework from which the school culture in this study can be firstly determined, then compared and contrasted. It will be used to provide the initial and final benchmarks from which any change in school culture may be assessed. Stoll and Fink's typology will provide an indication of the perceived direction of the cultural movement.

Educational change

In this section I intend to discuss educational change in order to understand if it can impact on school culture. For an organisation to grow and improve change is necessary. Dean (1999 p.100) argues that 'A school that is not changing in some way is not developing.' Necessary change that can be managed or controlled leads to purposeful learning. Purposeful learning is the key to growth and improvement in schools. Fullan (1991) who has studied educational change proposes three dimensions at play when introducing innovations. Firstly there is the consideration of use of new *materials or resources*. The second dimension is the introduction *of new approaches to teaching* and the third is that *beliefs* underlying pedagogical assumptions may be altered.

Changes in actual practice along the three dimensions - in materials, teaching approaches and beliefs; in what people do and think - are essential if the intended outcome is to be achieved. (Fullan 1991 p.43)

Fullan claims that all three dimensions are necessary, as they are the means of achieving educational goals. Change can vary between groups of people and people as individuals. Change will occur when people's concepts of education and the skills involved with its deliverance are altered.

...the purpose of acknowledging the objective reality of change lies in a recognition that there are new policies and programs "out there" and that they may be more or less specific in terms of what they imply for changes in materials, teaching practices and beliefs. (Fullan 1991 p. 43)

Fullan contends the crux of change lies with the relationship between the innovations being introduced and the embedded multitude of realities of personal and organisational histories. In other words, at the focal point of change there seems to be a relation between the introduction and implementation of new ideas in teaching in the form of resources or new approaches to teaching, and the school's capacity to change. If new skills and knowledge are to be introduced and become embedded practice and be apparent in the embedded school culture it is fundamental that teachers' attitudes and beliefs develop and change.

The process of change

The process of change is complex. Factors contributing to change continually evolve and are interwoven. In this section I will outline the key stages of change that Whitaker (1993) has devised and compare them with Fullan's (1991) stages of change and Wilson and McPake's (2000) model (see Fig 2). Whitaker in his book *Managing Change in School* offers theoretical frameworks for managing change. Wilson and McPake's research, undertaken in studying change in small Scottish schools, offers a revised model for the implementation of change that is based on Fullan's model.

Fig. 3 A comparison of Fullan's, Whitaker's and Wilson and McPake's process of change.

FULLAN	WHITAKER	WILSON and McPAKE
• Initiation	• Purpose	• Audit • Planning
• Implementation	• Practice	• Implementation
• Continuation		
• Outcomes	• Product	• Sign off

Fullan (1991) analyses the complex process of change into four stages of *initiation*, *implementation*, *continuation* and *outcomes*. Whitaker (1993) however sees the *purpose*, *practice* and *product* of change as being three stages that constitute the *process* of change. Both agree that the stages are not simply linear but vacillate between one another as continuous interactive feedback and decision-making occurs. Fullan's first stage, the *initiation* of change, takes into account the context of the situation that started the change and the decisions and reasons behind the change. This is similar to Whitaker's first stage, the *purpose* of change, where the initiative, the intention and hopes for the future are shaped. Whitaker's second stage is *practice*; this is the stage when systems, structures and activities are applied. For Fullan, phase two is the stage whereby the *implementation* of ideas is put into practice. He however describes an extra stage called *continuation*. This is the where practices are ongoing and begin to become an integral part of the system. Wilson and McPake's research undertaken into the management of change in small Scottish primary schools showed that the characteristics of change in their study closely followed Fullan's model. There was one notable difference. In Fullan's model the continuation stage is cyclical and incorporates opportunities to modify innovations. This was not evident in Wilson and McPake's study as 'heads in small schools have neither the time nor the staff

for such refinements.' (McPake 1998 p.26) The implementation strategy through which small schools approached change can be defined as follows:

- Quick audit
- Realistic planning for achievable targets
- Implement with help from all available internal and external sources, especially networking
- 'sign off' - move on. (Wilson and McPake 2000 p.130)

The Wilson and McPake model seems to support Whitaker's model as an audit and planning will give any intended change a purpose. The implementation stage mirrors that of practice and to 'sign off' indicates that an outcome has been achieved. Although this particular study focused on schools with 120 children or less on roll it is feasible that a two-form infant school that is not substantially larger may also find refinement of change as suggested in Fullan's model a difficult issue for similar reasons.

Whitaker's final stage is the *product*, the point where the outcomes and achievements become evident. Fullan's last stage is similar and consists of *outcomes*, which completes the overview with the idea that change will effect a result. Wilson and McPake claim the final stage of signing off indicates the completion of the initiated plans that have been put into practice. Whitaker's framework seems to indicate the process of change in simple but effective terms that can be transferred to researching how the change in approaches to teaching writing can have an effect on school culture.

Professional Development

Professional development is a crucial aspect of change, as educational change is about putting into practice new learning. If it is teachers who have to implement the changes then it is important that they have opportunities to understand the essence of change. This is an issue that Whitaker has omitted, although both Dean (1999) and Fullan (1991) include it as

an important theme to educational change. They both see professional development as essential if schools are to develop and improve. Dean claims

Teachers need to be continuously reflecting on and developing their work, not only because change keeps coming from outside, but because knowledge is continuously changing and developing, and no school or teacher can afford to stand still. (Dean 1999 p.111)

If the contention holds sound that educational change 'depends on what teachers do and think', (Fullan 1991 p.117) and 'Educational change involves learning how to do something new'. (Fullan 1991 p.289) then professional development of teachers must be a fundamental objective in schools if teachers and schools are to continue to develop.

Learning is at the heart of education and is also the essence of educational change. For children to improve their learning, teachers have a responsibility to continue to develop skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes. Therefore professional development is a key theme for educational change which is an integral part of a school's culture Dean (1999). Fullan (1991) sees the improvement of a school as the product of the ultimate aim to change the culture of learning for both the pupils and adults.

In my study the practice of implementing new teaching approaches to writing was introduced to teachers via the NLS through professional development. This study intends to show how change in teaching practices initiated through professional development has impacted on school culture. Two key indicators of change will be employed in this study; based on Fullan's premise that educational change depends on what teachers (1) do and (2) think. The study of behaviours and attitudes of children to the changes in approaches to teaching writing will indicate what teachers do. The study of attitudes and behaviours of teachers to the change in teaching approaches to teaching writing will indicate both what teachers do and think.

Summary

This chapter shows how research into school culture has explored the generic cultures of either secondary or primary schools. Literature pertaining to the culture of infant schools is limited. The exploration of culture in the infant age range of schools seems to have been incorporated within the primary sector that caters not only for the youngest children but the older ones too. If this is so, then it is significant that this study explores the impact of change of new approaches to teaching writing on the culture of an infant school.

Schein, Hargreaves and Stoll and Fink's models will be used as a means to examine the depth, dynamics and type of Waterstone's culture. Walker's framework of the *process of change* will also be acknowledged. The two key indicators of change, (1) *what teachers do* and (2) *what teachers think*, identified in the writing of Fullan (1991) as providing the sign posts of educational change will be incorporated in the key research questions (see page 2).

Chapter 3

Methodology and methods

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss methodological issues. The characteristics of qualitative research are examined. This will lead to the use of ethnography, which is discussed as a traditional form of qualitative research inquiry that focuses on society and culture. The justification of the use of ethnography as a methodological strategy to answer the research question is discussed. This will produce a rationale for the research design that is consistent with the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. Ethnography will be used as the process that will enable the culture of the school to be described and interpreted. The chosen data collection methods will be discussed as will the process of analysis.

What is qualitative research?

This section of this chapter sets out to discuss methodological issues to outline the chosen processes used in the study. Qualitative research is the selected paradigm of the study so the question *what is qualitative research?* is examined. Cohen and Manion (1989) claim that to understand research inquiry, the aim of clarifying the methodology is to rationalise the process used in research rather than focusing on the end result of research.

...the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself. (Cohen and Manion 1989 p. 42)

The methodology suggests how data will be gathered in order to address the research questions to focus actions in the field. It details the design approach, the processes involved, the selection of the population, the involvement of participants, gaining access, gathering and analysing data (Rossman and Rallis 1998) (Cresswell 1998). Qualitative research interprets and illuminates relationships in an attempt to understand and explain the meanings of phenomena in their natural settings. 'Qualitative research is pragmatic,

interpretative and grounded in the lived experiences of people' (Marshall and Rossman 1999 p. 2).

Characteristics of qualitative research

Firstly, qualitative research is holistic and usually involves *fieldwork* and is performed in the world, the natural setting of the participant (Cresswell 1998) (Rossman and Rallis 1998) (Merriam 1989). Secondly multiple methods that are interactive and respect the human participants can be used (Rossman and Rallis 1998). Thirdly *the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis* (Merriam 1989). In other words the methods used primarily includes data collecting and analysing data by the researcher. Fourthly researchers are *interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed* (Merriam 1989). Fifthly the research is interpretative to elucidate, construe and comprehend and is therefore emergent and developmental (Rossman and Rallis 1998). Sixthly qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy, that is, it builds theories or hypotheses rather than tests theories that pre-exist (Merriam 1989). Finally *the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive* (Merriam 1989). In other words, words are used, instead of numbers, to portray meanings of the participants' activities and interests (Merriam 1989)(Cresswell 1998). Rossman and Rallis (1998) state: (1) that research should be iterative or able to be repeated, (2) that the researcher is reflexive and (3) the researcher is aware of how personal biography shapes the study.

Rationale of characteristics of qualitative research

The rationale assumed in the study will be based on the following characteristics of qualitative research. The research will take place in a natural setting and the source of data will be focused on participants who work within the setting. The researcher will be interested in understanding meanings people have constructed and primarily be the key instrument of data collection and analysis using appropriate multiple methods (Merriam 1989) (Rossman and Rallis1998). The data will be descriptive (Merriam 1989). The analysis will be interpretative and pay attention to detail, (Rossman and Rallis1998)

coming to a general conclusion that will build on theory (Merriam 1989). The relationship between the researcher and the social world will be made known through systematic reflection (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

The methodological aim of the study is to understand the cultural meanings and understandings through the reproduction of group and individual experiences. Therefore the process to understand the complexities of human experience will be through ethnographical inquiry.

Ethnography and the study of culture

Ethnography is a major qualitative research genre, (Rossman and Rallis 1999) rooted in sociological and anthropological studies (Denscombe 1998). Cresswell 1998 refers to ethnography as a tradition of inquiry. The concept of culture is central to ethnography. This is simply expressed by Rossman and Rallis (1998 p. 68) who state that ethnographies 'seek to understand the cultures of people in places.' This is similar to Cresswell's definition: 'An ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system,' (Cresswell 1998 p. 58). Ethnography is concerned with interpreting and explaining how people live, understanding how people make sense of their experiences in their lives in their society or group. Peoples' behaviours, attitudes, concepts, customs and their way of life are examined.

It pays special attention to the relative and constructed nature of all forms of behavior, moral and social rules, and systems of ideas, and it attempts to undercut common sense and ideological understandings by looking at how people really do things and experience their world. (Bentz and Shapiro 1998 p118)

Bentz and Shapiro (1998 p.118) claim that ethnographic knowledge is imparted in three forms: (a) description, (b) interpretation, and (c) explanation. The application of these forms will depend on the focus of the research question guiding the inquiry.

Ethnographic inquiry is located on a continuum that extends from pure description to the use of such descriptions for theoretical models and explanations of features of organisational, cultural and social life. (Bentz and Shapiro 1998 p117)

Ethnography describes the way things are and how people behave, the accurate portrayal of the situation. The nature of interpretation and explanation however is dependent on ethnography being located in a theoretical framework. If the research is based in theory then *deductive* reasoning is employed. If, however, theory is developed out of the process of description and interpretation of the experience this is an *inductive* approach. The latter is the approach this study will take.

The role of the researcher

Ethnography is a process whereby cultural groups are understood by description and interpretation typically through prolonged participant observation (Cresswell 1989). The observer notes what people do, what they say and the underlying tensions between what they really do and ought to do (Cresswell 1989). Denzin (1997) claims that the researcher's task is clear in that 'Ethnographers connect meanings (culture) to observable action in the real world.' Ethnographers set out to understand the views of the insiders and so become immersed in the day to day lives of the participants. This is known as the *emic* view. Rossman and Rallis (1998) and May (1997) reason that researchers should be part of the setting.

Making sense of what has been observed is central to the ethnographers' role. This can only be done through using conceptual tools that are based on the researcher's own experiences. Cultural description, interpretation and explanation are all entwined with the researcher's viewpoint. Ethnographers have to be cautious of their accounts and interpretations.

The methodology and methods underlying this thesis

To establish patterns of social behaviour ethnographic information can be gathered through 'observations, interviews and materials helpful in developing a portrait and establishing "cultural rules "of the culture-sharing group.' (Cresswell 1989 p. 60) The researcher decides what methodological processes and data collection methods best suit the purpose of the research and also deliberates the extent of information that will be needed to answer the research questions.

The purpose of the study is to understand the culture shift of an infant school. The study will be ethnographic because the object of the research is to delve into the culture of the school and understand meanings behind the experiences of teachers and children in order to comprehend their values and the basic assumptions. This study sets out to explore the values and beliefs underlying a school culture and how change in actions and interactions may affect deeply held beliefs. Therefore, data collection techniques will fit an ethnographical inquiry. The next section sets out to justify the methods used in the study. The research design is set out in Appendix 4.1 and outlines the objectives of the steps in collecting and analysing data. These steps connect the key questions to ultimately concluding and answering the general research question. *How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?* The methods used were chosen so that the information would be based on participant's own attitudes, feelings and understandings of practice and behaviour.

As well as using interviews, group interviews, and a questionnaire, three techniques in the Cambridge Manual Research Techniques by Ainscow *et al.* (1994) were used to map change in Waterstone School. As the impact of change was at the heart of the research, the user friendly, yet penetrating techniques of investigating change were considered to be suitable methods. The techniques chosen were designed to provide data that could not be readily accessed by other methods of data collection. These techniques were to complement interviews and questionnaires. These techniques were easily administered and provided an interesting alternative to interviewing that was acceptable to the limited

sample of participants and to the researcher as a means of easily and efficiently providing data. The techniques were trialled and evaluated and were found to be valid and reliable. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 pp.2-6)

Mapping Change: 'Technique 2': The experience of change: (Ainscow *et al.*)

The purpose of using the *experience of change* technique (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 pp.17-24), was to enable me to secure answers to key question (3) *What are the attitudes and practices of teachers to the change in approaches to teaching writing?* It would provide evidence of a key indicator of change, what teachers thought. The technique of asking teachers to focus on their feelings towards the changes in their practice would provide opportunities where teachers could concentrate on their emotions in a non-threatening manner. This would provide the means for deeply felt impressions to be carefully drawn thus enabling the investigation to encounter the deeper level of teachers' *beliefs* (Fullan's [1991] third dimension of change). This technique was used as it was proven (Ainscow 1994 p. 24) to be successful in obtaining critical and sensitive data about people's feelings. The data generated an illumination of the overall ambience in the school as well as providing awareness of individual's feelings towards the progress of growth in the organisation.

The technique was chosen to gain insight into how the participants viewed these developments or changes in practice to teaching writing. Such insights would provide the necessary information to gauge teachers' attitudes towards changes in teaching writing.

How to use 'Technique 2': The experience of change (Ainscow *et al.*)

'Technique 2' has three stages. During the first of the three stages preparations are made prior to the interviews. This includes making stimulus cards that pertain to the particular change in question: word cards, which consist of 26 singular words that portray positive and negative feelings, e.g. optimism, anxiety, confident, stimulated, disappointed etc: and a

sorting card that has spaces allocated to the following categories, *often*, *sometimes*, *hardly ever* and *doesn't seem relevant*.

At the start of the second stage, the interview, the respondent is promised anonymity. The respondent is asked to consider the specific change outlined on the stimulus card. Then with the particular change in mind sort the experienced feeling word cards into the frequency categories.

The third stage involves a follow up interview that can be tape recorded or noted. The focus of this interview are the feeling word cards which were placed in the *often* category. The respondents are asked to explain their reasoning behind their choices in this category. At the end of the session general comments of the changes are requested. The notion of anonymity is also repeated. The pledging of anonymity provides an assurance to the respondents that confidentiality will be established as the degree of trust and confidence, which will be crucial to the collection of data. Respondents are also asked not to discuss the session with other prospective respondents until the interviews are finished. This request was to avoid others being more prepared with their answers, which may lead to answers not being spontaneous, which then may hinder in depth revelations.

The analysis begins immediately after the interview and before the next, the allocated word cards are transferred to a pre-prepared matrix according to the coding system A- often, B -sometimes, C - hardly ever and D - doesn't seem relevant. Simple quantitative analysis or ratio scores can be calculated. Individual scores can be attributed to the rated positive and negative words with the following weightings:

+ + words = +2

+ words = +1

- Words = -1

- -words = -2

Using this basis, individual and mean scores can be calculated.

Mapping Change: 'Technique 3': The initiation of change: (Ainscow et al.)

The purpose of using the *initiation of change* technique 3 (Ainscow et al. 1994 pp.25-31) was to enable me to answer key question (3) *What are the attitudes and practices of teachers to the change in approaches to teaching writing?* as it would provide evidence of what teachers thought, a key indicator of change. The aim of using the technique was to elicit an attitudinal response in a way that was easily administered and not time consuming or onerous. This technique was used to explore the extent of teachers' commitment to change and the extent of their feelings of control over the change. The technique enabled the participants' degree of commitment to internal and external change to be contrasted to their degree of control over the changes through answering four attitudinal response sheets. These were presented in the form of quotations that covered levels of commitment and control for internal and external change (Ainscow et al 1994 pp.71-74). A box for comments was also available.

The response sheets could be analysed for internal and external initiated change by matching the chosen quotation to the corresponding scores on the control and commitment keys (Ainscow 1994 et al pp.75-78). The totals of the responses for commitment and control could be transferred to a pre-prepared matrix. The horizontal axis represented the degree of commitment and the vertical axis the degree of control. The comments could be analysed using conventional categorising techniques for qualitative data. The results would enable the patterns of commitment and control to be clearly set out thus indicating the participants' attitudes to the changes.

Mapping Change: 'Technique 4' The culture of a school: (Ainscow et al.)

The purpose of using the *culture of a school* technique 4 (Ainscow et al. 1994 pp.32-41) was for key question (1) *what was the culture before the change?* and key question (4) *what is the change in school culture?* to be answered. Using this technique at the beginning and end of the study would provide an initial cultural baseline from which change in culture could be compared and contrasted. The answers to this question would

help to shed light on key question (5) *what is the impact of change?* How the game is played is explained as follows. The technique is a game played in the form of a board game that takes about 30 minutes. Participants are given four coloured cards from which they read descriptions of Welfarist, Traditionalist, Hothouse and Survivalist school cultures. The participants decide upon the culture that is closest to their school. They are asked to map their responses on an individual grid. The coloured cards match the corners of the grid. Participants are asked to place their school's culture on the grid in relation to the four cameo statements on the coloured cards and coloured corners of the grid. Players are asked to mark the place where their school is at present, put an arrow to point in the direction the school culture is moving and finally insert a star in the square that they would ideally like their school culture to be. This is done individually with no collaboration. The participants are asked to share and discuss their findings. The extension to the task was a whole group discussion the school culture and come to some consensus as to what the culture is and where it is heading. This provides an opportunity for teachers to disclose their attitudes to the school culture. The group discussion can be tape-recorded as a source of qualitative data to for future analysis into categories later. The teachers can be debriefed of the results of the collated version of the individual results on a matrix that shows positions ranging between, traditionalist, welfarist, hothouse and survivalist cultures.

Why use interviewing as a method of data collection?

The purpose of using this data collection method was to answer part of key question (3), *to explore the teachers' attitudes to the change in approaches to teaching writing*. This would provide more evidence of a key indicator of change, what teachers thought.

Merriam (1998) points out that interviewing is necessary when there is a need to understand people's interpretation of the world and or past events. Interviewing is essentially (but not necessarily) a face to face interaction language event in which people are asked to convey their attitudes, perceptions and relationships, through the medium of speech. Interviewing is a tool to find out about people's attitudes and can be a means with which to attempt to describe a culture (Powney & Watts 1987 p.13).

The purpose of interviewing is to gain understanding through the interpretations of other people's experiences. We cannot completely and perfectly understand people, as to do so would entail us entering other people's consciousness. What we can do however, is endeavour to understand them through their actions (Seidman 1991). Denscombe (1998) outlines three reasons for using interviews in research. Firstly to obtain data based on emotions, feelings and experiences. Secondly to gain data that may be based on sensitive issues and thirdly to obtain privileged information. It was my intention to gather information on teachers' perceptions of attitudes and practices of writing to shed light in change in school culture. The teachers were key players in the study. Interviewing, therefore, seemed to be an appropriate method to collect data.

Interview Structure

Interviews should be chosen as a mode to collect data based on the kind of information needed. Interview structures range from structured interviews with predetermined questions to open ended unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview however lies within this range. Questions are a guide for the interviewer but there is flexibility. The semi-structured interview was used, as a range of pre-prepared questions was set. These would provide answers to a key question but there would also be scope to probe if necessary to give participants opportunities to disclose information that would otherwise not be available. The questions were selected (see Appendix 3.3) to gain teachers' perceptions of teaching writing before and at the start when the changes were first introduced, to enable a baseline to be drawn from which comparisons with other data could be made to show the impact of change in school culture.

The interviewer and interviewee relationships

Interviewing relies on relationships between the interviewer and interviewee. The quality of this relationship will bear some influence on the data gathered. McCall & Simons (1969 p.20) claim 'that an effectual relationship established by the researcher with the informant can be a proficient way of eliciting data.' Relationships between interviewer and the

interviewees are pivotal and are dependent on various aspects. Denscombe (1998 p.116) asserts 'that people respond differently depending on how they perceive the person asking questions.' He suggests that the researcher interviewing should consider issues of age, sex, ethnic origin, social status, educational qualifications and professional expertise.

The latter three considerations were a particular concern of mine. I was the headteacher with higher status, with a degree of power and authority, higher qualifications and more professional expertise than the teachers I was interviewing. This was an issue that needed careful management. On reading Seidman discussing interviews where participants have different racial backgrounds I was aware that the barriers I faced were not racial but that the divide of high status, high qualifications, and professional expertise was just as problematical. He outlines a means to bridge such racial barriers of suspicion through courtesy, regard and sincere attention.

Maintaining sensitivity to issues that triggered distrust as well as exhibiting good manners, respect and the genuine interest in the stories of others can go a long way towards bridging racial barriers. (Seidman 1991 p.77)

To counteract the status barrier I was consciously aware that my interviewing skills should be well developed in order that the process would be as smooth as possible. Denscombe (1998 pp.124 - 125) outlines key skills important to the role of the interviewer. *The good interviewer needs to be attentive*; to listen carefully to follow the line of discussion and note body language. *The good interviewer is sensitive to the feelings of the informant*. If the interviewer is cautious he or she will have a greater chance to induce the disclosure of important information. *The good interviewer is able to tolerate silences*. Silences can be awkward and cause anxiety. They may prompt the interviewer to intervene to relieve the tension. It is my experience however that tolerated silences can produce significant data. *The good interviewer is adept at using prompts*. The interviewer should be aware of when to interject and how to elicit more information using prompts and ranges of repeating questions which can be used for extracting details and clarification. *The good interviewer is good at using checks*. Interviewers provide situations where issues can be clarified and

checked so that there is more accurate understanding. Summaries of ideas can add to greater clarification. *The good interviewer is not judgmental.* Personal barriers should be suspended as far as possible. This includes not responding positively or negatively to answers, but just accepting them. Feelings and attitudes on the part of the interviewer should not be revealed as such revelations may contaminate the interviewee's attitudes. The right of the interviewee should be respected. The skills listed above were at the forefront of my conscious desire to implement the interviews appropriately.

Analysing the interviews

The analysis was an ongoing operation throughout the stages of research. The act of writing before and after interview field notes, transcripts, listening to the recordings, rereading the transcripts and the reduced data, and the final writing up, all added to the process of interpretation.

Interpreting and analysing are not just processes the researcher does only near the end of the project. Marking passages that are of interest, labelling them, and grouping them is interpretative and analytic work. Crafting a profile is an act of interpretation and analysis, as is presenting excerpts arranged in categories.

(Seidman1991 pp.101-2)

Seidman's (1991) view of interview analysis is that it is ongoing. It is composed of finding groups of meaning that can be put into categories for interpretation.

Group interviews

The purpose of using this method was to answer the second key question: *What are the attitudes and behaviours of children to the change in approaches to teaching writing?* It was asked to gain an insight to teachers' practice from the viewpoint of the recipients of the change, the children. It was also significant to discern children's perception of their own skills and opinions of being taught to write. To understand such thoughts the group

interviewing technique is a tool that can enable the researcher to gather knowledge of young children's concepts. Group interviews were considered appropriate, as children need only to be proficient at the skills of speaking and listening. Group interviewing provides a technique that can be used to get data from young children and that utilises their developing skills so that they are able with guidance of an interviewer, to express their experiences. Gathering data through group interviews is a suitable technique to use with very young children. Kreuger (1994) found that children have the ability to express themselves freely and respond to the ideas of others without pressures from society distorting their perceptions of self and their environment.

The group interview is a tool that has to be carefully managed (Denzin 1994). I had the role of being the moderator or interviewer to the children. There was an issue of status that I had to consider. I was the Headteacher and the respondents were pupils. This issue was very similar to the one between the teachers and myself. This issue is debated in the previous section of this chapter. The moderator decides the intent and structure of the group interview through asking questions for example, where do I interview? who do I interview? and when do I interview? The moderator should be skilled not only in creating a safe environment in which experiences and opinions can be disclosed but of knowing when and how to intervene. Other required skills include being flexible, objective, empathetic, persuasive and a good listener. The group dynamics must be managed so that responses come from all participants, reluctant participants are encouraged, and domination is kept to a minimum. The moderator must also be aware that individuals can make revelations in a group interview situation either consciously or unconsciously. The research analyst therefore must be aware that such circumstances can occur. Analysis of group interviews is done qualitatively, similar to interviews as discussed previously in this chapter.

Using questionnaires as a research tool

The purpose of using a questionnaire was to complement and triangulate findings from the interviews in providing answers to key question 3. *What are the attitudes and practices of teachers to the changes in approaches to teaching writing?* The findings would signify two

key indicators of change, what teachers thought and did. Questionnaires can be used in small-scale research where detailed information is needed. Munn and Drever (1990) point out that the researcher should be clear on two counts: what information is sought and what information will the questionnaire divulge. For the purposes of this study I will consider self-completing questionnaires. In self-completing questionnaires the respondents fill out the questionnaires for themselves, the researcher is not usually present.

One advantage is the use of *standardised questions*. The respondents will have the opportunity to answer the same questions. There is however no opportunity for meanings of the questions to be clarified. May (1997) claims that there is no control over respondent interpretation of the questions. He also points out another advantage, there can be very little *interviewer bias* that may intrude in the relationship between researcher and respondent. This was also a consideration in this choice of method. A major limitation in using questionnaires is that the information readily supports description rather than explanation. Asking '*why*' questions can be time consuming for analysis and the answers may be superficial. The final part of the process is analysis. The aim in analysis is to examine the responses for patterns and explore relations.

The aim of questionnaire analysis is to examine patterns among replies to questions and explore the relationships between variables that the questions represent. (May 1997 p.102)

The main aim of analysis is to produce a summary of the whole picture by exploring patterns. Munn and Drever suggest that the first step is data preparation whereby the responses are translated to a grid. The grid should be prepared considering the questions and the respondents and the coded categories. They suggest that predetermined categories can be developed, which link closely to the research questions. The resulting coded categories can now be described. The results may be calculated in terms of numbers. For interpretation, it will be necessary to go beyond describing the data by making comparisons between groups. Finally decisions will need to be made as to what the important results are, how they should be presented and what changes may be suggested by the results.

