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IN SEARCH OF STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This is a case study which examines how an agreed performance indicator system can be used as a strategic management tool to enhance school improvement. Chapter 1 outlines the policy context leading up to and surrounding the use of performance indicators in education, including the development of performance management. The chapter also looks at the importance of design of performance indicators and the question of context. The case study itself centres around the work of a large secondary school's senior management team and explores the managerial change the school has undergone, from a very traditional and autocratic approach to the current open and more strategic style of management.

Chapter 2 examines a range of literature relating to performance indicators in order to explore what grounds exist for the use of a performance indicator system to help a school's senior management team to be more strategic. The functions and implications of performance indicators are explored, as well as the differentiation of indicators. The research was conducted using a case study approach. The study outline and the methodological problems encountered, including the combination of methods used is documented in Chapter 3.

The next three chapters describe the case study in detail. Chapter 4 examines issues arising from the school's Action Plan and uses them as the basis for agreeing a set of performance indicators. This is followed in Chapter 5 by refining the performance indicators in order that they serve the senior management team in their work. The final chapter of the three focuses on the application of the actual performance indicator system and evaluates it against the related success criteria. This is done to ascertain the effect upon the strategic capability of the senior management team and the effect on the school generally. The case study provides many insights to the school as a complex human organisation and the fact that the agreed indicators are applied in the context of a large and busy organisation. The world of the school as a human organisation and the world of measurement and

performance often collide and issues arise when least expected.

The case study analyses the total effect of the agreed performance indicator system, particularly from the human perspective and how it became a Trojan Horse for far more positive effects than anticipated. The study concludes by affirming the importance of the design of the performance indicator system, the constraints involved, the juxtaposition of qualitative and quantitative data and the consideration that must be given to the staff working in such an organisation. As a result of the study there were significant long-term changes for the management of the school, focusing on the senior management team's self-evaluation of their role and the Governors' evaluation of the senior management team. The study also raised important questions regarding performance-related pay, staff development and inspection versus school self-evaluation.

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In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 1
Moving Beyond the Stock Cupboard Culture

The research reported in this thesis examines how a senior management team in a particular 11-16 secondary school, of which I am the headteacher, uses a performance indicator system as a strategic management tool to enhance school improvement. The initiative for the study stemmed from a 1998 inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) which suggested that the senior management team was not strategic enough, being too embroiled in the day to day operational running of the school. Although it is a fine balance between what is operational and what is strategic, the inspection observation inspired me to look more closely at the strategical issue with the help of my senior management team. At the same time I decided to incorporate an exploration of the ideal, more strategic role of a senior management team and how a performance indicator system could help to enhance this role.

These explorations are preceded by a critical review of existing literature on performance indicators; what they are, why they are used and how they translate from data into improvements in a large, complex, human organisation such as a school. The study aims to explore the existing senior management structure, including its operation, and to examine whether the senior management team's strategic performance could be improved by using an agreed set of performance indicators. The culture of performance indicators, it has to be said, is a long way from the culture of the school ten years ago, at the time of my appointment. I anticipated that it would not be easy to effect a change in culture.

The school was established in 1877 and still is characterised as very traditional. When I arrived at the school in 1989 as Deputy Head, the school had a rigid system of authority and seniority, whereby staff asked for permission to do what are now considered everyday tasks. It was rare for staff other than deputies to ask to speak to the head of the school. Timetables were written and delivered from upon high, boys were caned regularly, and the use of data to influence decisions was unheard of. There was even a central stock cupboard where the deputy head ordered and retained stationery for the whole school. With trepidation heads of department approached the deputy head and asked for red pens and mark books for the year. These were given out and recorded, along with chalk, paper and even coloured pencils if the mood was right. This stock

cupboard culture pervaded the whole school. It was never questioned; in fact many staff felt secure with it. It excused them from such responsibility and saved them from making mistakes with the counting of red pens and pencils. The reality was that the school needed to move forward and in order to do this staff needed to experiment and take risks using their own professional judgement. Until the stock cupboard culture changed staff would always be dependent on the head of the school and professional development would be restrained.

Policy Context.

Throughout the 1980's a number of factors, such as concern about schools' varying performances and standards, combined to increase government concern about the quality of provision in schools. This resulted in several initiatives. 'Local Management of Schools' (LMS), in particular, introduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act, aimed at promoting accountability and emphasising efficiency and effectiveness through the delegation of finance to schools. This situation still exists today. My current position as headteacher of a 900 student secondary school puts me at the centre of this issue. With a growing school population, a budget of over £2 million and pressure to raise achievement, I am accountable to the governors and local government for the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.

The 1988 Education Reform Act accentuated the need for local education authorities to establish performance indicators. Systematic self-assessment of performance and the monitoring of schools by external agencies were both identified by Government to be significant in improving the quality of provision in schools. In recent years, with the introduction of league tables, benchmarking and target setting, many schools have become expert collectors of data. It is open to question, however, that schools are managing and using the data effectively to directly improve their management, teacher functions and overall effectiveness. I accept that it is necessary for schools to monitor and evaluate their work. However, it is my belief that this needs to be achieved through a multi-level approach. Currently, the day to day classroom lessons are evaluated by the classroom teacher and examination results of subject teachers are monitored by appropriate line managers. The work of senior managers, particularly in relation to managing change, is now evaluated by school governors under the performance management framework introduced by legislation in the autumn of 2000. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) evaluate the effectiveness of school governors and local education authorities.