The process of analysis

Analysis is the process of searching for new meanings, making sense of data, interpreting it to provide a premise or a set of premises from which conclusions can be drawn. Stake (1995) sees the process of analysis as pulling out instances and putting them back with meaningful analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation. Analysis is also understood to be a reading of the data, breaking it down into manageable parts to find patterns and trends. Kane explains this.

In analysing your information whether on your own, or if appropriate, with the help of a computer you will probably be categorising information, trying to see patterns and relationships, discarding the irrelevant, summarising, and drawing conclusions. (Kane 1991 p.151)

Walker (1985) claims that analysis is not only a matter of describing but interpretation. Interpretation is deducing what is meant and assessing the implications. His definition is similar to Walcott's approach, as described by Coffee and Atkinson (1996 p.9), of transforming description by asking the questions 'what is going on?' and 'what sense can be made?'

Analysis is the process of systematically organising the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials you have collected: bringing meaning to them so they tell a coherent story; and writing it all up so that others can read what you have learned. (Rallis and Rossman 1998 p.171)

Rallis and Rossman assert that the data analysis process has six phases. These phases were used in the study (1) *Organising the data*, so notes are manageable and records complete. (2) *Familiarisation with the data* happens when reading and rereading the data leads to immersion then to insights of themes embedded within the data. (3) *Generating categories, themes and patterns*. This is recognising salient themes, recurring ideas and patterns of belief that portray the worlds of the participants. It is also through questioning the data that

ideas emerge. The category that codes are divided into is the vehicle for a deeper level of understanding. Merriam (1998) claims that the categories should *reflect the purposes of the research questions*. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) also see the application of categories to reflect the key research questions as a valued procedure. The categories in the methods used in the study were chosen with the purpose of providing answers to the key research questions. (4) *Coding the data* this entails working through the evidence and applying a coding scheme that link to the categories. Passages are marked using the codes. Codes used in the study were key words or phrases that reflected specific concepts relevant to the research questions. (5) *Searching for alternative explanations of the data*, this is the stage where the researcher identifies, describes and searches for convincing explanations, understandings and meaning. In the study it was at this point of analysis that Walcott's questions of 'what is going on here?' and 'what does this mean?' were applied to provide interpretation. (6) *Writing the report*. This phase is central to the analysis process. The writing up of the report reveals descriptions together with discovered meanings and interpretations. To discover meanings and interpretations, the final chapter compares and contrasts the analysis of data collected. In doing so an assessment of the impact of the change in school culture will be evident. This will answer the final key question.

Summary

This chapter discusses the methodological issues encountered in the study. Ethnography was the chosen qualitative research methodology. It was an approach suitable to examine change and to understand what teachers did and thought. The change in teachers' attitudes and behaviours may influence any shift in school culture. The proposed process of methods of data collection and analysis were discussed together with the rationale behind the choices.

Chapter 4

Methodology and methods used

This chapter initially discusses my standpoint as researcher in the study. The procedures of data collection undertaken in the ethnographic study are explained. The process of how the data was analysed is considered by outlining categories and themes that were used for descriptions and explanations in a search for meaning to enable the research question to be answered (see Chapter 1 pp. 2- 4 and Appendix 4.1).

Ely *et al.* (1997) suggests that the researcher has an obligation to understand his or her own viewpoint, as researcher's backgrounds with different perspectives, experiences and attitudes will have bearing on the study as a whole. Researcher position will permeate and affect for example, the way questions are asked, data is assembled and interpretation is rendered. The researcher should know themselves and take into consideration such standpoints. This is probably one of the hardest tasks a researcher will enter upon as the processes to understand and make meanings of other people's perspectives will be immersed in their own conscious and subconscious awareness.

With over twenty-five years of teaching my experiences will have affected my own values and beliefs. Between 1973 and 1978 I experienced a very formal infant school where the Headteacher was autocratic. The curriculum was significantly focused on the reading, writing and arithmetic. The *initial teaching alphabet* was the successful medium to teach reading and writing. A teacher - parent partnership, however, was actively discouraged. This experience of a formal, non-welfarist school culture resolved my values of the importance of the need for children to learn basic skills. The other infant and primary schools I subsequently taught at were very different. Parental involvement was actively encouraged, social, personal and emotional development was a primary requisite for learning to take place. These schools reflected the happy caring infant schools as described by King (1978). Through these experiences I reinforced my appreciation of the importance of care and of valuing people.

It was from this background that as Headteacher my vision for Waterstone School was shared with governors and teachers. 'To secure the highest quality learning for all children in our care.' This statement embodies my beliefs and values that a focus on raising standards of learning for all children is paramount but it should happen within a context of caring and valuing.

For this research, as Headteacher I had no problems in gaining access to the setting. I was open about my research into the culture of the school as both the staff and the governors were aware of my interest in this field. I acknowledge that I was a participant observer and that although I had a role of researcher I was aware however, that my relationship with teachers and children was important, as I must have exerted both a conscious and subconscious influence on them both. The participant observations would be reliant on the researcher's 'self' as the instrument of research. (Denscombe 1998). To play this dual role of Headteacher and researcher was not an easy task. Choices had to be made (Stake 1995), for example which role I was in and, when and how they were to be played. As a researcher I tried to be evenhanded at all times during the data collection. I acknowledge that my personal and professional background, my standpoint and my values were crucial to the methods used, the findings and the final analysis. In the role of Headteacher, I still maintained the capacity to make day to day decisions that would impact on the school and my relationships with staff and children. My justification however for my high profile as participant - researcher was embedded within Schein's (1997) claim 'Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead.'

Setting up the group interviews

Group interviews were used to gain an understanding of children's perceptions of being taught to write. Two group interviews were set up, the first consisting of two boys and two girls. A similar sample was intended for the second group, however one boy declined and it was a girl who was willing to take his place. The children were from different classes to ensure that class cliques were not involved. A sample of four would be manageable, involving everyone, giving them time to have their turn at participating.

The samples comprised Year 2 children but from different cohorts. One sample was taken in June 1999 when those children concerned had experienced nine months of the new teaching approaches and the following academic year in January 2000 after the second cohort had experienced sixteen months of the new teaching approaches. As an interview inevitably consists of listening and speaking it was important if the data was to be rich that the children were able to use such skills proficiently. They also needed to have enough confidence to participate in a group context and not be intimidated by the situation and clam up. The sample was based on these criteria. Parental permission was sought and it was explained that children's views are valued on such issues. To ensure anonymity children's names were changed. The children were invited to join in the group discussions.

What actually happened?

The interviews were held around a table in a small warm, light room. The observer, the deputy head, discussed the process and her role prior to the interviews. She took notes to supplement the tape recordings. She acted as hostess at the beginning of the sessions, collected the invited children and explained their role in discussing their writing. Children were shown to their seats. The tape recorder was checked prior to the interviews. The children gave their permission for the interview to be tape-recorded. The data could be recorded verbatim, and also analysed at leisure.

The moderator

As moderator I explained the purpose of the exercise, and the need for them to speak one at a time. A structured framework of questions based on Bright's (1995) Student Interview Questions (Reflective Accounts), (see Appendix 3.2) was used as a guide. Closed questions were asked to introduce a topic, which was expanded by asking open and probing questions. Through careful listening I used reflective phrases and summaries to round off viewpoints for clarification or verification. The children were given time to think and answer questions. Quieter children were specifically asked for their comments to enable every one to be involved.

What happened to the data?

The observer and myself provided extra information about what was happened as field notes were taken before and after the interviews. The tape recordings were listened to and transcribed (see appendix 4.6). The transcriptions were used in conjunction with repeated listening to the tapes. The data from the transcriptions was coded, key words being noted in the margins. These key words then were transferred to *post it notes*. These formed the units of meanings that were sorted into three categories, children's *feelings towards writing*, their perceptions of their concepts *of learning to write* and their perceptions of their *concepts of the teaching of writing* (see Appendix 4.6 for extract from transcripts). These three categories reflected the purpose of the research question, to understand children's perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching and learning of writing. The data was analysed through asking questions of the data: 'What is going on?' and 'what sense can be made?' (Wolcott 1994). The analysed information was significant in enabling the key question *what are the attitudes of children to the change in teaching approaches?* to be answered. This key question is explored in chapters 5 and 6. The compared and contrasted findings in Chapter 8 provided evidence of the impact of change.

What happened in the teacher interviews?

All six teachers were invited for interview at the beginning of the study in spring 1999. One teacher did not turn up for the interview. She did not explain her action, and neither did I press her, as I was aware that she had a personal problem and so was not at all receptive to being asked questions. The other teachers were readily interviewed. The sample of teachers' experience ranged between years R, 1 and 2. The absence of the one teacher was not critical. I was conscious that I was asking teachers to give me their time, which seemed precious as they were under pressure to meet deadlines in preparation for Ofsted. McPake (1998) also encountered a similar consciousness not to overload staff.

I have to consider that the *time* may have been given to me only because I was the Headteacher and it was an expectation. I was aware that I had a higher status among the

teachers. I tried to separate my role of Headteacher and that of a researcher by *inviting* the teachers to be interviewed, to give me their views on the writing, in their own time not in school time. The invitations and timing, were signs to convey a message that I was a researcher who felt the teachers had something valuable to say. I was prepared to listen and would appreciate their time for sharing their views. There was an element of give and take for both sides but I was acutely aware I was indebted to the teachers' tolerance.

The interviews were conducted in the quiet, small group room. The reason for the interviews was explained. Permission to tape-record was sought. To address confidentiality anonymity was pledged. Field notes were taken both before and after the interviews to act as reminders. The recordings were transcribed (see Appendix 5.1 for a sample transcript).

Analysing the interviews

The same process of analysis used for the children's group interviews as previously outlined was followed for the analysis of the teacher interviews. Three categories developed from the interview data the first being the *change of approaches to teaching writing*, the second the emergent *feelings and attitudes of teachers*, and the third the teachers' understandings of *children's attitudes and feelings* were considered. This would enable the key question *what are the attitudes of teachers to the teaching approaches?* to be answered by constructing meaning through description but also by building an interpretation of the interviews as a whole.

The findings and explanations of the analysed data assisted in the drawing out of answers to the original research question. The listed categories helped explore the key questions and enabled an investigation into what teachers did and thought. The information in the categories would provide an insight into the impact of change on school culture by registering the changes in practice and the change in teachers' thinking and their beliefs. The changes in teacher beliefs would be a key indicator not only of change but also of change in the embedded school culture. It was my intention to confirm the findings by comparing them and contrasting them with analysed data from teachers' questionnaires. The findings were weighed up in light of the literature on educational change and change

of school culture. This enabled me to evolve an infant school culture typology that may fit a national school culture for infant schools (see Chapter 8).

What happened using questionnaires?

A questionnaire was used to follow up the teachers' interviews. It was devised to obtain information to answer key question three, that is, to explore teachers' perceptions of what they did and thought about the new approaches to teaching writing that were initially introduced through professional development (see Appendix 3.3). It was a means of collecting data that would be less intrusive as it was answered in the participants' own time. Also any influence I had as practitioner - researcher would have been minimal, as the questionnaire was anonymous. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open questions. Teachers' opinions were sought to allow respondents to express opinions and experiences in their own words. This gives the participants freedom to assert their opinions without restriction. The exact wording of the questionnaire was considered. The questions were designed to be as short and simple as possible without losing the intended meaning. It was important to avoid emotive phrases that would put ideas into participants' minds. It covered aspects of the teaching of writing and was piloted by one teacher, prior to being given to the teachers.

All six teachers completed the questionnaire in their own time in the second year of the study in 2000. As I progressed through the study I found that too much data had been gathered. I decided to concentrate on using data that answered the more focused refined research question: *How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?* This meant narrowing down the data by not using all the information that the data supplied. Categories pertaining to the genres of writing and the provision of a language rich classroom environment were omitted as they were indirectly related to the research question.

The categories that I chose to use were ones that corresponded to the research question through answering the following key question: *What are the attitudes and practices of*

teachers to the change in approaches to teaching writing? To answer this question would enable any change of practice to be identified. Teachers' attitudes to the changes would provide the information as to their commitment. This provided indications of the change in teachers' values and basic assumptions (Schein1997) and thus a change to school culture.

How the questionnaire was analysed

Grids were prepared on to which coded data was placed. The coded data was placed in the categories, which can be seen in Appendix 4.2. Teachers' responses to the introduction of new practices introduced through professional training were recorded in tables in Appendix 4.2. Table 4.1 showed the results of individual teacher's replies and comparisons of teachers in year groups. The second category: *Teachers' perceptions about the impact of the Good Writing workshop on teaching writing 4.2* was tabled to show teachers' responses to features of writing introduced in a different professional development opportunity. *Teachers' perceptions of the new approaches to teaching writing that have helped raise standards of teaching and learning of writing* outlined in table 4.3 formed the third category that provided an insight into the impact of change. The final category used was *Teachers' perceptions of teaching writing skills* to enable an understanding of teachers' practice to be gained, see table 4.4. The comments that teachers made were analysed in the same categories of teacher responses to professional development. Finally teachers' attitudes to the implementation of the new approaches and the teaching of writing skills were analysed through description and by asking the question 'what does this mean?' to enable an interpretation to be formed to see signs of impact that would suggest any change to school culture. The categories were also interrogated to elicit meanings through comparing the categories and relating the answers to the key question to aid interpretation.

Mapping change in schools: 'Technique 2'. The experience of change: (Ainscow et al.)

The changes that the teachers were asked to comment on during the interview, the changes in approaches to teaching writing, were listed on a stimulus card for respondents to refer to. In collecting the data the *Experience of change* technique was carefully compiled by

following the three stages in Ainscow *et al.* pp.17-24. The activity was prepared as described in Chapter 3. The second stage involved all six teachers. In the summer 2000 the teachers were individually invited to take part in the research. I explained that I was interested in teachers' attitudes towards the changes in teaching writing which were outlined on the stimulus card. Before I clarified the procedures that would be followed I also made clear that the information gathered would be confidential, as their responses would remain anonymous in the write up of the research. Teachers were asked to sort their feelings towards the change by allocating the individual word cards into specific frequency categories. Respondents were identified in this case by numerals.

The third stage was an opportunity for the respondents to comment or tell their story on the words sorted in the *often* space. At this stage, as previously agreed, I took hand-written notes. It seemed appropriate that jottings rather than a tape recorder were used, as the focus involved teachers' feelings. To attentively listen and write the comments (which were not long) somehow showed more regard to the significance of what was said than to use a higher order of technology as the short responses were heard and immediately noted. The hand-written notes were typed out afterwards (see appendices 4.3, 4.4).

Analysing the data

After each interview, the allocated attitudes A *often*, B *sometimes*, C *hardly ever* and D *doesn't seem relevant* were noted on the matrix (Appendix 6.1). The matrix assigned the frequency of the experienced feelings into *very positive* ranging to *very negative* categories. Individual responses were totalled. The combined responses were reduced and tabulated into frequency and percentage tables (Appendices 6.2, 6.3) The ratio of the scores was calculated by comparing the total positive results to the total number of negative results. The mean score was also calculated. The results of the combined scores were compared and interpreted using the following categories of *very positive feelings*, *positive feelings*, *negative feelings* and *very negative feelings*. The teachers' comments on all the *very positive* feelings were analysed to find the meanings to the interpretation of the

results. They provided an insight to the teachers' inner feelings and attitudes towards changes in teaching writing.

Mapping change in school: 'Technique 3': The initiation of change: (Ainscow et al.)

This was undertaken in summer 2000. I was aware I relied heavily on the good will and co-operation of the teachers, and that collecting data involving the staff included teachers giving up their time during the non-teaching parts of the day. For the purposes of this collection of data a time slot was allocated at the beginning of a staff meeting. The reasoning behind this was to signal that this research was an important school issue and data would be collected within directed time. All six teachers were asked to complete their responses that related to the school initiated changes to teaching writing. Collecting this data was quite straightforward. The preparation simply entailed ensuring enough of the four response sheets for teachers to complete. For the purposes of this study teachers were asked to reflect upon specific changes in new approaches to teaching writing. It seemed an appropriate technique to gather data about the initiation of external change as the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the internal change, the new teaching approaches in teaching writing of emergent and extended writing. I introduced the technique and explained my ongoing research. The gathering of this data would enable me to acquire a general portrayal of the effect of changes on the school as a whole. Teachers were asked to read the response forms and tick one box of a set of comments that seemed to be most appropriate. The four response sheets corresponding to school based and governmental changes were distributed a set at a time. Teachers were asked to write comments in the boxes provided. During the completion of the sheets at least three teachers said that they had difficulty in making their decisions. My gratitude was expressed to all when the exercise was completed.

Analysing the data

The response sheets were analysed for internal and external change by matching the chosen quotation to the corresponding scores on the control and commitment keys

(Ainscow *et al.* 1994 pp.75-78). The totals of the responses for commitment and control were transferred to the matrix (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.79). The horizontal axis represented the degree of commitment and the vertical axis the degree of control. The results were tabulated in the text, see Chapter 7 pp.100, and 103). The comments were analysed using conventional categorising techniques for qualitative data using the following categories, *Commitment to School initiated changes: Control of school initiated changes: Commitment to Government changes: Control over governmental changes:* Teachers responses to both school based and government initiatives were compared. The results enabled the patterns of commitment and control to be clearly set out thus indicating the participants' attitudinal perceptions to the changes. Only five comments were written out of a total of 24. The comments were used to support and clarify the choices in explaining and making sense of the themes of commitment and control. The scores from the commitment and control keys were plotted on the matrix. The scores, which ranged between 1 to 5, corresponded to the degree of commitment and control for both types of change. Teachers were informed of the results at a following staff meeting.

Mapping change in schools: 'Technique 4': The Culture of School: (Ainscow et al.)

The purpose in using this technique was to understand teachers' perceptions of the current culture, to project the direction the culture was moving and to disclose teachers' ideal cultures. This technique was used because it was specifically devised to assess school culture and the scope for the management of change. The technique was used twice, at the start in 1998 and again at the end of the study period in 2000 to enable any impact of change to school culture to be judged through a comparison of the findings.

What happened when mapping school culture?

In 1998 one teacher was absent so five teachers were involved. In 2000 all six teachers were included although there had been a change of two teachers. In the first instant the teachers were invited to spend part of their lunch hour to complete the activity. The teachers seemed happy to participate. It took place in a small room for group work and

took 30 minutes. On the second occasion it was decided that the activity would take place in a staff meeting thus alleviating them of time constraints.

In both cases the administering of the 'board game' followed the same arrangements (see chapter 3). Prior to starting both activities I gained permission to tape record the preceding group discussions. The teachers responded individually to mapping their perceptions of the school culture, the direction the school was moving and their ideal school culture. The teachers shared their responses in turns and collaborated in the group discussion to come to a consensus of the school's culture, where it was heading and where they would like it to be. I was not part of the respondents' circle but sat outside it, listening to the responses so my influence on the teachers would be kept to a minimum. My presence was necessary, as I was able to listen to what was said, clarify points and to reassure the teachers that their contributions were helpful and valued.

The individual responses were collated on a single grid for analysis. The proportion of teachers' choices in a particular quadrant was calculated. The data gathered from the taped group discussion was transcribed and analysed as outlined in the group interview section. These units of meaning were coded on the transcriptions and divided into the following categories of school culture, *Welfarist*, *Survivalist*, *Traditionalist* and *Hothouse*. By asking *what does this mean?* of the data descriptions and interpretations were unfolded. This enabled me to uncover the positions of the school culture, the directions the school was heading and the perceived ideal cultures. The information from both activities were compared and contrasted in Chapter 8 for a final interpretation. This was done to discover the change of school culture that had occurred over time and to answer key question 4: *what was the change of school culture?* Finally, teachers were debriefed.

Ethical issues

Although the school and the participants are known to me, the researcher, throughout the study I have endeavoured to protect the identities of the teachers and children concerned and the identity of the school itself. Confidentiality was assured through the participants

remaining anonymous. Each time data was collected the participants were invited to take part and the timing of the data collection was negotiated with teachers. Throughout the study the participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study and they understood they had a choice in participating.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods of data collection and analysis and how they were used in the study. The methods were specifically chosen to explore the five key questions (see Chapter 1). School culture was investigated to find evidence of change using a specifically adapted technique. Children's perceptions were investigated through group interviews to answer key question two. Teachers' perceptions of practice and attitudes were explored through interviews and questionnaires. These insights into what teacher did and thought were crucial to answering the third key research question. All the gathered information would have a bearing on answering the research question: *How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on the school culture?*

Chapter 5

The initiation of change

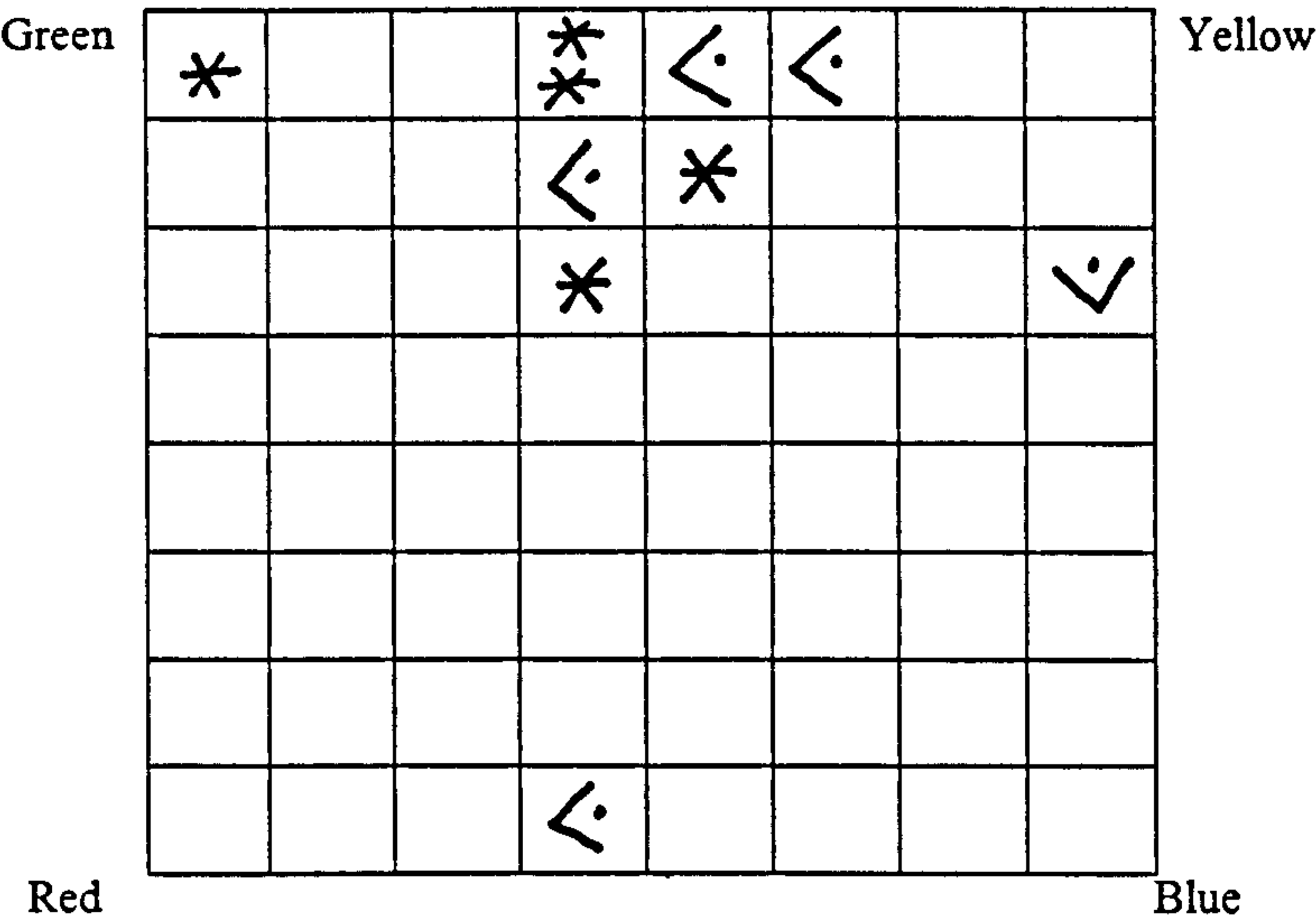
This chapter sets out to answer three key questions. (1) *What was the school culture before the change?* The school culture was mapped in 1998 in order to explore teacher's values and basic assumptions of the school culture prior to educational change. The information provides a benchmark from which any change in school culture over time can be compared. (2) *What were the attitudes of children to the changes in approaches to teaching writing?* To answer this question data gathered from a group interview with children will be analysed. This will enable children's perceptions gathered from group interviews, to be taken into account, as children's learning is an essential element in the impact of change in approaches to teaching writing. (3) *What were the teachers' attitudes to the change in approaches to teaching writing?* This question will be answered using evidence from teacher interviews at the start of the study. Answers to the latter two questions will provide evidence of what teachers do and think, both key indicators of change. The analysed data will give a base line from which other data can be contrasted and compared to answer the research question, does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?

What was the school culture in 1998 before the changes?

The teachers' responses were mapped on a grid (see page 55). Three out of the five teachers located the school culture in the Welfarist quadrant. One was firmly located at the Welfarist boundary; the other two veered slightly towards the Hothouse quadrant. Although the fourth teacher located the school in the Hothouse quadrant the position was border in the Welfarist position. The fifth teacher located the school culture on the boundary of the Traditionalist school limit. The school was generally perceived as a Welfarist school culture. The results are mapped on page 54 (Fig 4). The following evidence was gathered in 1998 from the teachers' tape-recorded discussion of Hargreaves

Fig. 4 School Culture 1998

GROUP AGGREGATE DATA COLLECTION SHEET



KEY

- Present position
 - > Where it is going - in which direction
 - * Where would likely to be ideally
- Green represents the Hothouse School Culture
- Yellow represents the Welfarist School Culture
- Red represents the Traditionalist School Culture
- Blue represents the Survivalist School Culture

(1994) topology of school culture, which was used to support the evidence from the mapped school culture.

Did the school have a 'Survivalist' culture?

The extreme state of a survivalist culture as described by Hargreaves (1999) is a failing school one where there is low cohesion and low social control. The teachers dismissed the survivalist culture as a culture that was not prevalent at Waterstone School as the statement reflected the culture of a devalued school. It was recognised that individuals may occasionally experience low morale but that did not necessarily constitute a whole school culture.

This is the picture of a completely demoralized school. We've all said things like that but it is not constant. Only when something comes to a head. (Teacher E)

This finding concurs with those of Ainscow's study of school improvement.

All teachers tacitly accepted that managing change involved overcoming difficulties and encountering setbacks. These were regarded as natural occurrences since they recognised that change creates turbulence in the school (Ainscow 1996 p 13)

The teachers agreed that the school was not demoralized but that occasionally individuals were dissatisfied. Such situations were perhaps recognised as uncomfortable during the times of disequilibrium when teachers were unsettled. Teachers agreed that such incidents were not part of an embedded culture.

Teachers' perceptions of the school as a Welfarist culture

A Welfarist school focuses on high social cohesion of care and friendliness but where work pressure is low. (Hargreaves 1999). The friendliness of Waterstone School emanated

though the discussion as it was claimed by teacher C, 'We're a really friendly school. Everyone says so.' Friendships it seemed were important to the teachers. This aura was one that permeated through the school. Positive feedback from outsiders had been listened to and accepted by the teachers. Valuing the efforts of every one was also an important issue for the teachers. This was the heart of the Welfarist philosophy. The following statement struck a chord amongst the teachers. Feeling valued and wanted were fundamental considerations of the teachers.

I like this bit from yellow (Welfarist statement) that nobody gives of their best unless they feel valued and wanted. (Teacher C)

Embedded within this statement is a two-way communication of give and take, between both the teachers and the children. The children were highly regarded. It was implicit that high regard of children would lead children to put their best effort into their work. The teacher felt they could not perform at their best if their efforts were not recognised, respected and appreciated.

Children's happiness was a concern of all the teachers except one, who argued that there was little time for the children to develop their social and emotional skills. The ensuing debate contended that the school as a whole did focus on developing these skills and that this teacher did consider them. 'You do circle time' was an observation of another colleague. Teacher A rounded off the debate

If the children are not happy then the rest of what we do is a waste of time. The children need to feel secure. We really do care for the children. (Teacher A)

Through the debate the teachers came to a consensus that the social development of the children was as essential requirement to the school culture. This was achieved through the caring side of the school that came to the forefront and conserved children's well being which would serve to provide the feeling of safety and contentedness needed for children to be able to learn.

Did the school have a Traditionalist culture?

Hargreaves (1999) explains the traditionalist culture as a *formal* culture where the pressure is focused on students achieving learning goals. From the tape-recorded group discussion that emanated from the mapping school culture exercise, evidence came to light that the school culture had elements of the Traditionalist school culture. This was not shown on the mapped school culture grid (see page 55). The formal typology was not chosen as a position of the school culture. Teachers agreed there was no sense of care submerged within the statement and so it did not mirror the school culture. It was claimed that the school was well disciplined. This was discounted as not an exclusive element to the traditionalist school with the statement from Teacher A 'Because we are well disciplined doesn't mean we are not friendly'. Teacher C acknowledged that like the traditionalist school culture 'Assessment and testing is important but not overly.' These acknowledgements uncovered traditional traits of testing and assessment. The phrase '*not overly*' suggested the teachers had a counter argument why the school culture of Waterstone was not wholly a Traditionalist culture. Teachers could see elements of the school culture were of a Traditionalist nature however they themselves were not convinced that such elements were deeply embedded in the school culture.

Did the school have a Hothouse culture?

Hargreaves (1999) describes the Hothouse culture as one where all are under pressure to participate fully in the full range of school life. The Hothouse philosophy of school culture is to educate the whole child. The social and emotional sides to the child are as important as the academic side. This was shown in the following comments.

I think it is important to teach the whole child. If a child is not settled socially then it won't learn. (Teacher C)

Teachers acknowledged that the social development of children was one that could not be ignored, as in their view children would not learn if they were in an uneasy situation at

school. Children's security seemed to be a pre-requisite to learning. The teachers' desire to educate the whole child was the only reference made to the Hothouse culture. This reference to teaching the whole child was comparable with the nurturing Welfarist view of high social cohesion. The omission of other comments, for example for the academic side of teaching to be developed (Ainscow *et al.* p.83 1994), leads me to think that teachers did not view the school as under pressure to develop improved learning. There was no mention of a team spirit, which indicated that there was little collaboration between teachers. Nor was there mention of giving 100% to the profession that can be both intellectually and emotionally draining, which also suggest that full commitment to teaching and learning was not particularly evident in 1998.

Teachers' perceptions of the culture of the school in 1998

In considering the position of the culture of the school in 1998, the evidence through mapping the school culture and from the taped discussion indicated the following assumption. The school culture was one of a Welfarist school, which was complemented with a small element of a Hothouse school culture that puts emphasis on teaching the whole child. Teachers agreed that there was discipline in the school, which was a component of a Traditionalist school culture. The culture statements were debated. Elements from the ensuing recorded discussion were used to compile a description of the current position of the culture at Waterstone School in 1998. A description of the school culture emerged as follows.

Our school is really friendly and we believe in everyone getting along together. Nobody gives of their best unless they feel valued and wanted. It's a caring school. We expect children to do well yet believe that the social and emotional side of the child also needs to be developed, Most teachers are involved in pastoral care as well as academic teaching. Although we are friendly we regard ourselves as a well disciplined sort of school. There is some emphasis on pupil learning.

The culture of Waterstone School was one of being informal and cosy. Relationships were friendly and the children were happy being taught in a nurturing caring environment. There was a strong emphasis on pastoral care. Hargreaves clearly expounds the Welfarist culture.

It places emphasis on informal, friendly teacher student relations. The focus is on individual student development within a nurturing environment. The educational philosophy is child-centered and relations between the headteacher and staff are held to be democratic. (Hargreaves 1994)

The importance teachers placed on the relationships and care signified there was high social cohesion where relationships were the dominant issue. There seemed to be an omission on the part of the teachers to challenge the children to have an emphasis on learning. The lack of wholehearted focus on teaching, learning and assessment leads to the argument that there was a low level of social control where the culture was not goal orientated. The children and teachers were seen to be working in a happy environment of care and tolerance of a Welfarist school culture. This ideology was similar to the one King (1978 p12) uncovered in his sociological study states 'There is the idea that children learn best when they are happy.' The state of happiness, which provided the guiding principle of infant education in the 1970's, seemed to be evident in Waterstone School in 1998.

Teachers' perceptions of where the school's culture was heading

On the culture map 1998 (see page 55) the plotted arrows denoted the direction the teachers saw the school heading. The arrows showed that teachers saw the school to be moving in different directions. Three teachers agreed that the school was moving towards a Hothouse culture. Two other teachers perceived the school as lying between a Survivalist and a Traditionalist culture. As a group the teachers noted this discrepancy in direction when they plotted the positions on the collective data sheet. The ensuing discussion then drew out the agreement that the school was not generally heading off in the direction of the Survivalist culture. Four of the five teachers agreed that the school was heading towards the Hothouse and the Welfarist cultures rather than the formal and Survivalist cultures. The

Traditionalist and Survivalist cultures were originally ruled out, as the descriptions did not mention the care of the children. The resulting discussion covered teachers' perceptions as to where the school was heading. This unveiled the notion that the emphasis of the whole child was being lost and that direction was moving towards putting the emphasis on results.

The Government wants us to put emphasis on results. I think it's important to teach the whole child. If children are not settled socially they won't learn. (Teacher C)

The advancement of the whole child to be socially, emotionally and academically developed was picked upon as being important to teachers. There was emphasis for social and emotional development of children to be in place before achievement could occur as it was agreed that if care for the whole child was foremost then children would achieve better results. The values of educating the whole child became evident when staff agreed that the results the Government wanted could be achieved by upholding the embedded values of the school, which they believed were the right way to educate children. Teachers were showing a protective attitude. It seemed they wanted to safeguard children from the aims of the government of achieving improved standards through the primary consideration of the welfare of the children. The social and emotional development of children was uppermost and for these teachers was the means with which to achieve academic success to raise standards. The teachers exhibited strong social cohesion (Hargreaves 1999) and aimed to introduce the new changes through a determination to ensure strong social control (Hargreaves 1999) over the governmental initiatives. To do so would change the school culture from one that was Welfarist to one that was a Hothouse culture. In Chapter 7 the school cultures of 1998 and 2000 are compared and contrasted and will provide the evidence to see if the teachers' aims were fulfilled.

First group interviews with children

The benchmark evidence of children's group interviews was collected from the first cohort of Year 2 children in 1999 for comparison with the second Year 2 cohort in 2000 (see Appendix 5.2 for sample transcript). Data was analysed to identify and understand the underlying beliefs and attitudes children held in learning to write to provide evidence to answer the second key question: *What are the attitudes of children to the changes in approaches to teaching writing?* The analysis will also enable the following question, related to a key indicator of change, *What do teachers do?* to be answered. This will show how children's attitudes and behaviours were affected by teachers' change of approaches to teaching writing, thus providing evidence of school change.

Children's feelings towards learning to write

The children agreed that they liked writing and that it could be fun. Other positive feelings were related to a sense of achievement. This occurred when children worked hard on thinking and developing ideas that culminated in a good story. This is illustrated in Jenny's quote: 'When I work hard and have lots of good ideas it comes out as a really good story.'

The negative feelings encountered were bound up with children sharing their work with a wider audience when reading their written work out aloud to the teacher and the class. Gareth said he felt embarrassed. Josh said he felt lonely. Jenny expressed mixed up ambivalent feelings.

Sometimes I feel that I can't do it (read aloud to the teacher). If I have done the work wrong then I don't really want to take it to the teacher. But I still want to share it with the teacher or the children. (Jenny)

There was an underlying fear and a sense of insecurity stemming from feeling isolated and fears of feeling awkward and silly when reading aloud. There was a fear of incompetence in not completing the work to the standard or the way that was expected by the teacher.

Jenny's feelings were countered by a need to share what had been achieved. Any embarrassment or fear was overcome because of her need to share her writing with her teacher or with other children was stronger than the fear of wrong doing or embarrassment. She wanted the feedback and would take the risk of it being positive or negative. Feedback is an integral part of learning where there is recognition of success and development.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF CONCEPTS OF LEARNING TO WRITE

Conceptual development

The children agreed that learning to write could be easy and difficult. Thinking of ideas for writing was more difficult than using dictionary skills to find new words to use. Gareth was able to explain that unknown words could be looked up. Thinking seemed to be the hardest challenge as Jenny said, 'If you didn't think you would not get the story out of your head.' For Josh sequencing a story provided difficulty.

For me writing is quite easy and quite hard. I start with ideas but if I start with the ending and not the middle or the start, then I don't know what to do. I have to have a very long think. (Josh)

The challenge to the children's learning was working through ideas and transferring the ideas into a coherent correctly sequenced story not the use of technical skills of spelling. The length of the story was equated with a higher degree of difficulty as Josh explained.

If the story is a short one and not have too many words then it (writing) is easy. But if it is long you have to think about it hard and copy it out of your brain. (Josh)

The process of learning to write, to deal with organising ideas, involves abstract thinking skills. Thinking skills were accepted as part of their on going development. The children also realised that such conceptual development was important and central to improving writing skills.

Consolidation of skills

The children saw practice as a means to improving writing skills. They recognised the importance of practising using their handwriting skills, punctuation, using ideas in story writing and using phonics to word build when writing a story. The amount of writing was the yardstick the children used to measure their own improvement, as was the use of 'better words'. Gareth's statement provides the evidence.

We use better words than we did last year. We could only write a page then, this year we write pages. (Gareth)

Josh agreed but also acknowledged that with the advancement of age he understood what was expected of him, he knew what he was doing. Jenny was secure in using her phonic knowledge. The experience gained from being taught the processes and skills of writing, and putting them into practice had enabled them to become more cognisant with their learning of what they knew, what they could do and understand. These children were able to see that over time their learning had progressed and they had become more competent, through using a simple measurement, the quality and quantity of words.

Children's perceptions of concepts of the teaching of writing

Teachers' modelling of writing a non-fiction book helped the children to consolidate their writing skills. Although they had met the lay out of a non-fiction book previously, they agreed that the exercise of a teacher demonstrating how a book was written motivated the children to attempt to write their own. In Josh's words

The teacher helped us by writing a book and so gave us some advice and ideas. We were taught how to learn about healthy eating. I can do any work so can these others. (Josh)

Specific teaching demonstrating the organisation of how a non-fiction book is written, seemed to have given children the confidence to put into practice what they had learnt. Wray (1999) cites that there is some evidence that modelling can help children's learning to write.

There is some evidence that learning can be assisted if this modelling is accompanied by a commentary by the expert, thinking aloud about the activities being undertaken (e.g. Tonjes 1988). (Wray 1999 p.56)

Through understanding what they were expected to do, children seemed to feel competent and were able to rise to the challenge set them. Explicit teaching, explaining the thinking behind the writing of how to write a non-fiction book enabled the children to write their own non-fiction books. The ability to write was accepted of a matter of course.

Teachers provided support by giving advice. Teachers intervened by reminding the children of punctuation, legibility, reading their writing, checking work and listening. Josh was aware of the importance of listening as he said, 'Sometimes I don't know what I'm doing because I don't listen'. Jenny also recalls such advice.

She says to me if you want to be a good writer listen carefully at what you have to do. You have to do full stops and capital letters. Afterwards check your work and then if you have anything wrong you can write it again so you can read it. (Jenny)

Such advice helped children focus on some of the different facets of writing and learning. To be good listeners enabled children to be clear of what they were to do and how it would be best achieved. Indeed Jenny was able to recite her teacher's advice, which indicates that she was not only aware of the importance of listening but becomes actively involved in developing the skill and understanding the advice. In reminding children about punctuation her teacher was trying to ensure that children write in sentences. The attempt to ensure the children's writing made sense was a fundamental aim to writing. Similarly the checking of work highlighted that writing may need to be amended and edited, will enable the children to be clear about the meanings they wish to communicate.

The children received feedback on their writing in the form of written and verbal comments. Children read their teachers' comments about their writing. This was a two way process as the children would reply to a comment in the form of a question. Josh heeded the advice.

Sometimes I answer them (teacher comments). I did a story of the big bad wolf and she wrote at the end 'how can you make this more interesting?' I wrote ALL THE WAY HOME in big capital letters on my page. She came round and said, 'have you just done what I said?' I said 'Yes' and she said 'Well done'. (Josh)

The feedback in the form of teachers' comments prompted children to improve their writing. Josh was able to respond positively to the comment. Teachers influenced children to improve their writing not only by overt teaching but also through the medium of writing itself. It helped to endorse the notion of writing as communication. The following up of the response to the comment enabled the children to be praised for implementing the advice, thus providing encouragement and motivation for future writing.

Munro (1999) in his study of learning and teacher effectiveness also described the significance of positive feedback in helping pupils to manage their learning collaboratively with teachers and peers. He found such feedback also provided a source of motivation for future learning.

What attitudes and beliefs do children have to learning?

The analysis of the group interview showed that the children had positive attitudes towards learning and towards being taught by their teachers. Negative attitudes were ones that could be overcome in the quest for approval of their efforts. They accepted that teachers were a primary source that guided their learning. It was established that children understood that learning to write was an important fundamental life skill, a means of communicating. The children knew they had a capacity for learning that could be developed over time and that learning requires the capacity to think. Therefore three

principles have emerged, (1) that writing is a fundamental life skill of communication that is ongoing and can be developed. (2) Learning to write is constructed through using thinking which is an important multifaceted skill, which can provide a challenge. (3) It is teachers that provide the challenge needed to influence and help improve learning to write.

Key indicator of change: What do teachers do?

Teachers provide the learning experiences that enable children to have positive feelings towards learning to write. Children showed that they gained a sense of achievement on completing work that was satisfactory to teachers. Such endorsement of praise sustained and motivated the children. Teachers were also the source of negative feelings as the expectation to publicly share writing engendered loneliness and embarrassment. This expectation was double edged, as it also was the catalyst for the overcoming of fears.

Teachers taught specific processes and skills of writing including the organisation of stories, phonic knowledge, spelling and handwriting. The specific teaching resulted in children being able to verbalise what they had learned as they understood what was expected. These multiple expectations provided opportunities to make the children develop their thinking powers. Through such expectations teachers also provided the opportunities for children to practise their skills. Teacher modelling through demonstrations gave rise to children having a greater understanding of the concepts and skills taught which led to children becoming both more competent and confident. Teacher feedback also had a positive influence upon children with the provision of support, intervention and advice which both encouraged and motivated children. The changes in teaching approaches, a dimension of change (Fullan 1991) were implemented by the teachers. One of the intentions of the changing approaches to teaching was to raise the profile of teaching and learning to write as part of literacy. (DfEE 1998) It was an educational goal. The analysis of the first group interview gives evidence of the influence teachers had over children's learning during the first stage of the study.

Teachers' perceptions to changes in teaching writing

In this section teachers' perceptions to teaching writing prior to 1998 and to the initiation of new approaches to teaching writing are examined by analysing the teacher interviews undertaken in Spring 1999. The aim was to gain an insight into their understandings about teaching writing prior and after the introduction of the NLS and so provide evidence of change in what teachers do and think.

Teachers' perceptions of teaching writing before 1998

Teacher A recognised that the teaching of writing was not taught systematically before 1998 prior to the introduction to the NLS. 'We haven't been systematic enough in our approach'. The system of transcribing for children was prevalent in teaching children to write at this time. This was evident in children's books as copy writing. Children dictated captions to pictures which adults or teachers would transcribe. The children were expected to copy such writing. They could not understand or read what was written. According to teachers A and C children were not given the opportunity to think for themselves as writers. As Teacher B stated, 'children were essentially copying squiggles.' She thought writing lost its meaning for the children.

Before we were concentrating on getting them to write rather than thinking about how they're writing and why they are writing and how they're going to achieve what they wanted to put. They would tell us, then we would just write it. They would copy it. They weren't really thinking for themselves. (Teacher C, 1999)

The teachers' focus on writing was transcription. This was a skill that did not challenge children's thinking. The writing was not meaningful for children. The expectation of children to be independent writers was not evident to think and try out skills for themselves. Their limited learning relied heavily on adult assistance as a prop.

Before the NLS (1998) children were taught phonics but were not necessarily expected to use them. The teachers were aware that children in the past had been taught how to match sounds to letters but were not able to use this when encoding. Learning the sounds was done through using 'Letterland' (Wendan 1988). This is a system that can be a useful means to help the children know that words consist of letters which represent sounds, and that words can be built using grapho -phonemic correspondence. The teachers expressed their doubts as to the effectiveness of this system. Teacher B noted:

They (children) became hooked on learning the characters for example 'c' (the letter) is 'Clever Cat' rather than recognising and using /c/ (the phoneme) as a phoneme or sound. (Teacher B, 1999)

Teacher D perceived a lack of opportunity and expectation to write as contributing factors to low standards in writing. This resulted in children not being able to write competently or with confidence when entering a new class.

Children didn't have enough experience in writing earlier on. By the time they had reached Year 2 writing was not an automatic tool to use. They were not used to writing as they found it hard to write the date off the board. (Teacher D, 1999)

Writing was not a teacher's priority prior to the NLS introduction in 1998. Children's writing was heavily dependent on teacher input as children were not able or expected to write independently as transcription skills were reliant on adult intervention. Children were expected to be imitators. The lack of teacher expectation to use and develop phonic skills also impeded children's opportunity to be fluent competent writers. Children's understanding and skills of communicating through the written word were minimal. The skills that were taught did not move children's learning forward. Children were not expected to become 'willing to have a go', independent writers.

What happened after the introduction of the new teaching approaches 1998-2000?

In September 1998 it was recorded in the staff meeting minutes that *Jolly Phonics* a new system to teach phonics was to be introduced. The aim in using this medium was to concentrate on teaching children to both learn and use the phonics to build words. The medium also incorporated a hand signal system that supported children with prompts. This provided a multisensory approach to the teaching of sounds. 'Now children are using *Jolly Phonics* they are using their sounds to make their words,' explained Teacher A. This new approach enabled children to think and use their newly learnt skills.

They are thinking for themselves now. So even if you get just three letters at least they are the three initial sounds of a words that they want to use. To me that's much more worthwhile than doing a whole page of beautiful writing - and not being able to even read it back or begin to remember what they wanted to write. They are actively learning about the sounds. It was one of our bugbears before. Because they knew their sounds but they didn't use them in their writing in the reception class. (Teacher C, 1999)

The children who had particular difficulties in learning seemed to have benefited from the introduction of emergent writing by children remembering and using their phonic knowledge. These children were the ones who find learning difficult and learn in small steps.

What skills you work on depend on the stages the children are at. 'Blue groups' (lowest attainers) are at the 'finger space stage'. Until they have got that they can't read it back to themselves. Those children are using their sounds beautifully; their emergent writing is really coming on well and that is an improvement. (Teacher D, 1999)

Teacher C explained that children, who had problems using phonics, however, were taught to write using the system of transcription. Some children were still expected to be imitators

when they could not grasp the skills of word building. This shows that teachers were aware there were choices to be made in matching their teaching approaches to meeting the needs of particular children and could provide children with an alternative strategy if necessary.

The introduction of the Literacy Hour had an immediate effect upon the children and staff at Waterstone. Teachers were explicitly showing children what to do through demonstrating and modelling how writing was composed.

I have focused on showing the children how a story is composed, with a beginning middle and an end, by looking at other books they knew to see how the author had used beginnings, middles and ends. (Teacher D, 1999)

I model for the class. I get the children to watch and see how things are done on the board. Then I get the children to come and have a go themselves. (Teacher B, 1999)

Teachers were explicitly teaching to the class as a whole. Their time was being organised so all the children had the opportunity to see how the skills were developed and constructed. Children had the opportunity to be involved with such reconstruction. There were opportunities for the teacher to explain the skill so children could hear and see what and how the skill could be developed. Children were clear about what they were expected to do and how to do it.

Other skills were introduced to the children through the NLS as specific skills were taught. The skill of using capital letters and full stops, adjectives, adverbs and connective words were noted as strategies that were taught explicitly to children. Teacher D described what she did.

We made a list of 'describing words'. The children know what 'describing words' are. So when they are writing stories I can say can you put in more 'describing words'. They know what I mean. They know how to do it. (Teacher D, 1999)

The skills demonstrated to the class were understood and were being practised. Children were encouraged to apply the skills to develop their writing. The explicit teaching evolved to become more implicit as the expectation to continue using the newly acquired skill was anticipated.

Teachers' initial thoughts and feelings about teaching writing

The interviews showed that teachers had certain underlying negative feelings in teaching writing. Teacher B saw teaching writing as a struggle, as she perceived that children were entering school with poor language skills and were immediately in a disadvantaged position.

A few of the children grunted when they first came to school. We had to say, 'tell us what you want to say.' It's a transition from verbally saying ideas to writing them down (Teacher B, 1999)

This situation provided a challenge to the teacher in question who felt she was in a disadvantaged situation with the children initially entering school. She recognised the importance of language development as a fundamental requisite to writing that would have to be addressed with a focus on improving children's pre-writing skills. She also thought lack of parental support was an issue. Children were not encouraged at home and parents did not value their children's efforts as she noted that children's writing was rubbed out in Christmas cards and children were made to rewrite their messages. Children who did however succeed were seen as coming from homes where there was plenty of parental support and encouragement.

Children are not encouraged to do it (writing) at home. There's the same problem in Year 2 and the Year R. With the parents who want to help, the children stand out and their writing and other skills come out shining whereas the ones who don't, (parents) don't. (Teacher B, 1999)

This feeling was not born out by her counterpart teacher. Although she acknowledged children start with a language disadvantage, they quickly become aware that writing is important and they quickly began to use it in their creative play. She found that they were keen to write lists of children to invite to their parties at home. Parents informed this teacher that they noticed their children were enthusiastic at sounding out words at home. Teacher A said. 'They want to do it and they are finding reasons to do it.' In other words once children have been given the tools of using phonics and the purpose of writing invitations to a party for example, and so provided with a meaningful stimulus and reason for writing, they are motivated to write both at home and school. The new approach to teaching enabled teachers to gain confidence through seeing the fruits of their labour.

Teacher B mentioned that she thought children were not given opportunities to think about writing, of how, what and why they write. This teacher was recognising that teacher expectations may have been low. She showed a sense of fear in accepting a responsibility in challenging pupils.

'We (teachers) are very scared of giving a child a Level 3 and pushing them that little bit harder because of the expectation of keeping them at it.' (Teacher B, 1999)

Teacher expectation is clearly an issue here. There is evidence of fear of labelling children able to write at a high level of achievement and a fear of sustaining that expectation. If teachers do not have high expectations it will not be surprising if children do not achieve. A fundamental question arises. Is teacher expectation a pre-requisite for children's achievement? Dean seems to think so.

To a great extent teachers get from children what they expect. At a very early stage the teacher comes to conclusions about the ability of individual children and this influences the way the children are treated. (Dean 1999 p66)

Teachers' attitudes to the SATs results in writing encompassed disappointment. Teachers A and C saw that children probably had the capability to achieve a Level 3 in writing as some

children were achieving this level in their reading. Teacher A recognised that it is not an easy task for children to achieve this level in writing and also that children may not have experienced enough opportunities to consolidate previous learning. Although teachers felt disappointment at least one was able to begin to analyse the problem. Two others however blamed the parents' lack of support at home, as they noted that the children who gained the highest levels of writing in the SATs were children who received parental support.

Although teachers experienced disappointment there was no evidence that they might need to reflect deeply upon their own attitudes. On the part of two teachers there seemed no desire to want to rise to the challenge by wanting to become more competent practitioners with a desire to improve their own performance. Their fears seemed to have a paralyzing effect and feed low expectations and lack of challenge in their attitudes, which would have been reflected in their practice. It was easier to see the root of the problem lying elsewhere namely the parents and children.

Low teacher expectations of children's achievements and apprehension of challenging pupils is a fundamental issue that provides a benchmark from which any future impact of change can be measured. It was also significant that two teachers blamed parents for the schools low SATs achievement in writing. This suggests that evasion of responsibility on the part of these teachers. Although I recognise parents have a part to play in children's education (Nutbrown 1994), for the purpose of this research the study of impact of change will be confined within the school.

The NLS as framework, a new approach to teaching writing gave rise to teachers having positive feelings and attitudes. Teachers were interested in teaching writing. They expressed liking the new approach. The introduction of the NLS also helped teachers to feel more equipped to teach writing.

I like the time when the whole class are on the mat I feel I can give children all my attention. I like the time doing writing. I like Literacy Hour. (Teacher B, 1999)

I feel better equipped to help children with writing. The NLS is one of the best things, it is divided down and guides us to exactly what we're trying to teach. It has made you focus. It has really helped in planning. It's all the things you did, now it's to the forefront more explicit. (Teacher C, 1999)

Teachers' confidence was boosted with implementing the new teaching approaches. The teachers were interested and were open to experiencing the new ideas. This shows they were committed to adapting their practice to follow the framework. This seemed to give teachers peace of mind that what they were doing in the past was not so different to what they were expected to do in introducing new teaching approaches. Uncertainty had given way to greater confidence through conviction that their teaching was better planned and more focused.

Initial perceptions of children's feelings towards writing

Teachers perceived that children had negative feelings. Reception teachers of new children who started school noted this. Teacher B identified fear among children. She noticed that

They are wary about it (writing). Children were terrified of making mistakes in their writing. (Teacher B, 1999)

This attitude to writing was embedded within transcription copy writing where children were expected to copy and not anticipated to experiment using phonic skills to communicate. Correct spellings and neat handwriting were the objectives, which in the eyes of Teacher B withheld any chance of children writing with confidence. The reception teachers noted a difference after the introduction of *Jolly Phonics* and the NLS. These new teaching approaches were seen to alleviate these fears in children.

When they first came in they weren't interested. Now the children want to write, They already know their sounds. They write their lists of people to go to their parties, When they are playing they want to have a book or a piece of paper to write

on. They want to write they ask what's the next sound. So they want to write. They are finding reasons to do it and it's coming out in their play. (Teacher C, 1999)

The fears children may have entered the school with were quickly dispelled. Teachers noticed a considerable change to children's attitudes to writing after the introduction of the new teaching approaches. The children could make a link between writing and communicating to others. They saw that writing had a purpose and it was a tool that was of direct use to them to write out their party guest lists. Children were becoming motivated to write. The interest and commitment that teachers exhibited was seemingly having a positive effect upon children's attitudes to writing. Children who once were more comfortable with drawing pictures rather than committing their thoughts and messages in writing had changed. Teacher A noticed that children had developed an interest and were keen to do writing. 'They are motivated to produce a page of writing rather than draw pictures'. The children were seen as gaining in confidence as they were more able to express themselves with more freedom. Children using their phonic skills were seen by their teachers as becoming more independent. Copying transcriptions can be heavily reliant on the availability of the teacher to provide guidance and support for the children. In becoming more inventive children were less dependent on the teacher and are able to explore new found skills and reasons to write, which motivated them to discover more new learning. Their fears of making mistakes were becoming dispelled. Children were finding writing an enjoyable and rewarding task.

What the teachers did before the changes

Before the introduction of the NLS, the teaching of writing was not systematic. The only evidence of teacher modelling was that of transcribing. Children were dependent on the teacher to transcribe their ideas, which they copied. They were expected to be imitators of teachers writing through copying. They were not taught skills which could be practiced and developed through their own creative thinking. Although children were taught phonics their use of phonic skills were limited through low teacher expectation.