Senior management teams all too often become entrenched in the day to day running of schools. This is a normal and a valid part of their function. The other part of their work is the strategic development of the school. As the lead professionals in the organisation, senior managers are required to manage, guide and develop the school so that it is moving in a clear and planned direction for the next three to five years. It is a case of coming out of the engine room, checking the compass and steering the ship in the appropriate direction. For those who have been embedded in a stock cupboard culture there is the danger of being completely reliant on other professionals. Rather than being in control of their own destiny, they easily become reliant on others who may not have the same knowledge of their teaching groups or even the school. This dependency can be dangerous and at the very least abdicates managerial and professional responsibilities. The adoption of a performance indicator system to help improve strategic function throughout the school is a dramatic change from the days of continually being told what to do and being driven by data generated from outside the school.

Ultimately, the management of a school, operationally and strategically, falls to the senior management team. The team operates according to a school development plan although they may not be aware of how effective they are. Occasional visits from local education authority personnel; observations by governors and spontaneous feedback from colleagues provide some informative data. What is often not present is a systematic method by which the senior management team can measure its own progress. This is where an agreed set of performance indicators can be used as a way of establishing where the team is, and measuring how it progresses towards its objectives over a period of time. This thesis set out to explore the utility of one such system of agreed performance indicators.

With teaching reforms such as performance management and teachers' pay structures introduced by central government in the year 2000 in order to improve standards and raise achievement in schools, research into how effective we are is timely. Central government requirements are for all governing bodies of schools to adopt a performance management policy and set performance management objectives for headteachers. Headteachers' objectives must be linked to: leadership and management, student progress, the school development plan and the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of the head. In my view, objectives need to be accompanied by performance indicators so that it is clear what evidence is required to evaluate

performance. By the end of February 2001 all teachers in England and Wales were required to have agreed performance objectives. The teachers' objectives needed to be linked to their continuing professional development and the progress of the students they taught.

All the above initiatives are connected to revised pay scales put into place ahead of the performance management reforms. In the spring of 2000 all teachers at the top of the common pay spine by virtue of qualifications and experience were entitled to make Threshold applications for assessment to progress to an upper pay scale. Assessment of applications is based upon national standards which are thought to cover the different dimensions of a teacher's job. They cover professional knowledge and understanding, teaching and assessment, student progress, wider professional effectiveness and professional characteristics. Successful progression to the upper pay scale then allows further upward movement according to performance. The impact of Threshold payments, particularly in relation to performance objectives and performance indicators, is examined later in the thesis.

Design.

In exploring the aims of this thesis it was important to consider some basic principles of how schools function. It was my view at the outset that a performance indicator system would help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the organisation with a view to improvement and provide valuable feedback to staff in terms of development. There were a number of factors to be taken into account when designing the performance indicator system. These included:

- the number of performance indicators to be used and how often they were applied;
- whether or not there was an ideal performance indicator system or one which was unique to a school;
- how the performance indicator system was applied i.e. whether it was imposed, selectively applied, democratically introduced or negotiated. Its effectiveness would depend on which strategy was chosen;
- the balance of monitoring and evaluation in order to determine the effectiveness of the performance indicator system in improving the school's performance and effectiveness. Three considerations were important here; the commitment of the senior management team, the agreement of staff and the clarity and appropriateness of the performance indicators.

Context.

The main question to be explored was whether a performance indicator system could help the senior management team to be more strategic in its thinking. This needed to fit into the work being carried out in the school in relation to:

- the school development plan;
- the post OFSTED action plan;
- the school's current progress in school self-evaluation;
- the school's management structure and capability.

These were all important factors in the design and justification of an agreed and appropriate performance indicator system. Key players in this and their responsibilities needed to be clearly identified. A further challenge was the refinement and development of a performance indicator system within its context without compromising the School Development Plan and the post-OFSTED Action Plan. Schools are complex human organisations which are ever changing on a daily basis. Any systems operating in the organisation need to be managed and monitored. With a management structure running parallel to a performance indicator system, both needed to be sympathetic and flexible without losing integrity. Above all, the performance indicator system needed to be integral to the ongoing work of the school.

One of the first tasks was to agree the most appropriate performance indicator system to aid the strategic function of the senior management team and inform decisions and action within the school. The second was to carefully implement it. Over a period of 12 months the performance indicator system was monitored and evaluated to see if it really helped the team to be more strategic in its thinking, planning and operation. The system chosen included quantitative indicators such as data for attendance, exclusions and results at Key Stages 3 and 4 and also more qualitative indicators such as 'morale' and 'professional satisfaction'. How these were defined, identified and measured, was in itself a test of the senior management's ability to understand the operation of the school, what improvements were needed and how these could be effected while still carrying out complex short-term and long-term managerial functions. All performance indicators were measured at the beginning and at the end of the research. At the beginning each indicator was recorded with regard to how near or far it was from being achieved, including the appropriate data in each case. At the end of the research, a short evaluation was carried out and this is documented later in the thesis. The evaluation was conducted using existing resources and systems available to the school. This included governors, senior managers and local education authority officers.

Methodological Options.

Initially, I considered carrying out the study by way of action research. This seemed appropriate as this type of research is situational, concerned with diagnosing a problem within a specific context and attempting to solve it. Action research is often collaborative and participatory, hence this would have fitted-in with the senior management team's approach to running the school. Another advantage was that action research has as its major objective to improve practice. However, I was very much aware of the limitations of action research (Cohen and Manion, 1980:196). For example, it is often assumed that teachers have the time and motivation to conduct their own research. In reality, most teachers do not have time to do this and schools' budgets are so restricted that there would not be funds available to release teachers from their teaching in order to conduct their research. In terms of motivation schools cannot guarantee that any proposals resulting from the research will be implemented, although change from within stands a much better chance of being implemented than if it was imposed externally. Any motivation that does exist may also be limited by the many constraints which operate on schools, financially, politically or otherwise. I therefore chose to conduct a case study and the justification for this, and the difficulties associated with it, are given in the methodology chapter.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the case study. Quantitative data was used as a benchmark at the beginning against which to measure the same sort of data later in the study. This included data connected with attendance, test scores, exclusion rates, results of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 tests, and the professional development and performance of the staff. Interviews were conducted with senior managers on an individual basis and in group discussions with the whole senior management team. Performance indicators were agreed by the senior management team and related directly to the school's action plan derived from the 1998 OFSTED report. A level of monitoring and support was already built into the action plan at senior management, governor and local education authority level. Evaluation of progress made by the senior management team was tested and measured against the post-OFSTED action plan criteria for success using structured interviews with senior managers and other staff.