What the teachers thought before the changes

Teachers saw children as being disadvantaged with their language skills when they entered school. Children's attainment was perceived to be at a level that did not warrant a challenge. Lack of parental support was also thought to be a contributing component to poor results in writing. The teaching of phonics was ineffective. The teaching of phonics was seen as the source of problems of low standards in writing. Children were expected to remain dependent on teachers. There was also an attitude towards relinquishing the responsibility of low standards to the parents. All these factors suggest that teachers had attitudes of low expectation.

What the teachers did after the introduction of the changes in 1998/1999

Teachers were systematically teaching specific objectives of the NLS framework. Teachers were demonstrating the skills and processes of writing through modelling. This data from the children's first group interview showed that children were clear as to how the skills and processes should be used, having a greater understanding of what to do and clarification of teachers' expectations. The introduction of new teaching approaches both motivated and challenged children as they could see purposes to writing. Children felt confident and competent and knew writing was a life skill. The introduction of *Jolly Phonics* had a positive effect on the children as teachers could see the children had the skills and confidence to become independent emergent writers. The advice and feedback teachers gave to children also had a direct consequence as children were able to learn from their mistakes with growing confidence, overcoming their fears. Children were beginning to feel they could rise to challenges and develop a sense of achievement.

What the teachers thought after the introduction of the changes in 1998/1999

Teachers were aware that children had become more aware of what was expected. They could see teaching was more meaningful and resulted in children becoming independent writers who were better equipped, motivated to learn and developed in both confidence and competence. Teachers were developing a positive attitude to the introduction of the new teaching approaches. Teachers were raising their levels of expectation and challenge to teaching writing.

Summary

This chapter has explored the culture of the school in 1998 and found it to be the culture of a Welfarist school, which can be used as a benchmark to compare the 2000 school culture to assess any change of school culture. The key indicators of change from the first group interviews highlighted the influences of teachers' actions that have impacted upon responses since the introduction of the new teaching approaches to writing. The responses will be compared to those of the second group interviews in the next chapter. The final section of this chapter using teachers' perceptions from interviews has shown what teachers did and thought, resulting from the initiation of new teaching approaches to writing which will be compared with the results from the questionnaire in Chapter 6.

Chapter ~ 6

The practice of change

This chapter sets out to answer three key questions. The first question asks *what are the attitudes of children to the change in teaching approaches?* This will be answered by analysing evidence gathered from the second group interviews of children. The second question asks *what are the attitudes of teachers to the change of approaches to teaching writing?* This will be answered through the analysis of teachers' perceptions gained from the teachers' questionnaire. The key questions will provide evidence to explore the two indicators of change of what teachers do and think (Fullan 1991). The third question asks *what is the culture of the school in 2000?* The culture of the school in 2000 will be analysed. The information will be compared and contrasted in Chapter 8 with the evidence gathered in the previous chapter to answer the research question: *does change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?*

The second group interviews 2000

The data was collected and analysed as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 in order to identify and understand the underlying beliefs and attitudes of children from the second year 2 cohort held on learning to write. This will be used in the final analysis of the impact of change as perceived by children. The analysis will lead to the discussion of one of the key indicators of change namely what teachers do, since what they do has an influence on children and their learning.

Children's feelings towards learning to write

All the children expressed the opinion that they liked writing. They freely joined in the discussion explaining that they liked to write in a variety of forms including invitations, stories, letters and non-fiction. It became apparent that liking writing was the reason for Meg's aspiration to become an author. She said. 'When I grow up I 'm going to be a writer

so that's why I like writing.' When asked what would they feel if they could not write, all expressed dismay at that thought. They established they would be sad, and upset. Mandy did not want to miss out on the fun that she felt she gained from writing:

I wouldn't like it. It would be sad if everyone could (write) and I couldn't. I would be upset. I'd miss out on all the fun. (Mandy)

The children were open and willing to consider all forms of writing as a source of enjoyment and pleasure. Learning to write motivated children's aspirations for the future. There were indications that the children were becoming aware that learning to write gave them a sense of power. Not being able to write would be embarrassing and give them a sense of disadvantage among their peers. 'Everyone would take the mickey if they could write and I couldn't' (Jacob). Writing gave children a sense of well being through being able to communicate.

Negative feelings to writing were lightly touched upon and illustrated through Mandy's recount of a scene of her father writing. In a discussion about authors she declared he was an author who made mistakes when writing.

My Dad is an author. He writes it down. Then he does it wrong. Then he gets another book and writes it all over again in a book. He gets cross. (Mandy)

When asked if she ever got cross the reply was 'sometimes'. She had seen distress in her father, a person who writes in books, whom she classed as an author and had experienced it herself to a small degree. This indicated that she acknowledged that writing could lead to feelings of frustration and anger. It also showed she knew it was acceptable to make mistakes and start over again.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING TO WRITE

Conceptual development

The children thought that writing was quite easy. Writing was difficult when it came to thinking about how it made sense. When discussing a text that she had written Mandy stated that thinking had been part of the process. The following quotations from the transcript are examples of Mandy's thinking capacity.

I think 'does it make sense?' When I write a story, I ask 'does this make sense?' Because we've only got a little bit of information in our head. It took me a long time to think of all this writing. (Mandy)

There was a lot to think so I thought of it then wrote it down. Then I asked if it made sense. Sometimes it doesn't make sense. If it doesn't make sense then I cross it out. (Mandy)

When I do non-fiction I say to myself 'I should give one to the reception class so they can learn more about books'. (Mandy)

Thinking was part of the writing process for developing ideas that communicate meaning. To think of ideas is time consuming. The act of thinking about writing can be seen as a skill that was driving the writing process. Not only has a story to be thought about as a whole but a story is written in sections, writing notes is part of planning and organising ideas. There was awareness that thoughts once written should make sense to enable the writing to be understood. The regular checking for sense was the way meaning was created and maintained. Mandy knew writing could be amended and improved through rereading and editing it. She was not afraid to cross out. The choice of audience was another example of how thinking is behind decision making. For Mandy there was a keen desire to learn for herself and for others too. Thinking was a pre-requisite to writing it was not easy and could be time consuming as many factors have to be remembered and thought through.

Underlying the acknowledgement that thinking is not easy was a sense of dedication and perseverance towards learning to write.

Consolidation of skills

These children were able to explain grammatical concepts. They explained the use of adjectives and adverbs and how the frequent use of a particular connective was not desirable and outlined the other choices they had as Meg described.

We normally use *and* a lot. We must only use one *and* in a sentence. We have to use more link words like *so*, *because*, *then* and *although*. (Meg)

Meg was quite competent in reciting and revisiting her previous learning. This was an indication that specific teaching had taken place, which enabled her to understand the use of connectives. There was a clear understanding that common mistakes can occur in writing and how the mistakes can be rectified in making writing more complex.

Meg was also able to demonstrate that one of her stories had a beginning and an end but that she forgot to write the middle part of the story. When discussing another story she explained that it consisted of chapters.

I've done three chapters. One was the beginning of the story one was the middle of the story and the third was the last part of the story. (Meg)

This statement illustrates the knowledge she had gained. She knew that stories were organised as sequences that were partitioned into chapters. Such acquisition of knowledge enabled her to see her mistake of not including a middle section to one of her stories. This means her learning was continuing to be constructed through her responses to her own work and through trial and error and learning by mistakes.

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Teacher modelling

Modelling, teachers demonstrating how to write a story enabled the children to be more confident as writers. Children felt secure in adapting the story structure and changing the characters.

Miss S. read a story about an Owl. We had to make our own story about another animal. Instead of copying the story of the Owl in a house we did a different one.
(Vicky)

Teacher modelling engendered motivation as children expressed a keenness to continue writing other different stories but using the same framework, in doing so the modelling also inspired children to write to try out their skills with growing confidence. Children liked to write their stories thus enthusiasm and enjoyment was also experienced. This means that teacher modelling of how to write resulted in positive responses from children with their attitudes to writing.

Teacher intervention and advice

Children readily explained that they were encouraged by the teachers to have neat and joined writing, 'I didn't know I had to join up, 'said Mandy. Her understanding of teacher expectation had been clarified and increased. Teaching enabled children to learn specific skills. They were able to explain the use of punctuation marks and the composition of words. ' I know there are vowels in every word, ' said Jacob.

I know how to write punctuation marks and *its*. Last year I didn't know how to put a 'comma' in front of an s, after *it*. When you want to make it it's, you put a 'comma' in there. (Meg)

Meg knew how to use an apostrophe s although she called it a comma. She was aware she had experienced new learning. Meg also articulated a spelling rule 'I've learnt how to write rules. You cross "e" out when you write "ing" '. The children were confident in sharing what they had learnt from being taught specific learning objectives. It was no mean achievement to describe out of context what had been learnt previously. They had not only learnt the skills they also recognised their abilities had changed and the skills were important and useful in developing their proficiency as writers. The teaching of the specific learning objectives had a positive effect of increasing children's learning.

Feedback on children's writing

Teachers gave feedback orally or through written comments. The children read the teachers' comments and responded to them. When asked what did they do about the comments the following replies were received.

If the comment says, 'do your capital letters and fullstops', sometimes if I'm doing another piece of writing I think about doing them. When I'm writing I look at that when I do capitals. (Vicky)

Miss S says some bits are very good, some bits don't make sense. I think, 'Oh no! I've done it again! I thought it made sense but...' I think about it. I try to be better next time. (Mandy)

The teachers' comments acted as reminders and the children were able to act upon the prompts. The comments enabled children to focus on specific areas and refer back to the comments. Praise was given to endorse the accuracy of writing. This gave encouragement and consolidated the writing that was correct. Children tried hard to make their writing make sense and were surprised and slightly disappointed when it did not make sense. The sense of discontentment acted as a spur and helped to focus the children's minds to help them think about the problem. This had the effect to motivate a sense of wanting to improve to do better in the future. They were aware they would not always get things right

the first time but they were prepared to work at developing their learning. Teachers' comments had a positive effect on children's attitudes towards learning to write, to enable them to be motivated and to improve their skills.

What attitudes and beliefs do children have to learning?

The children from the second group interviews showed positive attitudes to learning. They were motivated and keen to write. Learning to write was pleasurable. Children were enthusiastic and were growing in confidence. They were aware they were new at learning and that there was a lot to learn. Their confidence was evident through their willingness to share what they had learnt. There was no sign of over confidence but a small degree of frustration and dissatisfaction through not getting things right was evident. Their positive attitude of wanting to improve enabled mistakes to become part of the learning process. Developing thinking skills was seen by children as an integral part of their learning of wanting to communicate their thoughts in a way that made sense to others and themselves in their writing. From the evidence these fundamental principles have emerged, firstly that children understand that learning to write is a continual process that can be accessed through trial and error and is an integral part of school, but, secondly children understand that thinking is an essential part to learning. Finally children seem to believe that teachers play an important part in structuring and challenging their learning to write.

A key indicator of change. What do teachers do?

Teachers provided the opportunities for children to learn through direct or indirect teaching. Specific learning objectives that teachers taught enabled the children to learn and be motivated in becoming better writers through consolidating skills with practice. The structured experiences had a positive effect on children's learning. They were able to remember and recite specific rules and skills that they had begun to incorporate in their writing. Children were motivated and enthusiastic. The demonstrations of writing helped children to become confident and motivated to write stories. The teachers were clear about their expectations and enabled the children to be clear of what they are doing. Teachers

provided positive feedback to ensure that good work was praised. Teachers also effect learning through constructive criticism. This uncovered uncomfortable feelings but made for effective children's learning. The teaching of new approaches to writing, a dimension of change (Fullan 1991) has enabled teachers to focus on both direct and indirect teaching. This focus has been noticeably evident through the analysis of the group interviews data.

Teachers' perceptions to the new approaches to teaching writing

If schools are to move towards improvement then professional development is a feature to be carefully considered if practice, behaviour, values and expectations are to change (Stoll and Riley 1999; Dean 1999). In the next section data from a questionnaire is used to understand how teachers responded to the initiation of new approaches to teaching introduced through professional development. Teachers' perceptions were sought as to how successful they felt the new teaching approaches were, with a view to identifying the impact of change through comparing the results with the initial teacher interviews in Chapter 8.

Teachers responses to professional development

All teachers perceived the NLS training as being a positive experience, which enabled enhanced knowledge and understanding (see Appendix 4.2.). The reception teachers perceived the NLS training as useful for teachers of KS1 and KS2 but not for influencing practice in the reception classes. These teachers commented that the training was an '*affirmation of good practice*', implying that they had already implemented much of the ideas featured in the NLS training. This may have been the case in terms of teaching phonics as these teachers had already developed the teaching of *Jolly Phonics*. Both the year R teachers omitted to reply to the question, *what have you put into practice?* As the Literacy Hour in the reception classes was gradually introduced over the year the reception teachers may not have appreciated the relevance of the questionnaire. It leads me, however, to the assumption that there had been no introduction of new ideas or knowledge as both admitted that the National Literacy Strategy affirmed existing practice in this year

group. These teachers stated their intention to develop the introduction of writing stories using simple plans, and to introduce simple punctuation checklists. Such statements show that the NLS training indeed did have some new ideas to offer these two teachers to help them improve their teaching. When asked to reflect on the training they were not able to recognise that the training had provided some ideas that they were not currently using.

The impact the NLS training had on the Year 1 teachers was inconsistent. Only a total of 6 features of the NLS training were embraced (Appendix 4.2). Teacher E introduced five of the features. Her score was similar to both Year 2 teachers. The NLS training has not been seen to have any particular effect on the practice of one of the Year 1 teachers, only one new feature, teacher modelling, impacted upon her classroom practice. None of the ideas listed in the questionnaire that were suggested by the NLS had been implemented. The reason was '*the children are not at that level*'. It was clear from her answer that the training was '*OK in parts*, ' that she was not particularly enthused by the new innovation of the NLS training. It seems that this teacher did not particularly gain new knowledge or insights into improving her teaching of writing as she stated that '*more knowledge was gained by talking to colleagues*'. This reply can be contrasted to the positive statement of '*gained wealth of knowledge*' by other teachers from the NLS training. This teacher was seemingly not as confident as her colleagues were.

Three of the teachers (Appendix 4.2) introduced a total of five new features of writing initiated through the NLS training. The teachers who have seemed to gain the most from the training were the Year 2 teachers and one Year 1 teacher. They accepted new ideas of writing frames, introducing different genre, and hot seating, and put them into practice, which significantly differs from the results of both reception teachers and one Year 1 teacher. Three teachers positively introduced new knowledge and practices gained from professional development delivered through the National Literacy Strategy training in writing. These were the three most recently appointed teachers to Waterstone School. The NLS training was only partially successful in developing teachers' professional practice. It was the teachers with the least amount of tenure at Waterstone who gained the most from

the training sessions. The impact of professional development was least effective for the *old timers*.

The teachers' evaluations of the Good Writing workshop (Appendix 4.2, Table 4.2) were mixed. The workshop was an in-service training day to visit the Reading Centre in Reading Berkshire. The year R teachers again appeared not to appreciate that the training was also aimed at the teachers of the younger children. They stated that some of the ideas of poetry and introducing writing corners were good ideas to extend their practice. Poetry and writing frames were introduced but not consistently over the year groups. From the evaluations as to the worth of the in-service training the professional development could be seen as not being particularly beneficial.

Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of new teaching approach

All teachers thought they had increased their understanding of teacher modelling through the introduction of the NLS, (Appendix 4.2, and Table 4.1). The tables of results show teachers' perceptions to employing new approaches to writing that have helped to raise standards. (Appendix 4.2 table 4.1) show a positive response to the introduction of modelling as a new approach to teaching writing. Modelling was the most significant change that evolved from professional development. Three of the six teachers noted this change in their practice as having a significant impact upon the standards of writing. Teachers demonstrated how writing skills and processes may be accomplished, and explained how texts may be composed and edited using their own ideas or expanded using children's ideas. This approach provided opportunities for the whole class to be involved, thus enabling children to clearly understand what was required of them. This practice acted as an incentive as children wanted to try out their newly taught skills for themselves. Modelling writing was a teaching technique that was being constantly developed and used throughout all the age groups. It provided a focused means for teachers to teach learning objectives and enabled children to access and develop learning to write. All teachers replied that they incorporated this new approach. As this was an essential element of the Literacy Strategy whereby teachers introduce both shared and guided writing in the NLS (see Appendix 2); it was not surprising that teachers had embraced this new approach to

teaching writing. What is interesting is that all teachers have alluded to transferring this skill to other teaching opportunities other than the Literacy Hour (see Appendix 4.2, Table 4.4). This was a new found approach to teaching writing that was fully embraced, understood, implemented and used in other situations. Teachers saw this new approach of modelling as a valuable and worthwhile approach to teaching. It is interesting that Wray *et al.* (2000) found that using similar approaches were a distinctive feature of teaching of literacy effectively.

Teachers' perceptions of change in practice to improve teaching and learning of writing were varied. They perceived there were a number of reasons as to how change in practice impacted upon the improvement in writing standards. These perceptions are illustrated in Appendix 4.2, Table 4.4. The year 2 teachers who had the responsibility of implementing the writing SATs in 1999 clearly indicated that extended writing, a timetabled slot for the purposes of teaching writing has also helped to raise standards. These teachers emphasised teaching writing through shared and guided writing through modelling, to groups or the class, both within and outside the Literacy Hour. Their approach was planned and focused on specifically taught learning objectives. Three other features were put forward as particular changes in teaching approaches that advanced raising standards. These were developing story writing, targeted assessments and increased expectations. Year 1 teachers however were less clear about how they have influenced improvements in writing. Teacher E focused on developing story writing through teaching the organisation of story structure. The corresponding Year 1 Teacher A was less direct in her perception of what she had done to improve standards by commenting that '*expectations had increased*'. It was not clear if it was her expectations of the children or the children's expectations of themselves. Writing has become high on the teaching agenda through professional development and may have increased expectations for both teachers and children. This perception was general and does not lead to any specific characteristic that may have helped to raise writing standards. Comments written in the questionnaire revealed that teachers developed and amended the use of writing frames to plan stories. '*Writing frames have been introduced using our own writing plans*', wrote Teacher E who perceived this development as a factor in raising standards. Another teacher saw targeted assessments as a feature of

raising standards as children's writing was assessed regularly. Teaching points for future learning objectives emerge through these assessments.

Teachers' perceptions of teaching writing processes and skills

The next section explains how teachers discerned when and how writing skills were taught. This was done to see if the NLS framework was only followed as outlined in the Literacy Hour, or whether the content and context of children's writing extended to convey meaningful messages was planned in other situations.

The teaching of writing skills of punctuation, spelling and handwriting was done systematically at particular specified times this was clearly shown in Appendix 4.2, Table 4.4. Five out of the six teachers primarily taught the majority of punctuation during the Literacy Hour as part of whole class teaching. The questionnaire results (see Appendix 4.2, Table 4.4) suggest that the majority of teachers were secure in using this programmed time to teach punctuation as part of sentence level work. Spelling was taught during Literacy Hour, *'in word work identifying letter strings'* stated Teacher C and outside the Literacy Hour through learning spelling by the following process, *'Look, cover, write and check.'* All classes were taught spelling as part of word level work. The word level work within the National Literacy Strategy helped children identify letter strings and patterns in both Years 1 and 2. Year R. children were taught phonics, corresponding sounds to letter shapes using the *Jolly Phonics* programme. Five of the six teachers spent time on teaching spelling outside the Literacy Hour. Children had differentiated spellings to learn, which were tested weekly. These spellings were part of their homework. The Literacy Hour provided a focused time to teach punctuation and spelling, although handwriting and some spelling were also taught at other times.

Extended writing as a new approach to teaching writing

Redfern and Edwards (1997) concede that the art of using writing skills to focus on communicating meaning is vital.

Of course children need to acquire handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills but within the framework of learning what it means to be a writer. The priority is rather on meaning and communication of ideas, where children have a chance to work on the rules of language with adult intervention and supportive teaching, gradually fine tuning their understandings to meet accepted conventions. (Redfern and Edwards 1997 p.3)

The NLS did not provide all the writing opportunities. Modelling was also a skill that teachers had transferred to teaching writing outside the Literacy Hour in extended writing time. Year 2 teachers thought that extended writing was a new approach to teaching writing that was successful (see Appendix 4.2, Table 4.3). Extended writing time was set aside one afternoon a week for children to develop their writing skills and encounter the processes of writing to communicate in a sustained manner. 'Extended writing is done on Tuesday afternoons - often related to the previous week's guided writing' stated Teacher F. In Year 2 extended writing objectives were related to guided writing, which was introduced during the National Literacy Strategy. Shared writing was planned and modelled alongside the literacy theme.

How the changes impacted on teachers' attitudes and behaviours

To summarise, change through professional development had a varied impact upon approaches to teaching writing. All teachers viewed the organisation of the Literacy Hour very positively. The incorporation of features of teaching writing however was fully not established. This was also a concern of Fisher (2000) who foresaw the format being followed rather than the principles behind teaching literacy. The varied attitudes to specific teaching techniques outlined in the NLS training possibly indicated that teachers could only assimilate a certain amount of change, and some more than others. This is a concept that Munro found.

'Teachers, like other learners differ in their preparedness to engage in change and the rate at which they implement it' (Munro 1999 p.155)

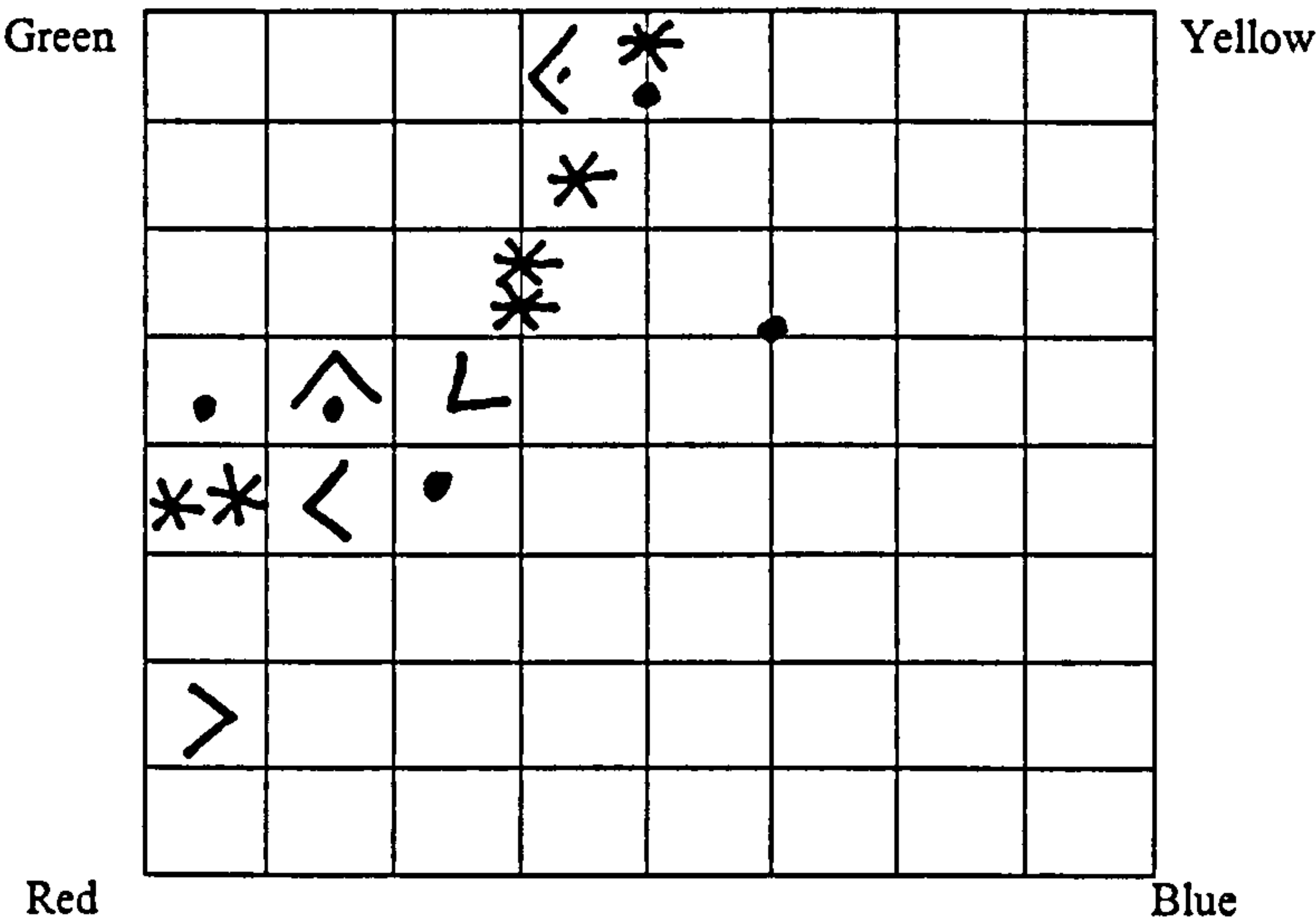
Modelling the teaching of writing was the one approach that had changed and had developed throughout the school. This was the only change in a myriad of features encountered within professional development that was whole-heartedly embraced by all teachers in the school (see Appendix 4.2, Table 4.1.) Although modelling comprised one feature in teaching children to write it was particularly significant as a change of approaches to the teaching of writing. Modelling was identified by all teachers as a technique that would help them to teach competently. Medwell *et al.* (1999) also found evidence those pre NLS teachers who extensively modelled and demonstrated skills taught effectively. It may have been introduced as part of the NLS but it was an approach that was easily transferred to the teaching of writing outside the Literacy Hour in extended writing times and teaching handwriting. Teachers seemed confident using this new approach to writing spelling and punctuation were both taught specifically within the Literacy Hour. This allocated time was not exclusive as opportunities to expand on the teaching of the skills were grasped in extended writing and at other times. It seems that half the teachers had positively reacted to the change in introducing new features. The other half had not been so positively influenced. These were the teachers who seemed to believe that their practice did not warrant such radical change. These were the teachers who had the longest tenure at Waterstone. The greatest change in attitudes to writing occurred with the most recently employed teachers. A substantial amount of professional development covering a wide range of issues was undertaken. It undoubtedly influenced change in teachers' practice. Professional development however was only partly effective and there was evidence that there was room for teachers to continue revisit the developments to sustain more change.

The culture of the school 2000

To ascertain if a wider impact on school culture was apparent, the culture of the school in 2000 was assessed after the changes to teaching writing had been implemented for two

Fig. 5 School Culture 2000

GROUP AGGREGATE DATA COLLECTION SHEET



KEY

- Present position
- > Where it is going - in which direction
- * Where would likely to be ideally

Green represents the Hothouse School Culture

Yellow represents the Welfarist School Culture

Red represents the Traditionalist School Culture

Blue represents the Survivalist School Culture

years. From analysing the collated teacher perceptions of the culture of the school on the culture grid (see page 92) the location of teacher perception was not at first straightforward. The siting by individual teachers of the position of Waterstone's school culture for 2000 was varied as all three quadrants of Welfarist, Hothouse and Traditionalist or Formal cultures were mapped. A closer look at the aggregated scores reveals that teachers placed the school culture between the boundary squares of the former three cultures. The direction teachers saw the culture of the school moving to was mainly within the Hothouse and Traditionalist cultures. The taped discussion that ensued enabled a more detailed analysis of the school culture.

Did the school have a Survivalist culture?

Out of the six teachers involved in the discussion only one teacher discussed the survivalist position and that was to state that she disagreed with it except for one factor which is described as follows.