Challenges.

The major problem which confronted me in conducting a case study of my own was implementing a change which staff would consider positive. I was well aware of the fact that not all staff would welcome a performance indicator system, especially given the culture I inherited. However, as a headteacher faced with implementing the post-OFSTED Action Plan some system of performance indicators seemed to be necessary. There are many pressures on schools to perform to maximum achievement and efficiency, regardless of the constraints they face on a daily basis. Government legislation has steadily increased this pressure by using league tables and the introduction of statutory target setting. OFSTED reports and statutory action plans have served to reinforce these pressures to the extent that the senior management team felt that there needed to be a consistently applied monitoring tool. They also felt that a performance indicator system, appropriate to the school, applied and refined to help inform strategic planning for the next decade would be the best way forward.

It is also the case that the school continually faces enormous pressures on intake and raising performance. There is a very high demand for places to the extent that the education authority now organises waiting lists for each year group. For each September intake (Year 7) it is quite common to have over 250 applications for the 180 places available. This places pressure on the school to attend admissions appeals and argue the case that the school is full and cannot effectively cope with more than 180 students in one year group. When independent appeals panels admit additional students, I then have to manage the additional numbers and minimise the adverse effect on resources and accommodation. The large numbers have consequences for the size of groups in Technology, general pressure on class sizes, circulation in corridors and stairwells, dining arrangements, and pressure on toilets and amenity areas. Traditionally the school has managed to keep Technology group sizes to a maximum of 20. Recent years have seen that figure rise to 21. This has already raised issues relating to health and safety in each Technology room. In terms of student movement around the building, lessons changes occur every 60 minutes when nearly 900 students all change rooms at the same time. As well as the above factors, there is pressure to manage the school's budget although the formula is not fully supportive of a growing school role. Whereas the formula supports the cost of additional teaching staff, it does not keep up with the demands for additional textbooks and materials. On the other hand there are increasing expectations from all parties concerned about raising achievement, improving attendance, asset management, staff appraisal and development, Easter revision courses

for Year 11, summer literacy and numeracy schools, and associated intervention programmes.

A further consideration that needed to be considered was the integration of a performance indicator system into the day to day running of the school. The senior management team did not only have to understand and manage change, but also manage the rest of the staff. As will be examined later, Stoll and Fink (1996) stress that staff development and school improvement are completely linked; one cannot happen without the other. To successfully agree the performance indicators and work towards them, the senior management team had to be able to work with the performance indicators as part of their day to day and strategic operation. It means that not only did the senior management team have to manage their own development but also the development of other staff. The performance indicator system needed to be applied and used within the school's strategic action plan. It could not operate separately as it required the rest of the school, complete with vision and direction, to give it a context within which to operate. A performance indicator system helps to identify strengths and weaknesses of the organisation with a view to improvement and provision of feedback to staff in terms of their professional development and performance. If a performance indicator system is not appropriate to the school's needs and challenges then it will have no use at all.

This research, in effect, explores how the stock cupboard culture changed; how it was emptied and how the red pens were all given out to staff to use their own judgement on who they gave them to and when they needed to order more. Over a period of time the red pens were replaced with departmental budgets and development plans, as well as responsibilities for special educational needs and information and communications technology. The suggestion of performance indicators 10 years ago would have been heresy. Now it seems to be synonymous with performance objectives. The question is, can the school develop a system of performance indicators that are consonant with its educational aspirations.

Chapter Two, *The Art of the Possible*, examines a range of literature relating to performance indicators in the light of the main research question and the links a performance indicator system may have to fundamental concepts in school improvement and development. The chapter gives a literary context to the issue of whether a performance indicator system can help a school's senior management team to

be more strategic. In the case of schools performance indicators were traditionally seen as something that was applied to them rather than something that was useful to school managers. The first examples of performance indicators in education are examined, as well as the issue of accountability. The concept of achievement rather than performance is explored, as schools tend to operate within the language of achievement and what has been phrased as *the art of the possible*. The functions and implications of performance indicators are explored, as well as the differentiation of indicators. The chapter links these areas to the concept of school improvement and how the careful implementation of performance indicators can be relevant to schools' success.

Chapter Three, *Milestones or Millstones?* examines how the case study was conducted and what methodological problems were encountered along the way. The chapter shows the combination of methods used; especially how the balance between quantitative and qualitative data was maintained. How the research was conducted is recorded, highlighting factors which caused the methodology to be changed. The nature of case study research is explained, with the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the characteristic nature of case study data. The chapter also addresses the issues of data sampling, the quality of data and the question of validity. The fact that the case study was centred in a school with a set number of participants and given terms of reference regarding the running of the school, facilitated effective use of data and a more focussed study.