I don't agree with the blue (survivalist statement) apart from the fact I don't agree with the wording, 'after all teaching is just a job'. It's not just a job it's a career, it's more a way of life. When you get here early in the morning and leave late. I do believe it is getting out of hand. There's so much we just can't get done. We give so much it is just not ending. (Teacher A)

This teacher saw teaching as a job that demanded 100% of her time. Teaching was seen as a full time career that had pressure to fulfil the jobs that were never ending although there was dedication to put time into completing tasks. The other teachers listened to teacher A's lengthy remark but no one else commented neither did they disagree. This leads me to understand that although the school does not have a survivalist culture, this particular teacher may have her own particular problem in surviving as a teacher.

Did the school have a Welfarist culture?

In the discussion the consensus of the teachers was that the welfarist statement was the initial statement teachers gravitated towards. This was a first impression of the school culture. It is interesting that it was not debated in depth, as it seemed to be taken for granted.

To start with I was looking at the friendly school getting on together. I thought yes!
(Teacher B)

The school was so brilliantly yellow (welfarist) we wouldn't want to get rid of it.
(Teacher C)

We're still building on the yellow bits that we've got. We are working with children who desperately need our support; we are still working in yellow and still developing it. (Teacher G)

The teachers still endorsed the Welfarist culture as one that was prevailing. This was evident in all teachers' comments as being a state that was inherent and understood by all, even newcomers. This was the case of teacher G. She recognised that children, especially those who need help, were able to get the support they needed. The reception teachers C and B were of the opinion the Welfarist culture was at the forefront, which indicates that there may be an early year's Welfarist subculture. There was an understanding that the school culture at the deepest level had the fundamental ethos of a welfarist school, and was continuing to be nurtured.

Did the school have a Traditionalist culture?

All teachers, except one reception teacher, recognised that the school had attributes of the Traditionalist culture. She considered other teachers' comments, however, and conceded that she could see their points of view.

I didn't like the red (Traditionalist) at all. I thought it sounded authoritarian. That's why I disregarded it but now people have been talking I see things differently. But I do think reception is slightly different. (Teacher C)

This teacher saw the Traditionalist statement as belonging to an uncaring culture that only had an emphasis on attaining results. It was the emphasis on results that attracted the other teachers to this typology. It was recognised that there was an emphasis on results and that there was a pressure for the teachers of Year 2. The pressure of providing the conditions of teaching and learning in order for the children they taught to achieve a high standard of attainment that would be reflected in improved SATs results.

I think its interesting that the Year 2 teachers are moving towards the red (Traditionalist culture) more than the other teachers, its because the pressure is more because you've got the SATs. (Teacher C)

Maybe we are more aware. I don't know. We're more aware of the importance that if children don't achieve a good level 2C then they won't achieve a level 4 at key stage 2 (Teacher D)

The Year 2 teachers experienced pressure in getting results in the SATs. These were the teachers who were directly involved in teaching the pupils who sat the national tests. The results of the SATs would reflect on the standard the school was achieving as a whole school. They seemed to take the responsibility for the achievement of higher standards, a result of internal tensions for school improvement but also the *external* governmental demands were also a contributing factor to Year 2 teacher pressure. Such pressure however was not confined to the Year 2 teachers the Year1 teachers also were aware of an internal responsibility to raise standards.

The pressure of the Year 1 teachers at the end of the year is immense. We think, 'oh goodness if we don't send them (children) over (to the next class) having achieved a certain standard.' (Teacher A)

The pressure on teachers stemmed also from *internal* pressure for the standards of the school to improve. This permeated through the school and had become apparent among the teachers of year one as well as year two. The reception teachers did not allude to being under particular pressure for their children to attain better results. It was noticed that the school had developed an emphasis on testing and assessment.

I think there is so much emphasis on testing and assessment. I know it's important and we do it well. (Teacher C)

This was an acknowledgement by this reception teacher that there was a whole school emphasis on attaining higher standards through thorough assessment. There was greater understanding of what children had achieved and the steps to be taken for improved progress, which would result in improved results when the children were tested. Implicit in the statement was the understanding that results would improve when children were assessed.

Three of the six teachers could identify that the school was well disciplined and that there was a strong emphasis on children learning. This was a significant trait that was upheld as part of Waterstone school culture.

I think we are moving towards red (Traditionalist). We are well disciplined and there is a very strong emphasis on pupil learning and high expectations. We work together on this and it's very important (Teacher F)

The development of the academic side to schooling emanated through the group discussion. The teachers agreed that this was a notable part of the developing school culture, in that they were prepared to work together in the bid to see children do their best and become more independent achieving higher standards in their learning.

Teachers recognised there were high expectations related to children achieving higher standards and also high expectations placed on the teachers through the leadership of the

school. 'We run a tight ship with high expectations of the teachers.' (Teacher D) and 'You have to have the tight reigns, so you are aware of what is going on.' (Teacher G) It was accepted that there was strong leadership leading the school and that it was equally important that the leaders of the school (Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher) were aware of the relationships, the teaching and the learning that occurred in the school.

There were counter arguments that the school was not wholly a formal school. A traditionalist trait was one that would not accept new ideas and is naturally suspicious of trendy ideas. It was recognised the teachers at Waterstone were able to accommodate new educational innovations.

It's not true that we are not interested in new ideas. We are very interested and willing to try out new ideas. I think of all the things we have put into place over the last two years. (Teacher F)

The Traditionalist culture also espoused an emphasis on sport. It was agreed that although Waterstone did not uphold a tradition of sportsmanship it did hold annual events that involved parents visiting the school for particular customs for example Harvest, Christmas Easter and sports day.

There had been expectations of teachers through the internal school pressures and the external governmental pressures to undertake staff development with the intention of changing teachers as practitioners with the introduction of new teaching approaches. There was an emphasis for the school to be goal orientated to improve results. Although the teachers understood that the school was not wholly traditional there was a strong trend that the school did manifest significant attributes of a Traditionalist culture. There were also indications that there may be a Traditionalist sub-culture among the teachers in Years 1 and 2 as teachers were concentrating their teaching towards teaching, learning and the achievement of improved results.

Did the school have a Hothouse culture?

The Hothouse philosophy is to 'educate the whole child'. Embedded in this phrase is the concept that education of the whole child has a wider ramification than to focus only on the academic progress of children. Children's personal, emotional, social, moral and physical development are also embodied within this philosophy. Teachers believed 'We follow the philosophy to educate the whole child'.

I think that the green (Hothouse) fits most with the philosophy to educate the whole child and we accept that tests matter and pupils give of their best. (Teacher D)

Teachers were cognisant of the idea that the development of the whole child was crucial, As was the social and pastoral side to teaching. They were, however, also aware of the importance of the aspect of academic development.

Relationships were key attributes that were valued in the Hothouse culture. It was decided that the staff worked together, that there were no loners. . 'Relationships are generally OK we work together and give of 100% to the job.' (Teacher F). There was an awareness of what others were doing in the school. Teachers were working together collaboratively in teams which dispelled any sense of isolation. One significant observation was that the Hothouse culture was not wholly chosen as the school culture as it did not have an emphasis on pupil learning.

May be it's because the green (Hothouse) does not put enough emphasis on learning. That's the bit that is missing. (Teacher C)

Pupil learning was a significant factor that was to be included in deciding the school culture. Hargreaves' description (Ainscow 1994) of a Hothouse culture is one that is under pressure with high control and high cohesion that can provide an oppressive culture whereby both teachers and pupils experience anxiety. Although there was evidence that teachers experienced pressure there was no evidence that teachers were particularly over

anxious or that they recognised anxiety in the children. This indicates that the levels of control and cohesion were not high as those of a Hothouse culture.

Teachers' perceptions of the culture of the school in 2000

Through taking the relevant sections that teachers chose to endorse from the typologies the following statement has been constructed. Waterstone school culture 2000 can be described as follows.

We regard ourselves as a friendly, well-disciplined school where everyone is valued. There is an emphasis on pupil learning where testing, assessment and results are important. There are high expectations of both pupils and teachers as the head runs the school as a tight ship. Pupils are encouraged to do their best and to become independent. We are proud of traditional non-academic events that take place. We are willing to embrace and take on new ideas. The development of the whole child is held as important. The school is a place where there is an awareness of others. Teachers give 100% of themselves and so teaching can be emotionally and intellectually draining.

Teachers' perceptions of where the culture was heading

Interestingly teachers agreed that the culture of the school in 2000 incorporated elements of the three main typologies of Welfarist, Traditionalist, and Hothouse cultures. When discussing where the culture was heading, teachers decided that the ideal culture also lay with the appropriation of the three cultures. In the discussion when all three typologies were upheld. Teacher G stated the following, which was refuted by Teacher D.

What you have described is the perfect school, to keep the friendliness and to develop the whole child and to have expectations of pupils learning. (Teacher G)

Nobody has the perfect school. We've a long way to go academically. We need to consolidate all the things we have done. They don't happen automatically. (Teacher D)

What was being recognised here was that the school culture was at an optimum point where the focus on relationships of the welfarist culture was complimented with a significant trend to developing pupil learning. This was not at the expense of other equally important aspects of the pastoral care of the child. For culture to be embedded it must become part of teachers' subconscious. It was alluded that two subcultures had emerged, one being a Welfarist culture with the reception teachers and a second as a Traditionalist culture of the key stage 1 part of the school which consisted of four of the six teachers. So the amalgamated *perfect culture* was not fully embedded with all the teachers. Teachers saw that time was needed to consolidate such a culture.

Summary

This chapter has answered the three key questions. In doing so the indicators of change (Fullan 1991) have been made apparent. The school culture of 2000 has been assessed. These answers relating to the changes during the middle part of the study 1999/200 can be compared with the baseline 1998/1999 findings and the final 2000 findings, which are discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

The outcomes of change

In this chapter the final benchmarks of change are set. The data used to gain insights into teachers' perceptions of the initiation and their experience of change in approaches to teaching writing was gathered at the end of the study in 2000. The three sets of benchmarks date from the start of the implementation 1998/99, the progress of the change in 1999/2000 and finally the outcomes in 2000. The data gathered from the three stages are compared and contrasted in the final chapter. The single key question asked is *what are the attitudes of teachers to change in approaches to teaching writing?* This is asked to find out what teachers think as a key indicator of change (Fullan 1991). The answer to this question will show the extent change has affected teachers' attitudes to see any change in their basic assumptions, the third level of school culture (Schein 1991).

Teachers' perceptions of the initiation of change

The following section sets out to discern the impact of change through internal and external pressures to improve writing through literacy in school. Technique 3 (Ainscow *et al.* 1994) enabled a map to be drawn contrasting teachers' *commitment* to and *control* over general changes engendered by the government, namely the NLS and the changes in the school, with particular reference to teaching writing. The intention was to probe teachers' perceptions of the general changes in order to provide a representation of a whole school position towards the changes.

The degree of commitment towards and control over change in relation to the source of the initiation of change, are now regarded as important factors related to the successful implementation of specific innovations within a school. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.25)

The comparison between teachers' perceptions of their *commitment* to internal and external initiated change will show how dedicated teachers were to both sources of change. To compare the *control* or influence teachers have in adapting to the change will serve to show the extent to which teachers managed the changes for the benefit of their own professional practice. Ainscow *et al.* claims that the control teachers have over the initiation of the changes is reflected in the amount of commitment teachers exhibit.

Control is another dimension that appears to affect the degree of commitment teachers have over change. Control refers both to the ability of teachers themselves to adapt and modify a change and to their ability to manage its effectiveness within classroom contexts. The level of perceived utility or effectiveness of a change within classroom settings is a good predictor of a teacher's commitment towards it. That 'commitment follows competence' is a recently established theme in educational change literature, and is a hypothesis amenable to testing by contrast between the control and commitment axes on the scales. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p. 26)

Before I embark on discussing the evidence I will endeavour to define what *control* and commitment are in the context of the technique used. It is clear that the view of Ainscow *et al.* is that *control* is bound up with teachers' competence in acclimatizing themselves to change. Whitaker (1993) considers control is located in either one of two sources. The first being 'internal control', that is, individuals freely take charge of their own destiny and secondly 'external control' whereby individuals feel they have little charge over their lives. He cites evidence from Phares (1976) that when individuals feel and take responsibility for their actions they have a greater ability to cope with the pressures of work and life.

The clear implication from research work in this area is that when people accept responsibility for themselves and their own behaviour and recognise their own power to affect and influence the way that circumstances develop, they will be likely to work more creatively and cooperatively to the benefit of both themselves and the organisation as a whole. (Whitaker 1993 p.44)

For change to be effectively implemented the determination on the part of participants to carry the change out, to be fully involved and persevere in the form of commitment will be a factor to be considered. Everard and Morris argue that for change to take place the commitment on the part of the participants should be recognised.

Experience in organizational change has shown that in addition to developing the plan for carrying out the change, the planners must determine who in the organization must be committed to the change and to carry it out, if the change is actually to take place. (Everard and Morris 1996 p.256-7)

Everard and Morris (1996 p.257) also identify that individual levels of commitment can be judged on a one to four scale. Where individuals (1) are ready to oppose the change, which decreases so they are (2) willing to let it happen, then (3) help change happen and finally (4) make change happen. If commitment is to be developed then existing levels of commitment may need to be ascertained. The use of the mapping technique to gauge commitment and control will help such an identification of attitudes to change.

The gaining of insight into these two dimensions of *commitment* and *control* will help show the impact of how successful the general implementations of the changes both externally and internally have been within the school.

Fig. 6 Responses of 6 teachers to school initiated changes : (x denotes teacher's response)

Control

5 High					x
4					xx
3					xxx
2					
1 Low					
	1Low	2	3	4	5High

Commitment

Commitment to School initiated changes

The results collated on the matrix corresponding to school based changes showed that all the teachers were highly committed to changes which suggests that the overall commitment level of all teachers to the school changes was very high. The key statement relating to commitment that was unanimously selected is as follows.

Most of the changes we're making will prove to be very worthwhile in the end. Some won't work and will have to be dropped or revised - that's inevitable when you do something new. But I'm confident the benefits will out weigh the drawbacks. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.75)

One teacher commented upon commitment as a whole school issue. She stated that she recognised the changes were just evolving. She had identified that the changes had not been embraced by everyone and advocated more change ' We all have to continue with more change not just some of us.'

The commitment of the whole school seemed to reflect other attitudes. There was optimism that the changes may have to be revised, acknowledgement that some ideas may not work and need to be dropped but commitment was solid as there seemed to be a faith that the results in writing would be successful and override any shortcomings.

Control of school initiated changes

The responses to the control the teachers felt over the changes were varied. One teacher who felt at ease in the initiation of the changes also felt she had the ability to influence and guide the implementation of the new approaches to teaching writing to the benefit of the school as a whole as reflected in the following key statement.

Whatever we do here in terms of change has to be related to our own ideas of where the school is going. Some changes fit better than others, but in the end the real control lies with the teachers, not with those who dream up the ideas.
(Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.76)

Clearly this teacher felt comfortable in establishing the changes and that they sat easily with the direction the school was heading. The level of control two others felt was high but not as high as the former. From whatever direction the changes originated these teachers' felt quite determined but flexible in manipulating them and were purposeful when implementing changes within a certain limiting framework. The statement that most suited their understanding of their control over the school-initiated changes was as follows.

Wherever the changes come from you can always bend quite a lot of them to your own purposes if you set your mind to it. The room for manoeuvre may be limited, but it gives you some control to do it your way, I think. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.76)

These teachers felt a fairly high degree of control over the changes and seemed willing to adapt to changes within perimeters. One teacher commented that flexibility and willingness to adapt new ideas were important steps, which should be followed with evaluation and amendments. This implied the cycle of planning, action, and review was essential for improvement of practice.

Half of the teachers, however, felt less control over the changes. They had ambivalent feelings for and against the changes that were not their choice. There have been opportunities to implement changes of their own choice. There was recognition that changes may be modified after evaluation. The key statement for moderate control of school change is as follows.

It's a mixed bag, in my view. Many changes are being imposed, and some we like and some we don't. Then there are changes we've chosen for ourselves. Some of the imposed ones might be altered in the light of experience. I suppose. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.76)

This statement which was chosen by three teachers (half the sample) indicates that such ambivalence will affect their performance in implementing school initiated changes. Teachers' attitudes as a whole suggest that control may well be a small issue for the

changes to be completely implemented but that taken as a whole the matrix shows that teachers' attitudes were showing an optimum level of commitment with a fairly high level of control. These findings were positive, as very little change in attitude is needed for the school to be working at the optimum levels of both commitment and control.

Fig. 7 Responses of 6 teachers to government initiated changes : (x denotes teacher's response)

Control

5High				x	x
4					x
3					xx
2					x
1 Low					
	1 Low	2	2	2	5 High

Commitment

Commitment to government changes

The results collated on the matrix corresponding to government initiated changes show that most (5 out of 6) the teachers were highly committed to changes with one who was fairly committed. These teachers were confident that the changes brought about by the National Literacy Strategy would be beneficial and become successful although there may need to be some adjustments. One teacher did not show as high a commitment level as her colleagues did. She was not in total agreement to the changes. She was confident, however, that once the strategy was underway the changes would be beneficial. The overall commitment level of all teachers to the governmental changes was very high. Two teachers commented upon commitment to the NLS. One endorsed her full commitment to the Literacy Hour. She nevertheless expressed a view that in her opinion the government introduced the strategy so fast the changes may not have been fully tried. The second

comment stated that the Literacy Hour worked better when the structure was not adhered to as rigidly as was first prescribed. She noted that 'when teachers take what is given and make it their own, their practice becomes more beneficial'.

Control over governmental changes

The amount of *control* teachers felt in implementing the NLS varied, ranging from very high levels of control to a moderately low feeling of control. Two teachers expressed having very high levels of control. This shows that both teachers felt at ease with the initiation of the NLS and that they have the ability to influence and guide its implementation as such changes related to the needs of the school. One teacher showed high commitment and so was aware that although there were limits bounding the changes that there was flexibility to adapt the strategy to suit her purposes and provide her with more control.

Two teachers admitted to ambivalence to the changes and so their control was adjusted to incorporating chosen changes with a view to adopting and adapting the imposed changes. A small amount of control over the initiation of the NLS was evident. Finally one teacher's response revealed that in her view she had only a little amount of control over the changes. Her response reflected that the change was imposed from a hierarchical position and that she as a teacher had little control. All she could do was to make the best of the situation. Her selected response was as follows

The trend is for most changes to be top down and that makes me feel teachers don't have much control. So, in the end, all you can do is concentrate on the few you approve of, and put up with the rest. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.78)

This was a response by a teacher who acknowledged there were changes but had no particular concept that the changes were to help teachers improve their classroom practice in teaching Literacy. Although initiated in a top down way through government reform, the

Literacy Strategy was introduced as a framework that teachers were expected to develop within their own classrooms.

Comparing teachers' responses to the school based and government initiated changes

Interestingly the results of teachers' attitudes to both types of internal and externally initiated changes were very similar. Comparing these results to Everard and Morris' (1996 p256) scale of levels of commitment the teachers showed they were willing to *make* the change happen. In both cases all teachers' responses showed that they felt a positive commitment to both types of initiated changes. They agreed that in terms of governmental and school based change that the changes were related to the direction that the school was moving. Teachers saw that some changes were better than others when putting them into practice. Their commitment ranged between one teacher being fairly committed to the remainder having a very high degree of commitment. Taking the overall results into consideration the teachers have responded most positively to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers felt they had great control over the establishment and administration of the changes. There was an overall positive trend of commitment to the change, with most members of staff feeling more dedicated and absorbed in making the changes happen.

Three (half) teachers recognised that control lies within themselves and not the initiators of the ideas. These teachers exhibited that they had an *internal locus of control* (Whitaker 1993p.44) that they were ready to take responsibility in actioning the changes. The results suggest that all teachers felt a higher degree of control towards the school initiated changes than the government initiated change. Teachers felt they had less control over external change, as the *locus of control* was *external* (Whitaker 1993 p.44). There was only one respondent who expressed a negative view to control of the NLS. Overall the responses show a positive overview to the whole school's response in controlling both types of changes

How has control and commitment impacted on teachers' attitudes?

I shall now compare the responses of control and commitment to the research question and ask, 'how have the internal and external changes impacted upon the attitudes in teachers towards teaching writing?' The data collection was chosen to gauge teachers' attitudes of commitment to change and their control over the change, thus enabling the effect of the changes to be ascertained. The results of the mapping technique shows that teachers' attitudes of commitment were particularly positive, for both the school based initiated changes teaching approaches to writing in school and the government initiated change of the NLS. The teachers expressed having very high levels of commitment to the changes. Taking the overall results into consideration the teachers have responded most positively and significantly to being involved and dedicated to both internal and external initiations of change to literacy and teaching writing in school. The results show that those teachers who implemented change most successfully were those who felt they had been inspired by the initial change and could manage, review and modify their practice accordingly. These teachers felt mastery over the changes and they felt they have some control over the management of the changes.

The remaining half of the teachers' attitudes indicated they felt less in control of governmental changes. The degree of control was *slightly* diminished but not enough to be highly significant. The technique used was to provide a whole school picture. The responses were anonymous and cannot be attributed to individuals. The pattern encountered however matches the findings in Chapter 6 on teachers' attitudes to the NLS professional development, where half the teachers embraced many new features of teaching writing. For the remaining half, more change in practice was less evident, see (Appendix 4.2 Table 4.1). Overall attitudes to the NLS were positive. Teachers were willing to implement the format of the strategy that was presented as an initiative they liked.

My final thought is a reminder that although teachers' attitudes in general have had a positive impact, one teacher commented she recognised that for the whole school to

continue to develop more change was needed. There was a willingness to continue to embrace and develop change.

Teachers' feelings towards their experiences of change

In this section it is my intention to investigate the feelings individual teachers had towards the changes to teaching writing. The *experience of change* technique (Ainscow *et al.* 1994) enabled information on teachers' feelings towards changes to be gathered. The data generated an illumination of the overall ambience in the school as well as providing awareness to individual's feelings towards the progress of growth in the establishment.

Data generated from a range of respondents can be used to throw light upon the overall climate within a school with respect to a particular change. In addition the discussions that take place often provide insights into people's feelings towards the overall organisational arrangements for supporting development. In this sense it contributes important evidence towards a more general review of a school's capacity to instigate, implement and absorb changes. (Ainscow *et al.* 1994 p.17)

The changes explored were the *new approaches to teaching writing* (see Appendix 7). These were chosen to gain insight into how the participants viewed these developments or changes in practice. The insights would provide the necessary information to gauge teachers' attitudes towards the changes in teaching writing. Fullan explains that educational change involves 'change in practice' and that such change is not singular but at least threefold. Implementation of new practice will involve using new *materials*, *new teaching approaches*, with the possibility of changing fundamental *beliefs*.

There are at least three components or dimensions at stake in implementing any new program or policy: (1) the possible use of new or revised *materials* (direct instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies), (2) the possible use of new *teaching approaches* (i.e., new teaching strategies or



activities), and (3) the possible alteration of *beliefs* (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programs). (Fullan 1991 p.37)

The changes in teachers' classroom practice indeed included the use of *material or instructional resources* e.g. using *Jolly Phonics* a new medium to teach phonics. New teaching strategies were employed in the form of encouraging emergent writing, teacher modelling, extended writing time, and using a wider range of writing opportunities. Teachers' attitudes to these concrete features of change were more straightforward to ascertain through interviewing. To enter the realm of teachers' underlying beliefs would be more difficult. The technique of asking teachers to focus on their feelings towards the changes in their practice would provide opportunities where teachers could concentrate on their inner-selves in a non-threatening manner (see Appendix 4.3). This would provide the means for deeply felt impressions to be carefully drawn thus enabling the investigation to encounter the deeper level of teachers' *beliefs* Fullan's third dimension of change.

Analysis of data collected on teachers' feelings to change in approaches to writing

From the frequency count it can be seen that all of the teachers, (see Appendices 6.2, 6.3) were committed to the change, and felt enthusiastic, optimistic, stimulated and interested. The majority five out of six felt supported, comfortable and pleased with the change. A smaller percentage, but still a majority felt satisfied and half of the teachers felt confident. Two teachers felt exhilarated and two felt valued. In comparing the entire positive 'A' scores with the negative 'A' scores there was a ratio of 54:3. The results of the data point to an overwhelming positive general reaction to the changes, which seem to have been assuredly and wholeheartedly embarked upon by all the teachers.

'A' was only scored three times in the negative zones. One teacher expressed that she experienced worries and two others acknowledged pressure, one of whom was recently an NQT. This could account for such feelings, as she was new to the profession. The analysis of the data overwhelmingly pointed to a committed reaction to the changes by all teachers. After interviewing the last two, teachers 5 and 6, I had doubts. As noted in the field notes

(see Appendix 4.4) I felt disappointed that these teachers, the longest serving, showed less commitment compared with the rest of the teachers. This feeling was confirmed when comparing the mean scores with individual scores (see Appendices 6.2, 6.3). These two teachers had the lowest scores compared to teachers 1,2 and 4 whose scores ranged between 15 and 16. Although the two teachers, 5 and 6, did indeed have the lowest scores in total the final analysis showed that the members of staff as a whole exhibited a high degree of commitment and positive feelings.

Analysis of very positive and positive feelings towards change

Here I will extract a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' positive feelings, which will provide indications to teachers' attitudes towards the changes in approaches in teaching writing. I will do this through examining the comments about such changes, which tell the stories of how teachers felt. Firstly I have compared the responses to the *very positive* (++) and *positive* (+) feelings that were selected by *all* the teachers. Secondly I compared the responses of the *very positive* (++) and *positive* (+) feelings that *some* of the teacher's chose.

Commitment

In committing themselves to the change teachers recognised that the changes were working, that they enjoyed the job and wanted to do their best. They also expressed that for the changes to work there has to be commitment. Teacher 3 said:

I'm committed to the change, as I believe that it's the right one and has been proved with results. (Teacher 3, 2000)

This comment shows that for her, observed improvements empowered the feeling of commitment as an integral part of her beliefs and that these beliefs were confirmed. Another teacher powerfully stated that such commitment was a component of professionalism.

We owe it as professionals to do it, if not you're in the wrong job. I feel very strongly. It can completely colour the feel of the school. You don't have to be blinkered. You can see that this might work. (Teacher 4, 2000)

These were the words of the teacher who scored the highest total indicating commitment was the very essence of her job. She seemingly refers to signs of deficiency to commitment she had recognised in other teachers. This perception mirrors my own doubts, but all teachers stated quite firmly that they were committed to change. It seems that some teachers were more committed than others.

Enthusiasm

All teachers expressed their enthusiasm about the changes. The teachers welcomed the changes of approaches to teaching as the teaching approaches used in teaching writing fitted their styles of teaching. 'It suits my way of teaching' stated Teacher 2. Another teacher could see that children had progressed in their writing and the efforts of both teachers and children in trying out new ideas paid dividends. Teacher 5 noted 'I can see the children's progress at both extremes of the scale.' The progress the more and less able children were making was visible. Teachers seeing tangible evidence of progress sparked the feeling of enthusiasm towards the implementation of new approaches to teaching writing. Experienced Teacher 4 stated that 'trying out new things is good when you have been teaching for ages.' Applying new skills reinforced a sense of enthusiasm and the enthusiasm also spilt over to the classroom, which in turn enthused the children. 'Its good to see the children also being enthusiastic.' This sense of enthusiasm seems to be cyclic as teachers' enthusiasm seemed to be infectious and affect the children's eagerness to learn in a positive way. Similarly children showing progression in their learning positively affected the teachers' attitudes. There was willingness on the part of teachers to continue to implement refine and improve the new teaching approaches to writing, as it was seen as having a positive and beneficial effect on the progress of children learning to write.

Optimism

The sense of optimism in teachers stemmed from the notion that there were different ideas to try out. The experimentation of ideas was the crux to the change, which was seen to make a distinctive contrast to established practice that would be enhanced.

I always hope the changes are for the better. Change is something that is different. You don't know if it will work unless you try it out. (Teacher 3, 2000)

The changes put into practice were seen as having a positive effect on children. Teachers noted that children were given opportunities to improve learning through the implementation of new approaches to teaching writing and that children who had experienced such teaching had exhibited benefits from the experiences through progress.

The changes are so obvious with this class, compared with last year, are doing so well. (Teacher 5, 2000)

Within the optimism were the concepts that good always comes out of change. Optimism was buoyed up with hope and the eagerness to experiment with new ideas. Change was seen as always for the better and that such change boded for an exciting future and also seen as a way to improve standards in writing.

Stimulation

The trying out of new ideas by putting them into practice provided a challenge to which the teachers rose. The implementation of the ideas engendered feelings of interest and excitement in seeing if they would work. Putting the changes into practice had a positive effect on children's writing as explained by Teacher 6. 'It's exciting, now children are achieving more than I ever thought they would'. The changes in approaches to teaching writing helped children progress more than this teacher thought possible. The experience of teachers seeing children achieving and developing writing skills provided a source of

motivation for the teachers as they could see their efforts being rewarded. There was a two-way flow of contributions between teachers and children that seemed to have an assured consequence. 'Getting feedback from the children is stimulating. It's two-way. It has positive results' (Teacher 1). The implementation of the change was seen as an experience that would need amendments as they were worked through. 'The changes are a challenge. They need constant refining of practice' (Teacher 2). This excitement in children's progress created more opportunity to develop the changes through re-evaluations of practice. The implementations of the new teaching approaches were seen as being a successful two-way communication between the teacher and the children. The experience of refinement of practice added to the need for improvement and the accomplished success bred vitality into the teaching of writing.

Interest

Teachers were interested in the changes in teaching writing because the changes worked, and that trying out the ideas was enjoyable. Teacher 6 expressed this. 'It's interesting. I'm enjoying the new opportunities.' Two teachers expressed their interest in the processes and procedures in the developmental stages of children's writing the understanding of which can help children to develop their writing. 'I'm very interested in the stages of writing development seeing where children stick' (Teacher 1). The other teacher expressed a fascination between providing a wide range of opportunities for children and their independent efforts to communicate using phonic skills. She was also aware of the importance of continuity that operates through the whole school working as a team.

I'm interested in seeing the connection between emergent writing, which I'm not familiar with, all the way through to offering a wide range of writing opportunities to the year two children. Its important the whole school works on this. (Teacher 3, 2000)

The responsibility of children achieving with their writing skills was not the sole responsibility of the Year 2 teachers. This teacher was obviously interested in writing

processes and procedures including those she was not familiar with. She recognised that she herself was learning. She saw the importance of all teachers being interested in the development of children writing and the need to maintaining interest through working together as a team as a source of motivation.

Other very positive feelings

The majority, four out of six teachers felt *supported* in implementing the changes to teaching approaches. The concepts of teamwork and professional development emanated from the comments. 'We were all together when the change was introduced. We are on the same learning curve' (Teacher 2). Teamwork was recognised as working together both as a staff as a whole who were learning and developing together and as part of year group teams. Half the teachers confirmed that professional development accommodated the provision of support necessary to maintain the commitment to the change. The professional development that was recognised as supportive included observational visits and dialogue with teachers from the local Beacon School.

I feel most supported and valued when talking to staff. When I have discussions with external assessment support groups. It is helpful visiting the Beacon School, being able to try out ideas and how we can adapt them to our own practice.
(Teacher 4. 2000)

The support the teachers gained through working together or from professional development seemed to empower them to want to try out the new ideas without over much apprehension to hinder the development of change.

Three teachers expressed *confidence* in the changes that were initiated through professional development and through mutual support in discussing the changes with colleagues. The changes in the words of one teacher 'Sat with my philosophy.' The changes to the approaches of teaching writing endorsed this teacher's fundamental educational beliefs. Another indicated that her confidence was promoted because she was happy with what she

was doing. Confidence was influenced by the initial introduction of change through professional development. The interaction of colleagues through discussion affirms and perpetuates the change. The concepts of the introduced change were constantly established and correspondingly confirmed teachers' basic tenets of their understanding of education, which produced conviction in their work.

Two teachers claimed that they often felt *valued* in promoting the changes. The feeling of being valued received the second lowest frequency very positive 'A' score although the other teachers felt valued sometimes. The source of the feelings of value were varied, ranging from perceiving children's enjoyment and parental support to feelings of value stemming from the teacher herself, other teachers in staff meetings, and the Headteacher.

Two teachers declared they often felt *exhilarated* through implementing new ideas that have clear direction and manifest themselves in supporting children's progress. High expectations were linked to a teacher's performance with the feeling 'I can do more' also attributed to feelings of *exhilaration*. The resulting successes of the changes with respect to both the children's progress and teacher's own perceptions of their performance seem to inspire motivation. The five others said they sometimes felt fervently about the changes.

Analysis of strongly felt negative feelings of change in approaches to writing

The comparison of the positive 'A' scores with the negative 'A' scores gives a ratio of 54:3. The ratio overwhelmingly favours the positive attitudes. This suggests that all teachers concerned have regarded the changes as a positive accomplishment. All the teachers either scored 'A' or 'B' scores for the ++ and + feelings. That is, teachers encountered these positive feelings either often or sometimes.

Although this may be so an investigation of the negative scores and comments will provide more substance to secure a complete picture. The three negative feelings that teachers encountered *often* were those of *worry* and *pressure*. One teacher was worried over her professional practice that she was 'doing the right thing for the children and could I have done things better?' Two teachers *often* experienced pressure. Indeed three other teachers

admitted that they *sometimes* felt pressurised this category of negative feeling that teachers felt most *often* and *sometimes* only one teacher admitted to *hardly ever* being under pressure. One of the teachers who often experienced such feelings said she felt 'pressurised to achieve a high level with the class.' The other said that she felt pressure 'not only by the changes but the world in general.' She also expressed that external and to a smaller extent internal pressures caused feelings of anxiety. Frustration was also encountered when 'I can't move the children on to Level 3 when I feel that they were just there on the brink.' Both these teachers were teaching Year 2. The children in these classes were the pupils to take the next set of SATs. There was a clear indication that these teachers were under pressure to raise the standards of writing. It was one of these teachers who also recognised that to raise the standards in writing was a whole school issue and that the task in getting children to achieve more in their writing standards should not just be left to the Year 2 teachers. Negative feelings sometimes experienced were those of *frustration*, *isolation* and *cynicism*. *Frustration* that was encountered reflected teacher's high expectations that were not being fully actualised in children's performance. The three teachers who admitted to feeling *cynical* were the three longest serving teachers who had only experienced teaching at Waterstone School. My final point is that although all teachers warmly embraced the whole enterprise of change in approaches to teaching writing there was an undercurrent of ambivalence in the form of pessimism from the *old timers*.

How have teachers' feelings indicated an impact to attitudes towards teaching writing?

Before I conclude, I will refer back to the research question and ask what was the impact of the change towards attitudes in teaching writing? Attitudes are shown in ways of thinking and behaving. Connecting with teachers' feelings enabled the investigation to be explored at a deeper level, providing a wealth of previously hidden underlying information. To assess impact, I will consider the significance, influence and impressions the changes have made on the teachers. The most striking significance is that all teachers' attitudes to the changes range between very positive and positive, this suggests that throughout the whole school the changes have been welcomed and the ensuing changes of practice has whole school endorsement. The likelihood of the changes in practice

becoming part of the school's embedded culture is high. The implementation of the new teaching approaches could be identified as the second level of culture of espoused values, the implementation of strategies, goals and philosophies. Schein (1997) explains how values can be transformed in to the third deeper level of the school's culture.

Only values that are susceptible to physical or social validation and that continue to work reliably in solving the group's problems will become transformed into assumptions. (Schein, 1997 p.20)

The changes in practice were a response to the problem of improving standards in children's writing. As all teachers positively committed themselves to the changes in practice in working out the problems involved in raising standards, they have socially validated their shared values. Schein explains social validation.

By social validation I mean that certain values are confirmed only by the shared social experience of a group. Such values typically involve the groups internal relations, where the test of whether they worry or not is how comfortable and anxiety free members are when they abide by them. (Schein, 1997 p.20)

These results confirm that the teachers supported the changes. The high ratio indicates that the shared experiences were shared values, which everyone has comfortably accepted. As explained previously the three negative responses were qualified with reasons of pressure and worry appertaining to a very small group who expressed their honest feelings in experiencing high expectations that they value. The changes in practice were daily experience. Schein asserts that when the answer to issues is used habitually then the values were subsumed basic assumptions.

When a solution to a problem works repeatedly, it comes to be taken for granted. What was once a hypothesis, supported only by a hunch or a value, comes gradually to be treated as a reality. (Schein, 1997 p.21)

The change in approaches in teaching writing has become a fundamental part of classroom practice. It is seen to work for all the teachers who have declared an overwhelming commitment to the changes. This commitment to new practice indicates that the culture of the school has changed because implementation of change in developing new practice has become an intrinsic part of working. The impact upon the school's culture on changing the approaches to teaching writing, the emergent writing, teacher modelling, extended writing and the range of writing opportunities has, therefore, been substantial. Finally, although there may be an undercurrent of cynicism, the data analysis shows that the school's capacity to instigate, implement and absorb the changes of teaching approaches to writing was particularly high.

Summary

Professional development is a means to introduce materials and new teaching approaches. It provides the foundation for the development of values engendered through using the latter elements of change. New materials in the form of the NLS frame work has been introduced with both a high level of commitment and with teachers having a certain degree of control over its implementation. Teachers have adapted their approach to teaching writing through teacher modelling. This is a key transferable skill. Teachers' attitudes towards promoting writing in the classrooms are variable but their attitudes towards the teaching of writing are very positive. Although a *small* amount of cynicism was evident from *old timers* there is a clear indication that teachers have a positive attitude to the changes that promote a positive picture for the school as a whole. These positive attitudes indicate that their fundamental beliefs of endorsing pedagogic assumptions, through using the new materials and implementing new approaches to teaching writing, that Fullan's third dimension of change in values, have indeed started to develop. The evidence shows that change has affected the deeper levels of values of teachers and will form the final benchmark to assess what teachers thought about the changes.

Chapter 8

Change in school culture

The main aim of this chapter is to answer the research question, *How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?* In order to find out if the changes in teaching approaches to teaching writing have impacted on the culture of the school, I have used four objectives by which to assess the impact of change in this chapter. The first is to compare and contrast children's attitudes and perceptions of what teachers do when teaching writing, by using the findings from data gathered from the children's group interviews in the first and second years of the study. These are outlined in Chapters 5 and 6. The second is to assess the similarities and differences of teachers' practices and attitudes with reference to the implementation of change in teaching writing that has evolved over the two-year study period. This will be done using analysed data from teacher interviews (Chapter 5), which will be used as a baseline from which data from the teachers' questionnaire (Chapter 6) can be compared. The third involves information to be compared and contrasted with the final findings of teachers' attitudes to change outlined in Chapter 8. Lastly the outcomes of the assessed school culture of 1998 and 2000 (Chapters 5 and 6) will also be compared and contrasted, with a view to observing any culture change. By using the above evidence, links will be made to see if indeed change in the approaches to teaching writing has played a part in any observed impact of change in school culture.

Fullan (1991) indicated that little is known about what students think about educational change simply because no one asks them. This study has not ignored the viewpoint of the student but actively set out to find out children's perceptions to change when being taught to write. Fullan suggests four representations of how students may experience change.

If we were to attempt to infer what some of the experiences with change meant to students, several images come to mind. Four such images that seem to have some basis in fact concern (1) indifference, (2) confusion, (3) temporary escape from

boredom, and (4) heightened interest and engagement with learning and school.
(Fullan 1991 p.182)

This section of Chapter 8 sets out to compare children's perceptions of learning to write. This will enable the view point of children to be examined when determining the impact of change to teaching writing and be compared with Fullan's suggested representations. Although this section examines change in children's perceptions towards writing it will provide an insight into teachers' practice as children's attitudes and behaviour towards writing are a product of what teachers do in school (Whitaker 1993). This consequently will provide an indication as to teachers' values, the second level of culture (Schein 1997).

Change in children's attitudes and perceptions

From both the samples it was evident that both sets of children had positive feelings to writing. They thought it fun, they liked to write. They enjoyed writing and thought it was pleasurable. The first group found a sense of achievement in writing. Children of the second group utilized their sense of achievement as a means of motivation to spur them on to want to write both in the present and in the future as budding authors. These children who experienced the change in teaching writing exhibited signs through their feelings of achievement that they positively benefited from the continued change in teaching writing. Both sets of children alluded to embarrassment. Such embarrassment was founded in lack of self-esteem or disadvantage. Self-consciousness could be seen initially as a barrier but it was overcome with the aim to promote writing. The overruling aim to learn to write was also evident in the second group which voiced a sense of disadvantage if they were not able to write. Both groups were becoming aware that writing as a means of communicating was also a means of accessing power and was an experience that was valuable to them.

Both sets of children experienced negative feelings. These feelings were different. The first group could see that writing was a solitary practice that could lead to loneliness. The second group did not allude to this feeling but could see the writing process had the potential to be frustrating as writing was not seen as an exact art but one that was

continually evolving, revisited, amended and edited. The absence of loneliness and the admission to frustration may be attributed to the continuing development of the new approaches to teaching writing. The new teaching approaches incorporated the explicit involvement of the teacher modelling specific objectives. The children were being exposed to the teacher demonstrating skills, which incorporated a sense of security. This enabled the second group to be more aware of the nature of the importance of learning through mistakes, that trial and error was an intrinsic part to learning.

Change in children's perceptions to learning to write

CHANGE IN CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Both sets of children agreed that writing was accessible, they were able to write and it could be easy. The concept of writing in the form of developing thinking skills however posed a challenge. For the first group the composing of ideas to develop sequenced stories was a difficult task. This was also difficult for members of the second group. Composing ideas took time. The second group however presented evidence of using deeper levels of cognitive skills. They showed attention to adjusting the content of the writing to suit the audience. These children were more articulate in discussing the use of their developing skills indicating they had a higher awareness and greater understanding of how to improve the quality of their writing. This higher order of thinking skills was not evident in the first group. The evidence in Chapter 6 indicates that the change in approaches to teaching writing that developed over a two-year period of time had impacted upon the children's thinking and decision making skills to improve the quality of their learning.

Change in consolidation of skills

The findings show that children in the first group interview understood the importance of practising phonic skills, handwriting and punctuation. The first group was able to understand that the quality of choice of words in texts had improved since starting school, as had the length of their written work (see Chapter 5 p.64). This was children's own

yardstick to acknowledge improvement. The children from second group did not directly allude to practice of skills as supporting their learning. Children were able to use higher orders of grammar. They were able to recognise the worth of choosing appropriate connectives. The understanding of symbols to convey missing letters in their writing was evident as they used apostrophes (see Chapter 6 p.83). These examples indicate that the children of the second group were more able to reflect on specific skills of higher levels of previous learning as choosing connectives was more definite than choosing 'better words' (Gareth: Chapter 5 p.64). The understanding that writing can be organised not only in sequence but also in chapters, was more developed in the second group. Likewise they were able to explain spelling conventions (Meg: Chapter 6 p.84). This evidence indicates that the children who had experienced the new teaching approaches to writing for a longer period of time exhibited a small degree of change in children's understanding of how to consolidate and improve their writing skills over the study period. This indicates that teachers' practice over time was beginning to have a positive impact on the children's as their understanding of the writing process was widening.

Change in children's perceptions to the teaching of writing,

The children from both groups saw teachers modelling writing, the demonstrating of how to write, as a secure means to try out new ideas resulting in both sets of children a willingness to rise to a challenge to be extrinsically inspired and motivated to write. Children's confidence and enthusiasm to try out the taught methods of writing was increased. They were clear in their understanding of what was expected of them. There seemed to be a consistent attitude to teachers modelling writing between the two groups as the positive response neither increased, nor, more importantly decreased.

Change in teacher intervention and advice

The findings of both group interviews showed that children's learning was affected positively through teacher intervention and explicit teaching. For children to be able to clearly verbally express the conventions of punctuation showed a clear understanding that

their learning had improved through direct teaching by teachers. The remembering and using of apostrophes, a higher punctuation skill than using capital letters and full stops show that the second group were perhaps more skilful and knowledgeable. This indicates that the teaching of specific teaching skills over time had a more positive effective on the children in group 2. What teachers were doing, that is teaching writing skills, had a direct link to children's learning to write. Teachers' practice over time was being also continually adding to the development of children's learning.

Change in feedback on children's writing

In both sets of findings teachers' comments positively affected the children's attitudes to writing. Praise was a common factor that motivated the children, as were specific targets for the children to consider when continuing to develop their skills. The prompts that teachers made influenced the quality of the children's writing. The second group were aware that writing is not always perfect and that feedback can be transferred when writing new pieces of work, (Vicky: Chapter 6 p.84) rather than just pertinent to current work (Josh: Chapter 5 p.66). Where the teacher assumed an active and responsive role evaluative comments helped. Bright (1995) and Munro (1999) found this too.

More important, we affect how our students come to view themselves as writers.
We play a very important role in our students' developing understanding of writing.
(Bright 1995 p.52)

Children valued feedback from teachers. It helped them to understand and improve their writing skills. The importance of feed back is another constant factor that has emerged from both sets of findings. There are indications that the second group was able to consolidate the advice through transferring the skill in other situations showing the depth of their learning.

Change in children's attitudes and beliefs to writing

The findings from both group interviews showed that three similar fundamental principles of writing being (1) a life skill, (2) dependent on the thinking and (3) that teachers have a part to play in challenging their learning, had emerged which did not seem to have outwardly changed. In each group children had a positive attitude to writing. They understood that learning to write was developing communication skill. Both sets of children seemed to know that thinking is an important skill to develop if writing is to be improved through making choices and remembering and transferring previous learning. Finally both sets of children believed that teachers had an essential part to play in challenging and structuring learning programmes and through both direct and indirect teaching. The second group endorsed these fundamental attitudes and beliefs that were evident in the findings of the first group.

Impact of change on children

The changes to teaching writing through introducing the NLS made a difference to both sets of children. The change was sustained and continued in the second year of the study. The findings were compared with Fullan's suggested student outcomes. There was no evidence that children were neither *indifferent* or *confused* nor was there evidence of *temporary escape* as a result of the change. Indeed there were indications that the second groups' understandings of teachers' teachings and expectations were more clear and focused. The evidence therefore shows that Fullan's fourth category was fulfilled.

The final possible outcome for students - *heightened interest and engagement* - is obviously central to any solution, and as such is important to examine closely.
(Fullan 1991 p.184)

The findings of this chapter showed that the children's interest and engagement were indeed heightened. The outcome of children's positive attitudes and beliefs were confirmed throughout the period. There were also clear indications that the interest and engagement

of the children of the second group was even more heightened than the first group as they exhibited more knowledge and skills. Not only had the initial changes of the introduced NLS made an impact on children's perceptions the momentum of impact was ongoing in the second year of the NLS. These findings are central to the study as such consistent fundamental changes in children's learning showed the results teachers' practice and as such have a bearing on the culture of the school.

Change in school culture

The findings show that the initial changes of the new approaches to teaching writing had become embedded as noted in the affirmation of the three principles that children manifested in learning to write. The changes had become an accepted constituent of teaching and learning to write. The comparisons of children's perceptions, in Appendix 7.1 also illustrate that the new teaching approaches to writing were becoming more embedded as time progressed. The structures put into place were accepted and understood by both teachers and children. To become part of school culture the behaviour of the members of the organisation must share basic assumptions that are strongly held. Schein explains as follows,

Once a set of shared assumptions is formed by this process, it can function as a cognitive defence mechanism both for the individual members and the group as a whole. In other words, individuals and groups seek stability and meaning. (Schein 1997 p.27)

The changes to teaching writing proposed through the NLS continued to work. The changes were permeating the school. They were becoming second nature, part of a set of shared basic assumptions. In the next part of this chapter I will investigate how the teachers have sought stability and meaning through assimilating the changes to teaching writing that will uphold the premise that a change of culture had occurred.

Comparing and contrasting the findings of teachers' interviews and questionnaire

It is clear from the evidence that the teaching of writing in 1998 before the introduction of the NLS was not systematic (see Chapter 5 p.68). Whereas the teaching of writing during the implementation of the NLS in 1999 was carefully planned as specific learning objectives for writing were taught (see Chapter 6 p.90). Likewise in 2000 specific writing objectives continued to be taught. This indicates that the changes were systematic and consistent.

One teacher accepted that before the NLS they did not actively provide opportunities for children to think for themselves when learning to write. This teacher in the 1999 interview referred to children becoming more independent thinkers since the introduction of *Jolly Phonics* (1998) and the NLS. Children were taught and expected to use their phonic skills in learning to tackle unknown words, whereas prior to the NLS children were not expected to use these skills. One of the NLS objectives was to expand children's phonological knowledge (DfEE 1998 p. 8). The NLS seemed to have impacted on developing children's thinking as it was found that children from both the group interviews knew and believed that thinking was an important skill to develop when learning to write.

Prior to the NLS the modelling that was encountered was that of teachers transcribing. Children were therefore dependent, not having skills to tackle encoding language. The NLS introduced the practice of teachers modelling writing to children where skills were demonstrated (DfEE 1998 pp.11 -12). Children were expected to try them out with the result that they had a greater understanding of teachers' expectations and gained more independence. The teachers' skills of modelling expanded, in 2000 teachers were using this approach to teaching writing in extended writing outside the Literacy Hour. These findings are similar to those of Wray *et al.* (2000 p.83) but not the findings of Fisher (2000 p.67) who fears that teachers may become deskilled by the 'plethora of initiatives'. Before the introduction of the NLS teachers thought children were disadvantaged as they entered school with poor language skills. A few children were seen as only being 'able to grunt'. (Chapter 5 p.72) The underdevelopment of pre-school language skills was not

evident in other data gathered. It is conceivable that children continued in 1999 and 2000 to start school with poor language skills but that was not seen by teachers as a factor to be considered after the introduction of the NLS as hindering children's abilities to learn.

Teachers' expectation of children's abilities and achievements rose over the study period whereas prior to the changes children were not challenged. This was particularly evident in the second group interviews when children could explain in their terms the use of apostrophes. This was part of an NLS objective, *to explore relationships between grammar, meaning and spelling in older pupils* (DfEE1998 p8). Teachers saw changes in the children in 1999 as they saw that children were motivated, challenged and had gained in confidence and competence. Teachers gave advice and feedback, which supported the children's learning through trial and error. (Chapter 5 p.65 and Chapter 6 p, 84)

In 1999 after the introduction of the NLS teachers were aware their own and the children's attitudes to teaching writing had become more positive. They thought children were aware of what was expected of them and their learning was becoming more meaningful. They also thought the new teaching approaches benefited the children by equipping them to learn. Teachers could see that there was a rise in their expectations and challenge. They could see and were also experiencing the positive impact the introduction of the NLS had on children learning to write.

The questionnaire in 2000 showed that teachers had wholeheartedly implemented the modelling introduced in the NLS, which had positively impacted on the teachers and children as discussed previously in this section. On reflecting upon the impact of the NLS professional development it is clear that there was some resistance to a wider reaching change of practice, as it became evident that not all teachers positively reacted to the changes. The new teachers were more eager to try out and implement new changes whereas the longer serving teachers were not so positively influenced through the professional development. This fragmentation of teachers' attitudes was also apparent in the analysis of data collected in Chapter 7. It is interesting to note that Angelides and Ainscow (2000) also found that older teachers tended to protect their colleagues from

proposed changes. Although there was not evidence that other colleagues were being undermined the evidence pointed however, to the *old timers* having less aptitude to change.

There has been a change in the outward world of teachers' practice of what they do, and their inner world of what they feel, believe and of what they think about the teaching of writing over the two-year study period. From comparing the initial baseline benchmark from the teachers' interviews and teacher's questionnaire (see Appendix 7.2) and children's group interviews (see Appendix 7.1) the change was rapid. Teachers could see the difference their change of practice had made in developing children's skills and attitudes over the two-year period. The findings from the children and teachers show that the change was sustained over a period of time. The impact the changes had on teachers' practice has been quite significant. Teachers have adapted to the changes and the new practices have positively impinged on children's learning to write. The changes have also impinged on teachers' own attitudes, which became more positive. Whitaker (1993) sees the outcomes, results, achievements and quality as the products of change. The product of change, experienced by the children and teachers in Waterstone, can be seen from the findings as successful in terms of children's attitudes.

The maintenance of the new teaching approaches over the study period indicates what the teachers were doing has become embedded practice. The findings from the final set of analysis in Chapter 7 to gauge teachers' attitudes to the change, sheds a light on to teachers' inner worlds, what they believe about the new practices and also indicate the understood acceptance level of the new practices. The key to any change in school culture will lie in teachers' unconscious reception of the new practices as basic assumptions.

Teachers attitudes towards the new approaches to teaching writing

The analysis of teachers' responses of commitment and control to school and government initiated changes to writing showed that teachers were either committed or strongly committed to the changes although the degree of control teachers felt was not quite as apparent (Chapter 7 p.107). What can be seen is that in general the changes gave rise to

strong beliefs as the high degree of commitment indicated that teachers had accepted and were pledged to the changes. The findings in Chapter 7 indicated that the sharing of the values of commitment have strengthened their beliefs as the deeper levels of teachers' inner worlds have been affected by the changes.

Similarly the findings from analysing teachers' feelings endorse that the changes have positively impacted on teacher's inner worlds. What is significant is the high level of positive attitudes to the changes. These too indicate an affirmation that the changes matched teachers' principles.

For the teachers to have such a strong sense of commitment, very positive attitudes to the changes and to maintain the momentum of change in their practice and principles leads me to think that the changes have become part of the accepted way things are done and problems solved. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) describe school culture as the way things are done in relation to others in an organisation and Whitaker (1993) claims culture is about people's characterised behaviour, their attitudes and values and how their beliefs affect the workings of the organisation and culture. The findings indicate that teachers' outward behaviours to the teaching of writing have changed and the changes have impacted on teachers' fundamental principles and beliefs. If school culture is defined through these attributes of values and basic assumptions (Schein1997) then the probability of change in school culture is high. The next part of the chapter will compare the school culture in 1998 and 2000 to assess change in culture to see if teachers' values and beliefs uncovered in assessing the impact of implementing new approaches to teaching writing has affected change in the school culture.

How far has the change of teaching of writing had an impact on school culture?

There are indications that the culture of the school changed from a *Welfarist* culture to a more *Traditionalist* culture. Interestingly the culture of the school did not move towards the *Hothouse* culture, the direction the teachers indicated the school was moving in 1998. What is significant is that the cultural shift is seemingly well rooted towards an emphasis

on pupil learning. This was not a concept that was brought up for discussion in 1998. Assessment was understood as important in 1998 but 'not overly' (Chapter 5 p.58) whereas in 2000 it was deemed important (Chapter 6 p.97). This indicates that the cultural shift has moved as a result in academic change. Although the culture has shifted there are still elements of the embedded culture that has underpinned the school and not changed. The school had not lost the ethos that shone through so strongly in 1998 that the school is well disciplined, friendly, values people and has the welfare of the whole child at its heart. These, it seems are Schein's (1997) third level of culture of basic assumptions. These are the embedded, taken for granted, ideals that occur as part of everyday life that is assumed and taken on by the members of the school. The shift in culture has transpired within Schein's second level of values, of the teachers putting learning; attainment and assessment are at the forefront of teaching. As stated in Chapter 6 p.101, the teachers considered whether the culture of the school was perfect. The teachers decided that there was room for cultural improvement through consolidation. An academic shift has emerged and been sustained throughout the two-year study period. Repeated maintenance of these beliefs has enabled them to become second nature and over time become part of the *basic assumptions* of the school culture.

One point that emanated from the 2000 interviews mentioned by two teachers was that the school was run as a 'tight ship' by the Head with high expectations of the teachers (Chapter 6 p.98). This seems to be a change in perception of my own practice that was not evident previously. This provides a small piece of evidence that as school leader I had an instrumental part in the reshaping of the school culture. Peterson and Deal (1998) outline the role of school leaders in reshaping school culture.