Chapter Four, *Hearts and Minds*, is the first of three consecutive chapters that describe the case study in detail. It clarifies the school's position in terms of effectiveness and explores the action plan that resulted from the 1998 OFSTED report. The chapter goes on to describe how this data provided the basis for agreeing a set of performance indicators which helped to address the key issues, including the improvement of strategic performance. The school's background is explained in detail, including the existing management structures at middle and senior levels, the school's growth and continuing over-subscription. The senior management team's analysis of needs in relation to the school's performance is documented as well as several areas for

development. The key issues arising from the school action plan are recorded and associated strategies for achieving them. The chapter moves on to identify the performances indicators agreed by the senior management team. In relation to these, there is the exploration of the various examples of data generated by the school. An important part of the chapter is that on the interpretation of indicators and the need for caution. There is also a section on the management and monitoring of indicators, followed by further comments on quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter Five, *The Principle of Measurability*, re-examines the stated performance indicators and sharpens them into being more specific for the purposes of serving senior management.more specific for the purpose of serving senior management. It is shown how the case study took account of how the quantitative and qualitative data was treated, especially with the new 'double-edged' performance indicator system. The difference between these two sorts of data is explored further and the chapter shows how each indicator was going to be used and ultimately translated into managing the effectiveness of the school. Further matters taken into consideration are the influence of the interview and questionnaire data, particularly regarding staff attitudes to performance indicators and students' feelings about the school and their involvement in it. The important point made here is effectiveness of performance indicators and how this seems to be driven by the issue of measurability.

Chapter Six, *When Two Worlds Collide*, explores the application of the actual performance indicator system. Each performance indicator is examined with its related success criteria. Bearing in mind the principle of measurability, each indicator is evaluated in an attempt to ascertain the effect upon the strategic capability of the senior management team and the effect on the school generally. The application of the performance indicator system provides many insights to the school as a complex human organisation. Each performance indicator and its related success criteria is examined in turn by the senior management team. The agreed indicators are applied in the context of a large and busy organisation. The many variables at play in a large secondary school could not simply be clinically acknowledged and ignored. Students, staff, governors,

local government and central government initiatives are all taken into account as they are seen to affect the performance indicator system that is introduced. The worlds of the school as a human organisation and of measurement and performance often collide. Issues which affect the performance indicator system are seen to arise when they are least expected.

Chapter Seven, *The Trojan Horse*, summarises the total effect of the agreed performance indicator system, particularly from the human perspective and how it became a Trojan Horse for far more positive effects than anticipated. Areas explored include the main points arising from the implementation of each performance indicator, how the quantitative and qualitative data worked together, the lessons learned from the study and links to recent Government initiatives in education. The chapter also examines the significant long-term changes for the management of the school, focusing on the senior management team's self-evaluation of their role and the Governors' evaluation of the senior management team. The wider implications of performance indicator systems in schools are explored, such as performance-related pay, staff development and inspection versus school self-evaluation.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 2
The Art of the Possible

This chapter examines a range of literature relating to performance indicators in the light of the main research question and the links a performance indicator system may have to fundamental concepts in school improvement and development. The chapter will help to give a literary context to the issue of whether a performance indicator system can help a school's senior management team to be more strategic. What is already known about performance indicators, how they originated, what they were invented for, and how they are currently used, are outlined in more detail below. Fitz-Gibbon (1990) describes a performance indicator as, '*an item of information collected at regular intervals to track the performance of a system.*' Performance indicators are collected in many complex organisations and systems that deliver a service. They are not perfect measures but are significant pointers to how effectively a particular system functions. They are not without error and there are always associated problems of appropriateness, definition and interpretation. Performance indicators are one aspect of quality control and the case study will show that they are at least extremely useful to assist managers in their work.

One of my concerns was that performance indicators were still seen, in the case of schools at least, as inert, or at the most as something that was applied to them. Historically, performance data has been used to measure and compare, often in league tables, with very little explanation of the data and awareness of the differences between schools. In many local education authorities it has been possible for a single sex secondary school to be compared with grammar, mixed, church, independent and comprehensive schools within a very small geographical area. Another concern is how the language of benchmarking and target setting can operate within organisations which are essentially about relationships and what can be achieved with the resources and people involved.

First Use.

Brighouse (1988) reminds us that when education authorities first used performance indicators they were purely concerned with checking how their schools were performing. Over the years this has led to a proliferation of data being collected about schools. This has been for a range of reasons mainly to do with standards and performance although the purpose of the information has not always been made clear. With the development of information and communications technology, schools eventually became very good at collecting data about themselves. The result of this has been that currently any one school has three major sets of the same data being collected about it. Firstly by the school itself for its own self-evaluation and documentation, secondly by the local education authority, and thirdly by central government agencies. At school level the data is used in reports and brochures, with some discussion about student performance in different subject areas. My concern here is that the data generated should be used for at least the following purposes: student monitoring, target setting and mentoring, vehicles for improving the performance of subject areas, raising the quality of teaching and learning, and for generating further performance indicators for the strategic development of the school. If we are concerned about raising achievement and the effectiveness of schools through improved strategic management, we should not be talking about *performance* indicators, but *achievement* indicators.

In my view it is more helpful and productive for professionals to talk and think in terms of achievement. In schools events are planned within a development framework and achieved or not achieved. Performance is the language more clearly associated with local and central government within a political context. Precise measurements are made because money has to be accounted for and there is usually a political agenda whereby such measurements are published and used. In the 1980's schools were subject to quasi market forces, parents were given the right to express preferences for schools for their children, budgets started to be delegated to schools and league tables were introduced to offer more information for people making their preference of schools. The quasi market forces applied to schools are not the same as those of the world of commerce because schools work within a constricted market in education with limitations on the monies being delegated and families subjected to a geography of choice within varying educational systems. The free market has competition, consumer choice, free and full information for customers, rational choice, an exchange mechanism, diversity of suppliers and a supplier-marketing organisation. In terms of the quasi markets of the

educational world, Le Grand (1993) argues that free markets rarely exist. They are considered quasi because the organisations (education services) are not for profit, the state determines the product, the exchange mechanisms are indirect, consumers and customers are not the same as there is a diversity of customers with different aims. Hatcher (1994) refers to surrogate markets. In this definition the incentive is funding and not profit. Public sector organisations cannot operate as true commercial organisations, for example, they cannot raise their own finance; they also cannot compete on prices. There are vital differences between the two markets, yet education has been subjected to the market place as if no differences exist at all. Performance terminology fits well in this context. In education, however, achievement is complex and more appropriate to the language of professionals who work in schools.

The Language of Achievement.

Achievement, moreover, is the language of educationists; headteachers, teachers and support staff. In exploring achievement schools need to encompass the art of the possible with aspects of the impossible. Children are unique; they develop at different rates, respond to different stimuli and come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. It is with all this that educationists start their long task of providing and assessing formal education. In my experience, teachers think and talk in the language of achievement quite naturally and this is natural and extremely positive for the teachers, parents and children concerned. Measurement is often difficult, clouded by experiences and learning difficulties. The technology of measurement is limited despite the recent advances in statistical techniques. Thomas and Goldstein (1995) stress the importance of studying student achievement and relating the progress they make to background factors and those over which schools can have some control. Yet there is a temptation to value what is measurable and not measure what is valued. This is one very good reason why educators should be in control of their own destiny; if nothing else, to tell the world what is achievable and what has been achieved.

In education, legislation over the last 20 years has required local education authorities and individual institutions to monitor, evaluate and improve their performance. Along with this there has been a move as noted towards public accountability and the exposure of institutions to market forces; Le Grand (1993) and Hatcher (1994). As a result, benchmarking, target-setting and the adoption of performance indicators have all become part of a management culture that sits uneasily with the long-term and broad aims of schooling and does no always fit in with how schools work. Even the smallest

school is complex and dynamic. It is about people, relationships, development and organisation. It is consumed by the task it carries out each day, emotionally charged, delicate and can never operate as an exact science. To put it into one phrase, education in schools is the art of the possible.

Accountability.

When examining the utility of performance indicators then, it is first necessary to understand the managing, planning and evaluation each institution conducts. For management and planning purposes, attempts have been made to describe the essential aspects of the work of organisations economically in terms of discrete, quantifiable and standardised characteristics. These characteristics are assumed to have a credibility, acceptability and lack of ambiguity for all that use them. They also seek to allow valid comparisons to be made between institutions and are loosely termed 'performance indicators'. These were originally used in industry and commerce, especially in the form of financial indicators, such as company accounts, Fitzgibbon (1990).

Already one can see here how the language of the origin of performance indicator systems does not match much of what schools are about, especially when you consider their over-riding purpose of educating young people. Coopers and Lybrand (1988) claim that performance indicators are seen as an essential element in the accountability that is being demanded of schools as a consequence of financial delegation. With greater freedom of control there comes an equal demand for monitoring and accountability. Coopers and Lybrand (1988) suggested 3 mechanisms for demonstrating accountability: the use of performance indicators, an enhanced role for advisers and inspectors, and the production of an annual report on each school's performance. Before the arrival of the accountability culture schools functioned without performance management, targets, league tables and performance indicators. This was in an era when schools were largely funded centrally in terms of staffing and general upkeep of buildings. Headteachers were a direct extension of the local education authority and governors had far fewer responsibilities. Schools were not subjected to the market place and fewer parents exercised their right to state a preference for a school for their child. Within this context schools continued to function and served their local communities without any obvious competition. With the changing social and political context within which all schools operate, performance indicators have started to become central to the management and improvement of schools. There has been a concerted attempt, locally and nationally, not only to develop appropriate indicators but also to model and interpret them using

statistical techniques. With the development of information and communications technology (ICT) in schools, there is the added opportunity to collect, develop and utilise data. As noted earlier, however, the purposes for which it is sought and collected are not always clear.

Salter and Tapper (1981) are suspicious of government motives and claim that the Department for Education and Science (DES) had lost the battle for curriculum control to the teachers in the sixties and was preparing another bid to influence the curriculum. In an era of *'managerial centrism'* (Simons, 1987) where there was a perceived need in government to restrict public expenditure to economic growth, Salter and Tapper understood that the DES was happy to exploit the collection and analysis of school data and that its ownership was not seen as that of schools.

The Functions of Performance Indicators.

It is possible to detect a variation in the perceived uses of performance indicators. Brighouse (1988) states that performance indicators can be viewed as markers and signposts. The markers indicate some aspects of where we are now and how far we have come. The signposts indicate further territory or enquiries that are worth pursuing. The performance is the distance travelled over a period of time from one or more markers towards particular signposts. Brighouse goes on to clarify that performance is distinct from intention and relates to what has taken place over a period of time. He indicates that indicators have the following functions: to establish baselines for existing good practice; to provoke sensible questions about practice; to identify areas for improvement; to suggest criteria for reviewing and evaluating progress; and to redefine the above functions at agreed times with an agreed audience.

The above definition makes an interesting comparison with Salter and Tapper's more 'command and control' view of the use of such data. There is an immediate tension between a centralised government use of data and Brighouse's signposts. On the one hand the data and the direction of school development is in the hands of the teachers and school managers; on the other hand it is collected and held centrally for purposes which are unclear and somewhat divorced from the schools who generated the data in the first place. Fitzgibbon (1990) has a definition that is more neutral than Brighouse's definition, describing performance indicators as items of information which are useful for tracking the performance of systems.

Brighouse suggests that the indicators chosen should be valid, relevant and helpful at school level. No single performance indicator should stand in isolation. He also states that indicators only start to be useful when they provoke sensible questions in a general context and thus establish a basis for further developments. This is particularly relevant to the case study of my school. The senior management team jointly agreed its own performance indicators and used them as a set. Using them inevitably provoked further questions and development of their central role in the strategic management of the school.