School leaders do several important things when sculpting culture. First they *read the culture*- its history and current condition. Leaders should know the deeper meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. Second, leaders *uncover and articulate core values*, looking for those that buttress what is best for students and support student - centred professionalism. (Peterson and Deal 1998)

The 1998 cultural survey enabled me as leader to read the culture of Waterstone School. In doing so the *Welfarist* view was uncovered. The culture has been reshaped through keeping this concept to accept the fundamental vision of the school 'To secure the highest quality learning for all children in our care'. The evidence indicates that *learning*, the focal point of the vision of the school, was becoming a core value that had been developed over the two years.

The culture prior to 1998 could have been expressed as one of a struggling school (Stoll 1999) where there was low social control but high social cohesion, which was caring and cosy. Times have changed and so has the culture. There is more social control and high social cohesion but the main emphasis is with raising the standards of both teaching and learning. The culture has moved towards a more effective school culture as the teaching and learning has improved. The 2000 culture of Waterstone School can be expressed in terms of Stoll's typology (1999) see Chapter 2 as a *moving* school with a view to becoming both more effective and improving. The teachers recognised that the school may be at its optimum in social cohesion and control (a near perfect school culture Chapter 6 p.100). This idea has also been upheld in the positive findings of this study of teachers' perceptions of *control* and *commitment* (Chapter 6) by the changes and to the positive attitudes teachers have. The current school culture fits in with the description of a *moving* school, whereby pupil learning outcomes are emphasised but the relationships are such that members work together as a team to raise to standards in education.

Stoll (1999) relates that micro politics evolve within subcultures. The findings in Chapter 6 indicate there are subcultures within the school, where the reception teachers had not fully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. It is therefore likely that the ethos of the subculture of not having clear learning expectations but to provide a *happy* culture transferred when one of the teachers moved from reception to Year 1. In Chapter 7 the findings show the undercurrent of cynicism and the lack of total conviction in the National Literacy Strategy was located within the reception teachers and the same year 1 teacher. The welfarist subculture however has not withstood the changes. The tide of change has proved stronger with the newer member of staff recognising the need and providing the

will to change, has resulted in a second subculture that was determined to focus on pupil achievement, improvement and raising standards. Stoll (1999) views resolving inter-group issues as a pre-requisite of school improvement. This subculture has seemed to begin to permeate through the whole of the school and has resolved as a whole school culture. There have been enough interactions for the 'safe cosy' culture to dissipate into a culture of rising to challenges.

Summary

The comparisons of the group interviews with the children show that children's attitudes and behaviours towards writing continued to be maintained with children's interest and engagement towards writing improving over the study period. The new approaches to teaching writing were established in teachers' practice. Teachers exhibited a strong sense of commitment and attitudes to the changes to teaching writing. They embraced the changes embedded in their practice. The evidence from comparing the school culture of Waterstone Infant School before and after the changes to teaching writing shows a significant yet unexpected change. The Welfarist culture continued to be the bedrock of the culture, the culture did not move towards a Hothouse culture as the teachers predicted, but moved to incorporate more formal aspects of school culture by manifesting a trend that upheld an emphasis on teaching and learning.

Chapter 9

Conclusions of the study

The impact of the new approaches to teaching writing on school culture is discussed in this final chapter. Hargreaves (1999) points out that his typologies are ideals rather than real cultures. It is his fifth culture of an effective school illustrated in Fig. 1 Mapping School Culture p.16 that I intend to advance. It embodies constituents of school culture put forward by Hargreaves (1994), Stoll and Fink (1999), Schein (1997) and of educational change proposed by Fullan (1991) and Whitaker (1993) see Fig. 8. It takes forward a unique infant school culture from which a generic infant school culture is proposed. This study culminates with a model and description of a national *nurturing learning infant school culture*.

Impact of change of approaches to teaching writing

Prior to the 1998 changes, teachers perceived children as starting school with poor language skills (Chapter 5 p.72). Children were not using their knowledge of phonics effectively, (Chapter 5 p.69). Writing was not a skill that the children were competent and confident in using (Chapter 5 p.69). The evidence from the two group interviews show that after the implementation of the changes there had been a change in children's attitudes to writing and to their confidence and competence.

Teachers' behaviour, after the implementation of the new teaching approaches to writing or what they did in the form of classroom practice, changed. Teaching writing became more systematic (Chapter 5 p.77). Teachers worked with the children to give them feedback to extend and to challenge their learning (Chapter 6 p.84). Through professional development teachers changed their practice by following the Literacy Strategy and developing teacher modelling in extended writing. This had an impact on the children's confidence and competence of using newly taught skills giving them a sense of achievement (Chapter 5 p.62). Children were not expected to rely on and be dependent on

the teacher but to become inventive independent writers (Chapter 5 p.70). Teacher expectations changed and children could reflect how they had been challenged both in developing their thinking and writing skills. This change in practice affected children's attitudes as they showed they were motivated to write. They found writing fun.

Teachers' attitudes to the changes through the implementation of new approaches to teaching writing had a significant impact on the culture of the school. Teachers' commitment to the initiation of internal and governmental changes was high. (Chapter 7 pp. 105-110) Such a strong emphasis of commitment indicated that the changes were firmly part of teachers' beliefs and value systems. Likewise there was a firm indication that teachers intended to control the initiation of both internal and governmental changes and adapt and develop them to make them their own. The findings showed that the teachers' attitudes to the experience of teaching the new approaches to writing were particularly positive, as teachers felt interested, comfortable, stimulated and optimistic about the changes. They also felt positively confident, supported, pleased, satisfied and exhilarated in experiencing the changes (Chapter 8). Such positive all round results indicated that the teachers indeed did value the new teaching strategies. These strong feelings that were uncovered signify the depth of the cultural change. The small minority of negative feelings uncovered reflected a minor degree of cynicism and anxiety. These negative feelings, however, were not strong enough to discredit the positive feelings that indicated the change of beliefs but indicated the existence of a diminishing subculture of 'old timers' (Chapter 6 p.88) whose capacity to develop their practice was limited.

The changes in teachers' practices and teachers' attitudes impacted on the attitudes of children. They changed their attitudes and improved their acquisition of skills and knowledge (Chapter 8). All these changes have revolved around teachers' commitment and control and positive attitude to change, which have become part of teachers' unconscious behaviour and changed the school culture (Chapter 7).

The impact of change on school culture

The original intention of the study was to see how far change in approaches to teaching writing impacted on school culture. The results of the study indicate there has been a change of culture that has originated from the change of teachers' practice. This has changed and developed teachers' values. What is interesting is the original welfarist culture continued to be more deeply embedded. The culture developed, or deepened its capacity, to become one, which included a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. Such evidence shows that national educational initiatives can have an impact on school culture and also provide the capacity and likelihood for the change to be sustained. There was a willingness to make change happen (Chapter 7 p.111). Such desire to be both committed and steer the changes is the inspiration to the movement or shift in school culture. There was a belief that new teaching approaches can be developed which would yield an improvement in teaching and learning. It is this belief that indicates the capacity a school has to change its culture and sustain the changes.

The above evidence indicates that significant change has taken place. This has occurred in terms of teachers' attitudes and practice, which has impacted on children's attitudes to learning and in terms of school culture which, has developed an emphasis on academic learning. It can be argued, therefore, that the implementation of new teaching approaches to writing, the crux to change in teachers and children's behaviours and attitudes to learning has impacted on the culture of the school. The emphasis on academic learning has become a fundamental value that teachers uphold which has permeated into the fabric of the culture of the school.

The culture of Waterstone Infant School changed from being Welfarist, by transposing that ideology through embracing and putting emphasis on implementing new approaches to teaching and learning. The evidence shows that school culture changed over the two-year study period because of the new approaches to teaching in the form of new strategies for teaching writing. Hargreaves (1999) assumes that rapid change in culture will only occur in particular circumstances.

It is prudent, then to assume that only under unusual circumstances will staff beliefs, attitudes and values or operating systems be open to rapid change. (Hargreaves 1999 p.59)

The circumstances of the change of culture which were derived from the internal and external pressures of school improvement plan and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy have shown to be the catalyst of cultural change. The change of behaviours, the practices of teachers in teaching writing has affected change in teachers' attitudes and the way they think and feel at Waterstone. This change of values and beliefs resulted in a change of school culture. These findings, therefore, uphold the theory argued by Fullan (1991) that educational change depends on what teachers think and do, and Schein's premise that culture change depends on a change of values and basic assumptions of beliefs. The educational changes of implementing new approaches to teaching writing had an impact on school culture. It is the degree of impact that is remarkable. The change was comparatively rapid, over two years. More interestingly the impact of change did not disclaim the foregoing fundamental welfarist basic assumptions but added to them making them a foundation on which future teaching learning could be based. Fullan (2000) in the evaluation of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies, *Watching and Learning* makes the following observation

That it required great effort to obtain improvement, and that initial successes can become undone overnight as key people leave or run out of energy. (Earl *et al.* 2000 p.6)

This may be so but if the initiative for the improvement in teaching and learning of writing was nation-wide and robust enough to help effect change in school culture then there is likelihood that the changes will be sustained. The question '... whether improvement can be sustained?' (Earl *et al.* 2000 p.6) was also asked in the same report.

It is unlikely that sustainability is possible unless the entire infrastructure changes in order to provide the pressure and support on an ongoing basis- and does so in a

way that it becomes built in to the natural capacities of individuals and systems as they go about their work. (Earl *et al.* 2000 p.6)

The national emphasis on writing was not, however, reflected in the 1999 SATs children (Lloyd 2000). It seems that the immediate effect of change was in change in school culture not results. Indeed in 2001 Waterstone School received a DfEE award for school improvement which recognised the change in school culture as improving. The impact was visible in both teachers' attitudes and practice, and children's attitudes of understanding the 'writing process', rather than in immediate results in attainments. The majority of schools in the country experienced the unusual circumstance of implementing the NLS, some also may have writing as a focus for school improvement (Lloyd 2000). If this is so, it is feasible to suggest that other infant schools that started the initiation of change with a welfarist, 'Happy Family' model of school culture, have also risen to the challenges of embracing the initiatives wholeheartedly; thus experiencing a change in school culture.

Part of the new approaches to changes in teaching writing was the introduction of the NLS. This government initiative had a significant part to play in developing teachers' attitudes and practice. And hence influenced and strengthened their values of learning. If the NLS had a significant impact on the culture of Waterstone School then it can be argued that other infant schools that started the NLS with a welfarist culture will have also embraced teacher values emphasizing academic learning which will have become an intrinsic part of school culture. With this premise I propose a National infant school culture of a *nurturing learning infant school*.

Fig. 8 The theoretical background to the development of a moving school culture for school improvement the *Nurturing learning infant school*

Stoll and Fink / Moving School culture Hargreaves / Effective school culture	Fullan The meaning of educational change	Whitaker Framework of Change	Schein Levels of culture
Effective and improved learning and achievement	Educational change depends on what teachers do and think.	Product	
Shared Expectations and Goals Optimum social control Task orientated		Practice	Shared values
Welfare of the whole child Values of Care Optimum social cohesion Relationship orientated		Purpose	Basic assumptions

I have taken Hargreaves' theory of an optimum culture and developed a model of a *nurturing learning infant school culture* that is strong on values of caring but also embraces the values of academic achievement. The culture of the *nurturing learning school* embraces Hargreave's *effective* school culture, one of optimal social cohesion and control with expectations to support raising standards. It also embraces the dynamics of Stoll and Fink's *Moving School*. It is not only effective but also cooperative, with people actively working together to respond to change and development. A school that has an emphasis on teaching and learning cannot be static and by its very nature continues to

change. It also embodies the deeper levels of Schein's organisational culture by having the *welfare* of children as the shared basic assumption that is embedded as a foundation. From this footing the shared values of high expectations and the achievement of educational goals for improved learning can be built where teachers respond to the context of learning and continued educational change. Whitaker's (1993) process of educational change takes the form of developing the purpose of change through implementation of new practices with a view to creating positive outcomes - the product of change (see Fig. 8).

In schools, learning not only involves children learning, but also the learning of teachers through positively responding to educational change. The accent on learning provides the driving force for the culture to be a moving school, to focus on improvement. Hopkins (2000) sees school improvement as an approach to educational change that enhances pupil outcomes.

School improvement is about raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching -learning process and the conditions that support it. (Hopkins 2000 p.42)

The emphasis on whole school teaching and learning that permeates the culture, is underpinned with a supporting foundation of a welfarist culture of care, warmth and friendliness that is orientated towards relationships and a traditional culture of discipline with high expectations that is goal or task orientated (see Fig. 9). Taken separately both of these types of school culture have the potential to remain static. The melding of significant elements of these types of school culture together with the focus on children's learning, progress and achievement lead to a dynamic culture that has momentum for striving towards school improvement which is driven by the management of change.

In the light of the anxieties stemming from the political agenda, which has driven educational change, the Hothouse culture was the school culture most likely to have been developed, as all schools have been put under pressure to raise standards. What is significant is that my research shows that the *nurturing learning infant school* is not one under undue pressure. It is not a Hothouse culture, which Hargreaves (1994) describes as

frenetic and under pressure with high anxiety. Although the likelihood of such pressures and anxieties to affect a Hothouse school culture was strong, such high pressure was avoided in the *nurturing learning culture* by maintaining the fundamental core of a welfarist culture. A certain degree of pressure will be inevitable but not enough to be all-pervasive. The wherewithal to attain higher standards lies with a strengthened focus on learning. This will be evident through the dedication of teachers who show positive attitudes of commitment to learning, feel control over the innovations and initiation of change. Teachers will also show attributes of enthusiasm, optimism, and stimulation and be interested in developing their approaches to teaching to attain the educational goals of the school. The *nurturing learning school culture* shows that a school can take on educational reform and yet retain a caring, valuing, welfarist identity.

Fig. 9 A model for the nurturing learning infant school culture

Level 1	Focused learning in a culture of care
Level 2	Academic values of educational goals
Level 3	Beliefs of care and welfare

Unlike other cultural typographies the cultural model of the *nurturing learning infant school* has both depth and dynamics. There are three levels. The first level of culture is evident in the attitudes and behaviours of children as focussed learning takes place. Children respond positively to learning opportunities. The second level of school culture is

evident in teachers' attitudes and behaviours and reflects *Academic values*, which underpin the learning opportunities for children through focussed teaching. These values are incorporated in teachers' expectation of positive attitudes towards achievements in learning through the shared expectation of discipline, and educational goals. Teachers are focussed on improving children's learning and achieve this through high levels of commitment to, and control over teaching and learning. The depth of culture embraces the educational philosophy of fundamental beliefs of welfare and care. Teachers' fundamental beliefs of care and welfare are the third level. This is the foundation of the '*nurturing school culture*' and consists of basic assumptions that are taken for granted, that continually sustain children's welfare, social and emotional development so that children feel secure and want to learn. This culture upholds the continual cycle of educational change towards improved and effective learning through high expectations. This aspect provides the dynamics for the capacity to continue to change.

A description of the nurturing infant school culture is as follows:

We regard ourselves as a friendly, well-disciplined school where everyone is valued. There is an emphasis on pupil learning where testing, assessment and results are important. There are high expectations of both pupils and teachers as the head runs the school as a tight ship. Pupils are encouraged to do their best and to become independent. We are proud of traditional non-academic events that take place. We are willing to embrace and take on new ideas. The development of the whole child is held as important. The school is a place where there is an awareness of others. Teachers are committed to teaching and learning. Teachers give 100% of themselves and so teaching can be emotionally and intellectually draining.

The role of practitioner - researcher

The untold story behind this thesis is the story of the practitioner - researcher. There are difficult issues that face the practitioner - researcher as 'accounts can be described as subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in the precise quantifiable measures ' Cohen and Manion (1989 p 129). It is important that the ethnographer is at the centre of the research but should be mindful of the former issues. Reflexive accounting provides an insight to the context and nature of observed interactions. Practitioner - researchers also have to engage with the complexities of social relationships and status differential.

What is required is an understanding of the context and nature of the interactions observed, along with an understanding of the relationship between the observation and interpretation. (May 1997 p147)

The social circumstances of the teachers and children and my relationships with them were critical particularly as I had a higher status. The choices I made were steeped in my professional and personal experiences and as such I must acknowledge that as Headteacher I must have influenced the change in school culture. My role was one of participant observer whereby I adopted an overt role where the teachers and children knew my intentions. I wanted to gain deeper insights of the culture of the school by understanding through listening and learning. Inevitably as headteacher my own values and beliefs will have contributed to the final outcome of the change in culture as my decisions made in this capacity will have impacted on the change of culture.

Some of the problems faced

The role of being a practitioner - researcher was complex. The following issues of status, trust, consideration, negotiation, timing, bias and ethics were considered. They are all issues that are complex, sensitive and difficult to resolve.

There is the notion that teachers will be selective with their answers. Teachers may tell what they want to say, or say what the Headteacher wants to hear. This is an unresolved issue that ethnographers face. This study however was based on a premise of trust. Indeed the uncomfortable findings had to be accepted on my part. As a researcher I was aware I had to hide the disappointment I felt when I realised there was a certain degree of cynicism, that the degree of teachers commitment and control varied, and that the professional development had only been partially successful for some participants. With this knowledge, as headteacher I was armed with a greater understanding of the participants and was able to adjust my perception of situations. I was left however, with difficult decisions to make, including how to act accordingly in the light of the new found information.

As researcher I had considered involving a critical friend to undertake data collection, but from my experience as Head teacher I knew that in the past the teachers had shown deep suspiciousness of outside 'advisers'. I also knew the school was to have an Ofsted inspection in the summer 1999. I was conscious that the teachers should not be put under more extra pressure. I considered it safer to collect the data myself rather than risk any unrest with the teachers at a critical time, by asking more outsiders to come into school.

As researcher I knew that both teachers' and children's readiness and receptiveness to participate were crucial, therefore timing of the data collection was critical. In my position as Headteacher I knew that I would have to carefully choose when and how to involve the participants. Negotiating the timings with the teachers and inviting them to participate was a courteous and positive way to involve them. Similarly giving the participants due regard and attention in the interviews helped to smooth the tension between the two roles I was playing. Sensitivity to teachers' feelings was also a consideration. Should I have re-invited the teacher who clearly had personal problems on the day the interviews were scheduled? Had I interviewed her at the time I would not have shown regard for her feelings and I may have muddied the water for more co-operation in the future, the answers she may have given may not have been well considered. It was a critical decision not to pursue that particular avenue.

In order to avoid influencing the teachers' perceptions of school culture I did not join in with the activities and put my marker on the grid. Had I done so, I would have switched roles from researcher to headteacher, which may have been confusing to the teachers.

Although the research was conducted on the principle of confidentiality, ethical decisions became an issue for me as information gained had the potential to be detrimental to colleagues. Decisions had to be made on how to present the findings so as not to disadvantage these teachers.

All these examples indicate the tension I had to face and some of the decisions I had to make in reconciling being a practitioner - researcher. It outlines the essence of the untold story that is complicated, potentially risky and ethically sensitive. There are no clear-cut answers to the problems faced. Decisions had to be made in the light of existing knowledge and experience of the situation.

Perceptions of the researcher

In looking back on the undertaking of this study, I too have changed. This study has been a painstaking journey, which has impacted on me as a researcher, a headteacher and an individual in my own right. I found separating the roles of researcher and headteacher very difficult. Many times I found myself thinking as a headteacher. This I suppose was inevitable as the study was so close to my heart as an educational practitioner. I was the only person with complete access to and the will to undertake the systematic collection of data. I was aware that the timing of collecting the data was critical as teachers were extremely hard working and I did not want to exert undue pressure. I recognise the results gathered might have been subject to bias as the teachers and the pupils were being asked for compliance from their headteacher a figure of both power and authority. I have tried to minimise this, however, by being sensitive to these issues.

The study has enabled me to understand more deeply the complex concept of educational change and school culture and so understand myself in terms of being a leader in the midst of change. Hopkins (2000) suggests that a characteristic of instructional leaders is to

display an ability to understand both the nature of change and distinguish between maintenance structures and cultures. It has also helped me to gain a greater insight into the processes and skills in the teaching of writing. At each stage reading the literature has helped make issues more meaningful and this may be related to me seeing through the eyes of a researcher in the search for meanings. It is through the search for meaning that the study has impacted on me as a person looking for evidence to underpin premises. At the outset I was sceptical that I would see any changes to the culture of the school. As a headteacher I can see more clearly the need for strategic planning in pursuing the goals of the school to focus on pupil learning. I also understand that continued professional development is an important tool to manage the strengths and weakness of the teachers to the best advantage of the school.

A challenge for the future

More professional development is the vehicle to address the issue of continuing to improve practice so teachers can be more aware of what is to be taught and how it can be taught. Improving standards in writing is not just a school issue but one that is nation-wide. Lloyd (2000) notes that there are four steps to take for children's writing to improve: for teachers to be more expert in assessing writing, to provide sufficient opportunity for children to practice their skills, to emphasise the use of phonics and for schools to be led by leaders with good leadership skills. These are all factors that have been discussed in this study.

Change has been at the crux of this study, change in culture of attitudes and practice. The ideology of change and evolution has begun at Waterstone School. If, as Handy (1995) says, all learning involves change, then the school is still moving along a course of continued change. I have no crystal ball but I now have an insight into characteristics of teachers as individuals and the school as a cultural organisation. I am aware that for the school to remain a learning organisation then change must continue. Finally, recognition of school improvement in the two years is reflected in the school's 2001 DfEE achievement award, which has thus provided external validation of the culture change.

Appendix 1

The background to the study

I am the Headteacher of Waterstone School, a growing infant school nearing its capacity with a role of 180. The school is located on the edge of a thriving town in the south of England. I joined the staff in January 1992 as deputy head when the school had three classes and 80 children. I took over the position of Headteacher in September 1996. As Headteacher I felt I was in a unique position to undertake the research needed for this study.

Change in school organization

Since the introduction of the 1998 - 2000 School Improvement Plan the organisation of Waterstone School was subject to planned change. For the previous four years the school consisted of five classes. These were two reception classes, one year one class, one year two class, and a mixed class of year one and two pupils. There were six teachers; five were class teachers, and one was a special needs teacher. From September 1988 a classroom hired to the local playgroup was reclaimed and a sixth class set up. This change enabled the school to be organised as two-form entry with two classes for each of the year groups. Such organisation provided opportunities for the pairs of teachers in their year groups to plan together. Prior to this there was limited opportunities for joint planning. In September 1998 two new members of staff were appointed. An experienced teacher from outside the authority took up the post of Deputy Head. A newly qualified teacher replaced the special needs teacher and taught the newly formed sixth class. Learning Support Assistants had the brief to administer throughout the school special needs under the supervision of the class teachers and the Special Needs Coordinator, the deputy head. The new teachers bringing their experiences from their previous histories helped to change the dynamics of the staff. Both new members when appointed seemed highly committed to the school. Their commitment ensured that all planning was completed prior to the following week's teaching. Until September 1998 this commitment was not so evident as it has been since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS), when opportunities for joint planning were grasped. Teachers were not isolated in their classrooms; they were actively encouraged to share and be involved working together in the year group teams. This was not an easy transition for existing members who were used to working by themselves but it gave rise to opportunities for enriched cross pollination of ideas by which teachers were able to develop their ideas and teaching skills.

The implementation of the NLS impacted on the organisation of the school. It was decided through consultation with governors and teachers and recorded in governor meeting minutes, the school prospectus and staff handbook that the timing of school day be changed. Mornings, prime teaching time, when staff and pupils were fresh most receptive, was devoted to the core subjects of literacy and maths. Assembly time was moved to the beginning of the day, lessons of literacy and numeracy started by half past nine. These changes impinged in the way other subjects were taught. Prior to September 1998 subjects were taught in a cross-curricular topic framework. It was noticed in earlier 1997/8

inspector reports of monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning that teachers were more proficient in monitoring children than teaching. The emphasis of the newly organised curriculum was for the majority of subjects to be taught as blocked units rather than as a topic based, cross curricular, integrated day, as it became apparent to teachers that the latter would not continue be an efficient way of delivering the curriculum. In essence the whole of the curriculum underwent tremendous change. Because teachers agreed the new way forward in teaching, they generously devoted their time in planning jointly the subject based curriculum. The two new members of staff had the advantage of being party to the beginning of the change and their ideas could be assimilated, as they became an integral part of the team.

Why focus on improving the teaching and learning of writing?

The focus of improving standards in writing arose in 1998 when for the second consecutive year the SATs results at Waterstone showed a plateau, mirroring the previous year's decline in standards.

SATs Results 1998

Level	W	1	2c	2b	2a
No. pupils	2	8	21	9	5
%	4%	18%	47%	20%	11%
	2C and below 69%			2B and above 31%	

After analysing the results it became evident that the majority of children, 69% were achieving the lowest grade of 2c or less. This seemed to be a high proportion of children just passing a level 2. The highest grade attained was level 2A with 11%, which represented only 7 out of a total of 55 children. Since SATs were first introduced, and prior to 1999 no child at Waterstone had ever achieved level 3 in writing. 22% of children did not attain level 2 either by either attaining Level 1 or Level W. These outcomes provided evidence that the range of results were significantly poor. From this standpoint the focus of school improvement in the School Strategic Plan was to improve standards in writing.

Appendix 2

The National Literacy Strategy

As this thesis primarily sets out to study the impact of change in teaching approaches to teaching writing in respect to the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy it is important that the strategy and how professional development was implemented are outlined.

What is the National Literacy Strategy (NLS)?

The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) provides a national framework for teachers to teach literacy by setting out a framework of objectives to be taught from Reception to Year 6. The designated time to teach literacy is the 'Literacy Hour' a measured amount of time within which different aspects of literacy and teaching styles are used. The strategy was based on the National Literacy Project. The Literacy Tasks Force set up by the Labour government whilst in opposition reported in and stated that this project offered successful ways of raising standards.

This framework and the training that will be provided in the National Literacy Strategy are based on the experience of the National Literacy Project. The Literacy Task Force found widespread support of the project's approach to teaching literacy and its success in raising standards. Its proposals sought to spread this good practice as widely as possible. (DfEE 1998 p.2)

The Literacy Strategy defines 'literacy' in specific terms linking skills of reading and writing to communication as follows: 'Literacy unites the important skills of reading and writing'. (DfEE 1998 p.3)

Although the National Literacy Strategy incorporates the teaching of reading and writing I will concentrate on the theme of writing the theme of this research. These two actions are closely linked and support each. The focus on writing is for pupils to understand that for writing they are authors writing for different readers and so certain processes and conventions should be complied in both whole class and group activities.

Pupils need to understand, from an early stage that much of their writing will be read by other people and therefore needs to be accurate legible and set out in an appropriate way. They need to see the writing process being modelled by the teachers and they should take part regularly in composing, spelling and handwriting activities with the class as a whole and as a member of a smaller group. (DfEE 1998p 5)

Pupils being taught through the National Literacy Strategy (N.L.S.) would be expected to write independently, using the components of phonics spelling and handwriting being systematically taught. The skills of planning drafting revising of proof reading and

presenting writing will be progressively taught over both Key Stage 1 and 2, together with the organisation and purposes of texts.

National professional development

The National Literacy Strategy was disseminated nationally to teachers by means of a training pack. The training track consisted of 7 modules that covered the teaching of reading and writing. The training pack contained the following for the trainers (usually English Co-ordinators) in schools to use for staff development, course notes, overhead projection transparency sheets, audiotapes and videos. The modules covered were as follows: Module 1 The Literacy Hour, explained the structure of the Literacy Hour. The objectives, the key features of each part of the lesson, planning and the role of the teacher were covered. Module 2 Word Level Work outlined the principles of the orthographic structure of the English language. It covered ideas and ways of using this structure to help children read and spell, including giving clear guidance for all the aspects of phonics. Module 3 Sentence Level Work focused on answering the following questions. What is grammar? Why teach grammar and punctuation? What grammar and punctuation should be taught? How should it be taught and how can this be planned for? Module 4 shared reading and writing at Key stage 1. This covered the explanation of shared and guided reading and writing, and demonstrated the difference between them. Module 5 explained shared and guided reading and writing. Finally Module 6 Reading and Writing for Information, looked at using information texts, comprehension and non-fiction writing together with using writing frames. For the purposes of this study on writing I shall concentrate on how training on module five and shared writing impacted on to staff and the school culture at Waterstone Infant School.