Implications.

Fitz-Gibbon (1990) states that the development of useful performance indicators is necessary to enable effective monitoring and evaluation to take place. The main issue is to find the right performance indicators for the job, as they must be appropriate and agreed. Choosing the wrong indicators, she notes can be damaging to an organisation and it is important that managers adopt ones that are appropriate for the institution and feel they can work. Stepping out of the arena of education for a moment, Fitz-Gibbon offers the example of cross-channel ferries. If the turn around time of cross-channel ferries was closely monitored and those operating the ferries knew, the monitoring would apply pressure on the crew. If the frequency of dangerous events therefore, such as setting sail with cargo doors open, was not monitored, then the implicit message would be a dangerous one. This demonstrates a very important principle in the design of performance indicators. For each performance indicator questions need to be considered about the implied messages and behavioural implications. What implications will people draw? How will they respond? How will this affect reactivity; the tendency for measurement to have an impact upon that which is measured? The reality is that performance indicators will have an impact and there will be logical and emotional reactions. Conversely, any system, which alienates the participants, is unlikely to be able to function.

There is also a case for a limited set of quality (performance) indicators. At the moment there is controversy over which type of indicators should be prominent for what purpose. There is also the question of which audiences they are for and who is meant to make use of them. It would not be surprising if professionals were suspicious that their use was not solely for the advancement of educational provision, and may be used to

weed out the less effective practitioners and relate pay to performance. Those within institutions and responsible for its day to day management will require access to a wide range of individual indicators but the ones that are pre-eminent in measuring performance may not be the ones which are the most appropriate for determining pay scales for teachers for example. Those outside institutions may wish to know how it compares with others, and for this a smaller more quantitative number of key indicators may be useful. This notion of a limited number of key indicators is explained in the 'Joint Efficiency Study of Non-Advanced Further Education' (DES/WO 1987) which recommends six main indicators: staff/student ratio; non-teacher costs per full time equivalent (fte) student; cost per fte student; course completion rates and cost per fte completing student; rates of qualifications gained and cost per qualified fte student; and, rates of employment or progression to further/higher education for completing students. This is a very quantitative set of key indicators and is narrow in the sense that it does not attract any interpretation or value added aspect to the data it would inevitably produce. Furthermore, such a set of indicators would not be appropriate for everything that was achieved in a school. As already discussed, to ignore the qualitative aspects of performance data would be to ignore valuable contextual information which would give explanations for the quantitative measurements.

Differentiation of Indicators.

There are two types of indicator, firstly the low inference variety (Fitz-Gibbon 1990) which is easily located in quantitative data. Amongst these are student performance indicators that would include: attendance (including punctuality), exclusions, key stage assessment scores, other baseline tests, and registration on the SEN Code of Practice. Staffing indicators include such matters as; attendance, contact time, qualified status, subject specialism matched to the subject currently being taught, and INSET record. High inference performance indicators are based on highly professional judgements of what constitutes good practice. Examples are relationships; school culture and environment; professional development; the management of learning, and the quality of community involvement. These are the centrally important aspects of educational functioning and cannot easily be located in any set of data derived from quantitative performance indicators. It is these high level indicators which I am particularly interested in developing. They are largely unseen and only noticed when they are not working as part of a school's educational functioning. People generally use or refer to the low level inference indicators, important but not possible without the successful aspects of a school's educational functioning. As Fitz-Gibbon reminds us;

'Many important aspects are founded on professional good practice, and it is this, which actually determines the absolute and changing value of process and outcome indicators, rather than they being totally causally related. Relating process to outcome as the sole approach can be simplistic and may not always indicate how to plan for improvement.' (Fitz-Gibbon, 1990:23).

It is possible to see a small number of first line indicators emerging from the above set for schools: quality of examination results, student behaviour, plant, traditional teaching, and organisation. It is important that any indicators adopted are linked with the work of schools. This would include the development of young people at different stages and rates. As well as this, the indicators should be linked to the nature of the work involved in a complex human organisation, including constraints on the management of the school, the nature of children and related behaviours and the resources available to help the work of the school. After these, a hierarchy of other levels of indicators follows. As Wilcox reminds us in pointing out that fundamentally schools are about the transformation of students.
'Schools exist to provide a systematic means of developing in students certain knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes that are deemed desirable', (Wilcox in Fitz-Gibbon 1990:35).

Immediately, the picture becomes complex because of the range of variables at play. The school experiences of all adults involved in the process means that there are different views of what the 'desirable' outcomes should be. The process becomes and is value-laden. The range of possible outcomes is vast with many of them unexpected and idiosyncratic to the individual. Wilcox maintains that the quality of educational experience will always be an elusive entity that evades precise delineation. *'In brief, our ability to predict the reliable outcomes of education is very limited, particularly in areas which go beyond the acquisition of factual information and even there it is very far from being perfect.'* (Wilcox in Fitz-Gibbon 1990:35).

In such a fluid and complex situation there has to be a constant. Fitz-Gibbon (1996:44) states that *'A complex system must learn in two ways: from strong inferences derived from the conduct of experiments and from constant checking on its own performance'.* The system or the school in this case, needs both experimental data and constant monitoring in the framework of an educational development model. This is where performance indicators can play a useful part in giving valuable feedback about an

organisation and its effectiveness. Fitz-Gibbon reminds us that useful indicators are rarely readily available; they have to be 'engineered in' and designed into the system. Cooley (1983) uses the terms 'corrupting' and 'corruptible' to describe performance indicators that are corrupting and damaging. An example given is that of the Law courts which are required to report the time lapse between an arrest and an appearance in court. Rather than clog the system, four-week periods are selected as samples. It is the delay times in these samples that are reported. The system is corruptible because the four-week samples are known in advance. It is possible to delay a court appearance until the time delay takes it outside the four-week reporting period. Not only is this corruptible, it is damaging because it acts against its own purpose of avoiding time delay. An example of corruptibility in schools is in the area of truancy (also known as *unauthorised absence*. Schools are required to provide figures on their rates of unauthorised absence and a high-published rate of this could deter prospective parents. There is the opportunity to redefine lateness and certain instances of unauthorised absence that can significantly reduce the offending data and produce statistics that look more favourable. This means that there is a source of misinformation in the system making it less fit and it may stop people collecting good data.

'Schools should be concerned about truancy, but when they are forced to publish the figures in the local press, in a climate of fear, those figures become useless, or worse than useless, misleading.' (Fitz-Gibbon, 1996:48).

The Net Effect of Indicators.

Such an observation leads to the question; can the net effect of indicators be good? Fitz-Gibbon (1996) draws attention to some of the problems in the education system when targets or certain indicators are used in a blunt fashion. She states that the UK has one of the most closely monitored systems in the world, particularly relating to testing and examining of student achievement at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16. There is extensive data available for this but little of it is used as effectively as it should be. Fitz-Gibbon argues that this is especially so because the data has not been used to provide teachers with feedback that relates to their effectiveness in the classroom. With the issue of classroom control teachers receive immediate feedback on whether they are effective or not. On the issue of learning and student progress, the feedback is less immediate. At the end of a two-year GCSE course teachers consider whether the results are excellent or average and if other teachers working with similar students achieve better results. The further information needed is that which provides fair comparisons by showing the *'value added'* per student.

To take Fitz-Gibbon's point further in my own research, the issue of effective management, which includes the strategic function of a school's senior management team, is even less immediate or clear in terms of feedback. The success of the day to day running of the school is reasonably clear when considering the planned aspects of the day, week or term. It is less clear with the unplanned events such as a parent demanding to see the headteacher or an accident. In these cases the effectiveness of how the unplanned matters are dealt with is a test of the school's structures and management capability. How effective the strategic capability of the school's management is, is a more complex and long-term matter to assess and it is doubtful that it can be measured in traditional terms associated with performance indicator systems. The feedback, however, is equally important and it is vital that there are indicators giving regular feedback for this. It is only from the close monitoring of objectives, related actions and consequences of those actions that we can ever know whether the school is being helped or hindered. The indicators for this cannot only be quantitative, there must also be a 'value added' part to the measurement because of what I would call the 'complex humanity' of schools and what they deal with and do not deal with on a daily basis.

Hinds (1984) considers that *'valuing what we have done'* is a legitimate aspect of accountability. It is one way to test policies for the future, to bid for reasonable resources, give confidence in what we do achieve, is being done by others anyway, and the judgements may be sounder if we work together. A Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Statistical Information Service working party, chaired by Wynn Davies, took steps to establish the best set of performance indicators for the education service. At the time CIPFA had a particular responsibility in that its published data was open to interpretation and was used for policy-making and resource allocation. Although the working party was investigating from a local education authority (LEA) perspective and not from a school management point of view, it did consider the different audiences for performance indicators. Two main audiences came to mind: everyone and those responsible for the policies and services of an LEA (eg. chairman, director, chief officers, elected members and heads of establishments. As stated before by Hinds, the purpose of the indicators is to provoke questions, stimulate interpretation and identify areas for improvement. A single indicator, Fitzgibbon notes, is not enough, there has to be a set. Six major areas of work were identified which LEAs were trying to promote: the student-teacher ratio, the gross cost per student, the

occupancy of schools, the number of admissions appeals, public examination results, and post 16 destinations. It is interesting to note how many of these indicators have been developed and imposed as a measuring tool upon schools. Examination results at key stages 3 and 4 are sub-divided, average points scores are calculated, and league tables inevitably compare all schools and not like with like as indicated earlier. In formula funding the free school meals measurement is now central to the calculation of Special Educational Needs funding. Low grades at all key stages also release additional funding against a backcloth of 'raising achievement' and competition for places at popular schools. Hinds (1984) outlines the free school meals measurement as something which indicates where an LEA or school is at, rather than an indicator of performance. So it would be dangerous to take free school meals as an indicator of schools' performance in its own right.

Institutional Diagnosis.

A further major issue about performance indicators is whether or not they lead to what Fitz-Gibbon calls '*credible accounts*' and to tangible school improvement. Research into school self-evaluation at the Open University (Clift et al 1987) returns a verdict of 'unproven'. However, this rather depends upon the purpose of the self-evaluation and whom it is ultimately for. Simons (1987) has argued that with the right level of support, schools can and do evaluate themselves effectively for their own professional development and accountability in their local community. The reasons given by Clift are conflict of purpose, potency and credibility. Conflict of purpose arises because self-evaluation may create defensiveness on the part of those involved. Self-review also makes assumptions about collegiality and this may be ineffective against the *status quo*. Finally, Clift argues that teachers are not generally trained in the technical skills and processes of institutional diagnosis and evaluation. This includes procedures for deriving valid sets of performance indicators. Concerning the whole process of designing and using performance indicators, Wilcox maintains that;

'*No matter how carefully chosen or finely elaborated they will at best give a crude representation of the underlying reality of institutions.*' (Wilcox in Fitz-Gibbon 1990:34).

Wilcox goes on to make it clear that the value of performance indicators should be judged in terms of how validly they point up issues, concerns and hunches about institutions, which can then be further subjected to examination and follow-up procedures. The use of performance indicators, Wilcox concludes, is a necessary

condition for effective management and related activities, but not a sufficient one in its own right.