Appendix 3.1

Interview questions to gain teachers' perceptions on writing and standards

Q1 Why are writing standards low?

Q2 Why have we had no level 3s?

Q3 How can we improve standards in writing?

Q4 What strategies were you aware of using last year and?

Q5 What strategies are you using now?

Q6 What have you learnt since last year?

Q7 Are you more sensitive to writing being an important issue?

Q8 How can we improve standards in writing?

Q9 Are children aware that writing is important?

Appendix 3.2

Children's group interview questions

Based on Bright's (1995) Student interview questions

Attitudes towards writing

Tell me about your writing?

What were you are asked to do?

Do you like to write?

What is your favourite writing?

Is writing hard? What makes it hard?

Is writing easy? What makes it easy?

What do you write in your free time?

Who do you share your writing with?

Understanding writing

Who do you know is a good writer?

Do you ever do writing at home?

What kind of writing to do you do at home?

Would it make any difference if you couldn't write?

Perception of teachers' expectations

Do you read your teachers' comments?

What do you do about them?

Do they help you become a better writer?

When you conferenced with your teacher about your writing what help were you given?

What are you learning about writing this year that is different or new from what you learnt last year?

Are you a better writer this year than you were last year?

How do you know?

What does a teacher do to help you become a better writer?

Does it help?

So what does a teacher want you to do when you're stuck in writing?

What do you think you have learnt?

Appendix 3.3

Questionnaire on teaching writing

I would be grateful if you would kindly complete the following questionnaire on writing. Thank you for your thoughts, time and consideration. Steve

Year group _____

National Literacy Training

1. What is your a evaluation of the literacy training on writing?
2. What new knowledge have you gained from the training about teaching writing?
3. What have you put into practice?
4. Have you introduced any of the following? (Please tick)
Author's chair
The revision checklist
Writing frames
Hot seating
Comments: If yes explain how and what have you done.
5. What were the outcomes?
6. If no explain reasons.
7. Are there any of the above you intend to introduce?

8. Is there anything else from the literacy training you have introduced for writing?

Inset day of Good Writing

9. What is your evaluation of the Inset day of Good Writing?

10. What new knowledge did you gain about writing and teaching writing?

11. What have you put into practice since the Good Writing workshop?

12. Have you thought about using any of the following?

The message board

Writing corner

Poetry

Writing frames

If yes what were the outcomes?

If no please explain reasons.

Are there any of the above you intend to introduce?

13. What have you done to make your class a language rich learning environment?

14. What have you done to improve writing standards?

15. What happened?

16. How do you teach writing skills?

17. What range of writing do you plan for?

18. How do you teach the different ranges of writing?

19. How and when do you teach punctuation?

20. How and when do you teach handwriting?

21. How and when do you teach spellings?

22. How and when do you do extended writing?

23. What are the outcomes?

24. How do you plan for and introduce extended writing lessons?

25. How are the lessons organised?

26. What are the outcomes?

27. How are the children grouped?

28. How do you model writing for children?

29. What are the outcomes?

30. When do you model writing for children?

31. What are the outcomes?

32. How do you use display to promote children's writing?

33. How do you use display to promote your (teacher) modeling of writing?

34. How have you organised your classroom to be a rich language learning environment?

If you have any more comments to make about the teaching and learning of writing please feel free to jot them down.

Appendix 4.1

Research design

The study set out to answer the Research question *How far does the change in approaches to teaching writing have an impact on school culture?* through exploring the responses to the following five key questions.

6. What was the culture before the change?
7. *What are the perceptions attitudes and behaviours of children to the change in teaching approaches to writing? (* indicates what teachers do)
8. *What are the attitudes and practices of teachers to the change in teaching approaches to writing? (* indicates what teachers do and think)
9. What is the change in school culture?
10. What is the impact of change?

Steps in collecting and analysing data

Objective	Data source	Data collection /data analysis	Time
• To identify the impact of the change in school culture	Mapping change in schools (Ainscow , <i>et al.</i>) Technique 4. The Culture of Schools	Concept grid, group interview. Analysis using categories of school culture. Research diary	1998 & 2000
• To identify teachers' perceptions of attitudes to experiencing change in teaching writing	Mapping change in schools (Ainscow , <i>et al.</i>) Technique 2. The Experience of Change	Profile matrix, semi structured interview Analysis of interview and matrix for comparison of change Research diary	2000
• To identify teachers' perceptions of attitudes to experiencing change in teaching writing	Mapping change in schools (Ainscow, <i>et al.</i>) Technique 3. The Initiation of Change	Questionnaires Response matrix for comparison of change Research diary	2000
• To identify teachers' perceptions of attitudes and practice and experiencing change in teaching writing	Semi structured interviews	Coded categories Research diary	1999
• To identify teachers' perceptions of attitudes and practice and experiencing change in teaching writing	Questionnaire	Questionnaire coded categories	2000
• To identify pupils perceptions change in teaching writing	Group interviews	Semi structured group interview Coded categories Research diary	1999 & 2000

Appendix 4.2

Questionnaire data tables 1999/2000

Sample range: All 6 teachers

Table 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of increased understanding and introduction of new practice gained from NLS training for teaching writing.1999/2000

No of years taught at the school	5	10	7	3.5	1.5	1.5
Teacher code	A	B	C	D	E	F
Year groups	R	R	1	1	2	2
NLS new ideas for teaching writing						
Evaluation of staff development	G*	G*	Ok	G	G	G
Introduction of Author's chair	x	x	x	x	x	x
Introduction of Revision checklist	M	x	x	√	√	M
Introduction of Writing frames /plans	M	M	x	√	√	√
Introduction of Hot seating	x	x	x	√	√	√
Introduction of Teacher Modelling	√	√	√	√	√	√
Introduction of different genre	x	x	x	√	√	√
Introduction of Teacher Planning	x	x	x	x	x	√
Affirmation of good practice	√*	√*	x	x	x	x
Change in practice: total	1	1	1	5	5	5
Change in practice for year group: total	2		6		10	

KEY

G* = Good for KS1 & KS2 but not for Early Years in reception classes

x = no evidence

M = may consider putting into practice

√ = has put into practice

√ * note : affirmation of good practice not counted as change in practice

Table 4.2 Teachers' perceptions about the impact the Good Writing Workshop on teaching writing.

Year Groups	R	R	1	1	2	2	
Teacher code	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Features of the Good Writing Workshop							Total
Evaluation of staff training	x	G*	Ok	P	G	a	
Introduction of Poetry	√	√	x	x	√	a	3
Introduction of Message board	x	x	x	x	x	a	0
Introduction of Writing frame	x	√	x	√	√	a	3
Introduction of Writing corner	√	√	x	x	x	a	2

KEY
G* = Good, but not for year R
G = Good
Ok = OK
P = Poor
a = teacher absent
x = no evidence from reply
√ = evidence of practice

Table 4.3 Teachers' perceptions of new approaches to teaching writing that have helped raise standards of teaching and learning.

Teacher code	A	B	C	D	E	F
Year group	R	R	1	1	2	2
Features						
Extended writing	x	x	x	x	√	√
Modelling	x	√	x	x	√	√
Developed story writing	x	x	x	√	x	x
Increased expectations	x	x	√	x	x	x
Targeted assessments	√	x	x	x	x	x
Total No. of features employed by teachers	1	1	1	1	2	2
Total No. of features employed in year groups	2		2		4	

Key
 √ = evidence
 x = no evidence in reply

Table 4.4 Teachers' perceptions of teaching writing skills

Teacher code	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Year group	R	R	1	1	2	2	
Teaching writing skills							Total
Teaching Punctuation skills in Literacy Hour	√	√	√	x	√	√	5
Teaching Punctuation skills outside Literacy Hour	x	x	x	√	x	x	1
Teaching spelling skills in Literacy Hour	√	√	x	√	√	√	5
Teaching spelling skills outside literacy hour	√	√	√	√	√	√	6
Teaching handwriting skills in Literacy Hour	x	x	x	x	x	x	0
Teaching handwriting skills outside Literacy Hour Using modelling	√	√	√	√	√	√	6

√ = evidence in reply
X = no evidence in reply

Appendix 4.3

Interview notes: The Experience of Change 'Technique 2' (Ainscow *et al.*)

Notes written during interview spring 2000

No. in Sample. = 6

Example 1

Teacher 4

Pressurised	I feel pressurised not only by these changes but with the world in general
Valued	I feel valued by HT. I value myself. I feel valued by the responses and the comments from the staff meetings. I feel anxious or frustrated by the fact that I can't move the children on to level 3 when I feel that they are just there on the brink. External pressures often make me feel anxious internally sometimes.
Exhilarated	When we try new things, when doing emergent writing, When I watch Amy it's fantastic! She's so confident! Anything new! When I know the direction to go in.
Supported	When doing extended writing, a wide range planning sheets, Training days are supportive. I feel most supported and valued when talking to staff. KS1 writing assessment external support the discussions have been helpful with other schools as well, visiting the Beacon school, being able to try out ideas how we need to slant to approaches in practice
Optimism	We've got all these things to try
Pleased	As staff are able to talk more openly I pleased with the ideas I've tried and the children are writing well, emergent writing, the opportunity to work on next years S.I.P. This is what we want to do
Stimulated	Ditto having new things to try out.
Enthusiastic	Trying new things when you've been teaching for years you need a new slant teachers need to be enthusiastic to enthuse children. Its good to see the children enthusiastic.
Committed	We owe it as professionals to do it if not you're in the wrong job I feel very strongly it can completely colour the feel of the school you don't have to be blinkered you can see this might work

Satisfied	That we are changing.
Interested	In how things will pan out.
Comfortable	In my ability to try out what come out of future training. I feel confident that I can say I can't do that or I need help.

Example 2

Teacher 5

Enthusiastic	Because I can see children's progress at both extremes of the scale. Not so for the middle children their progression is more difficult to see.
Optimism	Because the changes are so obvious with this class compared with last year's class they have the potential to do well.
Commitment	You have to be you can't be any thing else.
Confident	Because I can see it is important to children.
Stimulating	I feel enthusiastic for the children and want them to do well.
Comfortable	I'm quite comfortable. Not a problem. It's much better for children because none have hang-ups. None say I don't want to write.
Interested	It works.

Final comments

Having done both, the way we do it now is better. Children are not hung up they are keen to learn to use their sounds and to write emergently. They are not hung up on the novelties of Letterland.

Appendix 4.4

Field notes (Technique 2)

Context: Researcher field notes written after interview with teacher who had completed Technique 2: Experiencing change: (Ainscow *et al.*)

Time: April 2000, after school

Teacher 1

T.1. was quite willing to participate but anxious she wanted to do the right thing. I tried to put her at her ease by saying that it was a quite straightforward and not too difficult task and she would be able to do it quite easily. I explained the issue of confidentiality, as her answers would remain anonymous. She was quite O.K. about that. Once she started she was quite vociferous in explaining her feelings. She is obviously very conscious of being the 'new girl' with the least experience. But she shows that she is very willing to learn new things. She was relieved and surprised that she found the exercise so easy to complete! She said she would be willing to do another interview if I wanted her again!

Teacher 5

T.E. was willing to come along. She almost dismissed my explanation of confidentiality with an air of 'I really don't care what you do with the info'.

She seemed to find it quite difficult

She thought about the categories to choose

Her comments were quite brief

When she finished I said thank you to her.

Teacher 6

T.6. came to the room in an ok manner. She knew she only had a certain amount of time as her son was picking her up. I reassured her the exercise would be quite short.

She thoroughly categorised her feelings. She commented on her feelings quite freely. I thanked her for her time.

After E and F's interviews. I had an overwhelming feeling of disappointment, because I felt an undercurrent of cynicism underlying the last two interviews. Although on the surface they pledged commitment both used the word cynical, which endorses my gut feeling to their reaction to change. There is some sort of barrier that is almost intangible, unseen but nevertheless there.

Appendix 5.1

Transcripts of teacher interviews 1999

(From a sample of 5)

Teacher C

Q: Why have standards of writing been low?

A: Maybe we haven't been systematic enough in our approach. We're putting that right now. In the past each year group was doing things again and again, we have missed out vital parts. Now we are getting progression much better. We have a better overall strategy. I wish I knew how to get round hand writing, really they need concentrated work to begin with

Q: Why haven't we had any Level 3 writers?

A: From what I can gather from the SATs its more difficult to achieve a Level 3. Its recording, getting things on paper they haven't practised it enough. If we practice I expect they will achieve Level 3. I certainly think they have the capability. Quite often SATs results are disappointing

Q: How can we improve writing standards?

A: We need to carry on what we are doing to focus on what we are trying to achieve. We need to find out why they didn't achieve, why they fell down, work out how we can improve. Starting with Year R and work on Year 1 and 2. Now we are getting the progression much better. It is much more focused. If it doesn't work I'll be very disappointed as we are putting in a lot of work

A: Now the way we are teaching it this year [introduction of NLS] has made a difference to the children. Children are much more willing to try things out - whereas before we were concentrating on getting them to write rather than thinking about how they're writing and why they are writing and how they're going to achieve what they want to put. They would tell us. Then we would just write it. Then they would copy it. They weren't really thinking for themselves. They are thinking for themselves now. So even if they write just three letters at least they are the initial sounds of the words they want to use. To me that is much more worthwhile than doing a whole page of beautiful writing - and not being able to even read it back or begin to remember what they wanted to write. They are actively thinking about the sounds. It was one of our bugbears before. Because they knew their sounds but they didn't use them in their writing reception class. They are using their sounds now in writing and some is fantastic it's the first part of the second term and the able children are writing. So I'm hoping this will work with the others

Q: What strategies were you using to teach writing last year?

A: In the past we were transcribing, we weren't concentrating on the sounds so much as in the last term. If we had done it right from the beginning. Now they are not writing so much but what they are writing they are writing on their own and they are thinking for themselves which is much more rewarding this work can be refined in Year 1. We had children who when they first came to school they didn't want to write their name or anything. Now they can do a line of letters. You can pick out the initial letters and parts of the words. Even the least able can pick out an initial sound at least one or two of the words they want to use.

Q: What strategies are you using now?

A: I think that's what's made the difference is swapping from Letterland to Jolly Phonics because instead in Letterland we were concentrating on the character. Now we teach the sounds they learn them, we were really pleased with their learning. They really didn't understand clever cat said 'c' when they sang it. They didn't think when they saw a 'c' in words that is the /c/ sound. They were just thinking that is clever cat. They were focusing too much on the character instead of thinking about the sounds and using the sounds all the time.

Teacher D

Q: How can we improve standards?

A: To be clear about what we are expected to do and to do it regularly, to actually see writing as a lesson and used in other areas of English right from reception

Q: Are children aware that writing is important?

A: Pause... I think they're far more aware that writing is important when they do it in their writing lessons and they know what is expected a lot better than they did a year ago. They ask, Is it our writing afternoon? They will ask and they will get quite excited about it. They're very eager to read it out. I often, to make sure they are on the right track, --- I ask them to read out their first or second sentence and I ask who would like to do it... Lots and lots want to do it. Even in literacy when we do how many sentences can you make with a long 'A'? They are eager to read out what they have written. From that respect I guess they think it's important

Q: What strategies are you using now?

A: I have started to teach describing words. That's a skill we have a list of describing words the children all know what describing words are so that when they are writing stories or anything I can say, can you put some more describing words? They know what I mean. They know how to do it. I wouldn't pretend they are at the level they can automatically put them in their writing. I hope we will get to that stage.

We've also started to look at different ways of starting sentences, when you need to say 'then' use other words to start a sentence. These are all skills that are taught. Hopefully that will enable children to use them in their writing. We've decided to put skills first and then do the writing

Q: What other skills do you work on?

A: It depends on what stage they are at. ---- Blue group are at the finger space stage until they have got that there is not a lot you can do, they can't read it back to themselves, We can't read it too. So that's a primary skill. Those children are using their sounds beautifully their emergent writing is really coming along well and that is a great improvement. For the other children who are more or less writing in sentences definitely trying to get their writing more interesting by using describing words.

Q: What have you learnt since last year?

A: I learnt to look to see what specific skill needed to be taught. What I should like is for somebody to present me with the order to teach the skills, what we need is not actually in the NLS. I've learnt something but I've also learnt there is lots more for me to learn.

Appendix 5.2

Transcript of first group interview

June 1999

Focus: children's perceptions to writing

A sample of 4 Children

Gareth, Jenny, Josh, Beth (names have been changed) from the Year 2 cohort 1998/1999

SJ: Can you tell me do you like to write?

Beth: Yes! Sometimes and its fun!

Josh: Sometimes you don't know what you're doing because you don't listen

S J: So, listening it is important too?

Josh: Yes.

S J: What's your favourite type of writing?

Jenny: Story writing.

Beth: Stories using sounds.

S J: You like using stones when you write stories?

SJ: Is writing hard?

All: No!

Jenny: Most of the time it's nice sometimes it's hard.

S J: Why is it quite hard can you give me an example?

Jenny: When you have lots of ideas it comes out as a really good story.

Gareth: Sometimes we don't know the words and we have to use our word books.

Josh: for me its quite good and quite bad, you have at the ideas and if you have just done up the ending and not the middle and the start, you don't Know that you can do this, you to have to have a very long think. This takes a very long time and when you get around to do it you have run of time.

S J: Is this thinking time important to you?

Josh: Yes.

Jenny: Because if you didn't think you would not to get the story out since of your head.

Beth: I go with Jenny.

SJ: Is writing easy?

All: Yes!

S J: What makes it easy?

Josh: If the story is a tiny one and you don't need to many words it is easy but if it is long you have to think about it hard and copy it out of your brain.

Beth: yes

S J: Do you write in your free time at home?

Gareth: Yes I usually draw or play with my toys.

Jenny: I write at home. Sometimes I play with my toys. I have a little writing table I write at. I write lots of stories. I have a storybook I write in

Josh: I normally don't do too much but I sometimes do. I have to remind my parents about something I write it down on a piece of paper.

SJ: So you write your parents little notes?

Josh: Yes so its worded so that it reminds my dad can come to the summer performance this afternoon because he's a mechanic he normally works to 6.30 or 6.00.

SJ: Is there any one else you share your writing with? You share your writing with your family?

Beth: I some times share with my best friend in the phone some times I share with my mum and dad.

SJ: How do you share writing on the phone?

Beth: I get a piece of paper and I read it off a piece of paper. If my friends got some writing she tells me my friend gives me some ideas.

SJ: Other people can help you with ideas, can they?

Josh: Sometimes people come and look at it in my book they say if its funny good or sad.

Jenny: I get ideas from other books as well when I get a story.

Gareth: I get ideas from storybooks.

Jenny: Then I do sort of the same story I make up my words.

Jenny: Sometimes I feel as if I can't do it and I've done it wrong I don't really want to but I still want to take it to the teacher, or the children.

SJ: You overcome your embarrassment? Is that what you are saying?

Gareth & Jenny: Yes.

Josh: Sometimes I feel a bit lonely if I say it on my own and I can do any work so can these others (points to the other children)

SJ: Can you think of somebody who is a good writer? Pause

Josh: I am a fan of Roal Dahl. I think he is a good writer because he writes good stories I've got most of his stories.

SJ: what makes Roal Dahl a good writer?

Josh: He makes stories quite funny like in the Twits. The twits is a funny title because they are twits and they don't know much and they are not very nice people they die in the end in a peaceful way they go to the proper place in Africa.

Gareth: I think J.K. Rowlings is a good writer she wrote the Harry Potter books she's written three I've read one she's writing a fourth and she is going to write seven books.

SJ: what's special about her writing?

Gareth: She had, uses funny names like Hagrid and Pigwidgeon.

Beth: I think Dick King Smith is good most of the time they got happy endings because I like happy endings They make it funny at times it gets sad but it's happy at the end he does really good stories he puts funny names in it sometimes.

Josh: there is another author I like it's a woman called Wilbur Smith (?) I was reading the story called the Dark Of The Sun I got for my birthday it does have some swear words in it, not many, it makes me laugh and it's very interesting.

SJ: What's interesting?

Josh: Well they went to a restaurant and they said that one man was, I don't know

SJ: That's OK. If you couldn't write would it make any difference?

Josh: Sometimes you might sometimes a teacher, once I only had two words after that there was a long middle bit of writing and she said Josh please work faster so If you write a lot it is a big difference.

SJ: What difference would it make to you Jenny?

Jenny: When you're in the middle of a sentence if I get stuck I look in a book and if I still can't do it I ask a teacher, then I think some more and I write some more down.

SJ: Gareth? What if you couldn't write would it make a difference to your life?

Gareth: I don't really know.

SJ: What does you teacher say need to do to be a good writer?

Josh: Keep your handwriting neat, remember your punctuation for a story, if you work on as sheet you can do a little story or poem on the back. Sometimes if you can't do any writing its because your hand hurts from doing too much.

SJ: What does your teacher say you need to do to be a good writer?

Jenny: She says to me if you want to be a good writer listen carefully at what you do. You have to do full stops capital letters. Afterwards check your work and then if you have any thing wrong you can write it again so you can read it.

Gareth: She says keep on practicing writing stories so we are better at handwriting.

SJ: Do you read your teachers comments?

All: Yes

Josh: Sometimes I answer them. I did a story, a report of the big bad wolf and she at the end said, How can you make this even more interesting? I wrote all the way home in big capital letters on my page. She came round to me and said 'have you just done what I said?' I said 'Yes.' She said, 'well done.'

Beth: If it's a question I always write it, (an answer) if it isn't I just read it

Gareth: When I was writing the big bad wolf she said, What will the pigs spend the money on? I said turnips turnips turnips! And she wrote HA! HA!

SJ: So you made your writing funny by replying?

All: Yes!

SJ: What sort of advice or help does your teacher give you?

Jenny: She gives me advice I write a bit down and show her as and say is that right if she says no I try again if it right she says try to think of some more like that.

SJ: Are you a better writer this year than you were last year?

Beth: Yes.

SJ: How do you know?

Gareth: We use better words last year we wrote a page, this year we write pages.

Jenny: When we were younger our writing sometimes it could go down a bit. When you look at my writing now it's neater.

Josh: I'm not.

Josh: Every time I do something, people say that I can always recognise your writing. It is always my way, no one else does it like that. I'm a better writer than 2 years ago when I started because I'm a bit older and I know what I'm doing now.

S J: What does a teacher do to help to become a better writer?

Josh: The sort of help she gives us some advice if we are not good she says go faster. For me she says, 'You have got more writing down'. So that helps.

S J: You're a bit slow with your writing?

Josh: Not any more

S J: Not any more?

S J: You've spoken about writing stories but you've made nonfiction books haven't you?

All: Yes

Gareth: The Fire of London.

Jenny: Keeping healthy.

S J: What did you learn?

Beth: I found if you could do something you could do Again is a good story you can try it again you can keep practicing if you want to be an author.

S J: What about non-fiction writing?

Jenny: I can write about non-fiction healthy eating. I look to the book I looked up chocolate I found that she shouldn't eat lots of chocolates. You should eat more fruit.

Josh: I found I eat lots of sugar.

S J: What about writing, how did you know what to write to in the book?

Josh: We used different pens to make it stand out.

S J: You used pens to make it stand out.

S J: How did you set out writing the books?

Josh: The teacher helped by writing a book and so that gave us some advice and ideas.

S J: So the teacher modeling how to make the book helped you?

All: Yes

SJ: How did it help?

Beth: It helped with ideas.

S J: What ideas?

Josh: She taught us how to learn about healthy eating.

Jenny: She gave us long and interesting words.

S J: What about the lay out of a non-fiction book?

Beth: We knew most but when she showed us it helped us.

Gareth: It helped us to more complex work.

S J: Complex work?

Gareth: We learnt how to use speech marks, exclamation marks.

Josh: She helped us keep on going we did more story writing.

SJ: Is there anything else you learnt?

Jenny: I've learnt I didn't do it neat and only half a page. I can do three or four now.

S J: Is the length of writing important?

Josh: Yes.

Gareth: No.

Josh: I think it is quite important because you need to if you want to be an author as the only to do lots of writing like Roal Dahl.

Gareth: What is important is how we use words and how we make them stand out.

Beth: Handwriting and punctuation are most important too. If you are not a good spelling people would not be able to read it.

Josh: I learned not to write to write swear words at school it's rude.

S J: The audience is important then?

Josh: Especially if you are a child you are not expected to write swear words.

SJ: I think we will finish now. Thank you all for helping me understand how you write.

Mapping teachers' feelings to change in approaches in teaching writing. 2000

++ FEELING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
COMMITMENT	6	100%
ENTHUSIASM	6	100%
EXHILARATION	2	33%
OPTIMISM	6	100%
CONFIDENCE	3	50%
STIMULATED	6	100%
SUPPORTED	4	66%
VALUED	2	33%

+ FEELING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
COMFORTABLE	5	83%
PLEASED	5	83%
INTERESTED	6	100%
SATISFIED	4	66%

- FEELING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
WORRIED	1	16%
CONFUSED	0	0%
DISAPPOINTED	0	0%
IRRATED	0	0%

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-- FEELING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ANXIOUS	0	0%
BORED	0	0%
CYNICAL	0	0%
SAD	0	0%
ANGRY	0	0%
FRUSTRATED	0	0%
ISOLATED	0	0%
PRESSURISED	2	33%

Fig.6.5 Table to show individual score totals and mean score

- ++ WORDS SCORE +2
- + WORDS SCORE +1
- WORDS SCORE -1
- - WORDS SCORE -2

Teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6
Scores	12+4-1	12+4	10+4-2	14+4-2	10+2	10+2
Totals	15	16	12	16	12	12
Mean	14					

Note: The mean was rounded up.

Comparing positive 'A' scores with negative 'A' scores gives a ratio of 54:3

Appendix 7.1

Table to show the comparison of children's perceptions of being taught writing in 1999 and 2000. Data from group interviews

1999	2000
Feelings	Feelings
Fun	Fun
Sense of achievement	Sense of achievement
Motivated	Motivated
Embarrassment	Embarrassment
Loneliness	Frustration
Skills	Skills
Thinking skills developing	Thinking skills developing
Punctuation	Punctuation
Phonics	Phonics
Handwriting	Handwriting
Story sequencing	Story sequencing
Word choice	Word choice
Capitals and full stops	Apostrophes
Non - fiction	Chapters
	Spelling conventions
	Capitals and full stops
	Story writing
	Author
Teaching	Teaching
Modelling	Modelling
Challenging	Challenging
Explicit specific teaching	Explicit specific teaching
Praise	Praise
Feedback	Feedback

Appendix 7.2

Comparison of teachers' perceptions of teaching writing before and after the introduction of new teaching approaches to writing in 1998.

Data taken from teacher interviews and questionnaires.

Pre 1998	Post 1998
Children's attitudes	Children's attitudes
Children wary	Children confident
Children not confident	Children competent
Children not competent	Mistakes are a learning opportunity
Afraid of mistakes	
Uninterested	
Children's skills	Children's skills
Limited phonic skills	Phonic skills
Limited thinking skills	Developing thinking skills
Dependent on teacher	Independent of teacher
Transcribing	Skills and understanding developing
Poor language skills	
Teaching	Teaching
Not systematic	Systematic
Children not challenged	Specific teaching of skills
Low teacher expectation	Grammar
	Capitals and Full stops
	Spelling
	Modelling
	Children challenged
	High teacher expectation
	Jolly phonics
	Teachers feel equipped to teach writing
	Literacy Hour
	Extended writing time

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