Clearly there are many other 'internal yardsticks', Brighouse (1988), which can be used by schools to measure and evaluate their own performance beyond formal quantitative performance indicator systems. These will range from the low inference indicators to matters that are unique or important to a particular school at the time, without needing to compare with other schools at all. In 1989 the DES published an *'aide-memoire'* of performance indicators which even included the extent of parental involvement as well as levels of external vandalism. What has never yet been published or examined in any detail is the effective functioning and systematic improvement of a schools senior management team (SMT) from which better management and school effectiveness follows.

Functions of Performance Indicator Systems.

It is particularly with the SMT function in mind that the following examination of the functions which performance indicators have is important in paving the way for my research. Mayston (1985) describes the number of different functions which performance indicators have in assisting effective management of institutions. They are: the clarification of the objectives of the organisation and the individuals within it; the evaluation of the final outcomes resulting from the actions taken by the organisation; the triggering of further investigations, and possible remedial action, to improve the quality of inputs and outputs; the determination of cost-effective sets of service levels to attain given targets in each direction of achievement; the enabling of consumers to make informed choices; and the monitoring of the fulfilment of contractual obligations.

In this review of literature, the exact nature, functions and audiences for performance indicators have been varied. In most cases a whole set of performance indicators has served a local education authority. They have supplied data from which crude assessments of the schools' effectiveness have been made. The data has been interpreted in terms of performance and not achievement. In many cases the indicators are used to make comparisons with other schools, other LEAs (and not even like with like, Fitz-Gibbon, 1990). The perception of my senior management team was finely balanced between feeling subjected to performance indicators and actually utilising them for more effective performance. It was a balance between having something done to them rather than the educator having a professional role in the development and

utilisation of performance indicators. Most of the examples cited are systems that have alienated participants (school personnel) and not involved them at a professional level. Performance indicators should be valid, originate at school level, relevant, and used as sets. In this case study the involvement of the senior management team is clear, and they remain central to the work in progress throughout. They agreed upon the set of performance indicators and used it to measure themselves in terms of the development of their strategic management role. The indicators became immediately useful when they provoked sensible questions in a general context, and thus established a basis for further development in the drive for better strategic performance and school improvement. If school senior management teams are only partly successful in increasing strategic performance, they will have improved their school in some way. It may be a better quality of planning or even ways of creating strategies to achieve elements of their planning. In the future school improvement should become a product of the above and synonymous with performance indicators. Performance indicators should, if used correctly, provide the clarity needed for development to be identified and strategies to be adopted. In this way there could be a direct link with school improvement. It may be argued that such improvement could be achieved using methodology external to the school. In doing this there is a danger that the external improvement model does not allow for sufficient involvement of the staff of the school.

School Improvement.

School improvement is my ultimate aim so it is appropriate at this point to examine the specific research on this topic. Stoll and Fink (1996:42) claim that a widely accepted definition of school improvement originates from the International School Improvement Project (ISIP) as *'a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively.'* This definition highlights the importance of careful planning, management and continuity. It also emphasises a teaching and learning focus as well as the need for supporting organisational conditions. School improvement's ultimate aim is to enhance student progress, achievement and development. This can be further defined, according to Stoll and Fink, as a series of concurrent and recurring processes in which a school: enhances student outcomes, focuses on teaching and learning, builds the capacity to take charge of change regardless of its source, defines its own direction, assesses its current culture and works to develop positive cultural norms, has strategies to achieve its goals, addresses the internal conditions that enhance change, maintains momentum during periods of

turbulence, and monitors and evaluates its process, progress, achievement and development.

It is my view that school improvement is unique to each school because each school's context is unique. As a result of this, school development cannot run to an absolute blueprint, but from within each institution. Strategies alone, however, do not ensure improvement. Schools need to address internal conditions that maintain and support improvement. Without these, improvement is inhibited, particularly through difficult periods. These are continuing conditions, which need to be adapted as, needs arise. Facets of school climate may need attention very early on before people feel able to participate in the improvement programme.

In order to focus on issues of teaching and learning, schools very often need to deal with basic climate issues and have appropriate maintenance systems in place. An example of this would be a school devoting considerable time to establish trust and openness between staff, students and the community before it embarks on substantial changes. This may include recognition of staff and celebrating their successes. Fullan (1992) reminds us that the psychological state of teachers is crucial to school improvement and their readiness for change. Neglecting this factor alone may lead to a defensive reaction on the part of teachers to protect themselves from innovations that might expose their inadequacies. The valuing of individuals as people and their contributions to others enhances teachers' self-esteem and builds trust. Improvements in the school's physical environment, behaviour policy development and improved communication are also climate-setting features.

Stoll and Fink argue that vision is another important factor in trying to achieve school improvement. The vision needs to be shared, not imposed, and articulated to the school community as well as the wider community. It helps schools to define their own direction and develop an attitude that puts the staff in charge of the change. Vision is the shared values and beliefs of a group of people. It is difficult to develop a whole school vision because teachers enter the profession with a personal vision of what they believe is good education. Pressures, demands and the general overload of school life tend to sink and fragment these visions. It then becomes very difficult to establish a shared vision when people are no longer clear about their own. Encouraging staff to articulate and question their own beliefs and values is an important step in articulating a school's vision.

Implementation.

My study seeks to explore whether or not a performance indicator system is an appropriate vehicle for improving the strategic performance of the school's senior management team and subsequently the improvement of the school. There are two main reasons why it is important to focus on implementation. Firstly, we do not know what has changed unless we attempt to conceptualise and measure it directly. We must know what is in the 'black box' of implementation otherwise we do not know how to interpret the outcomes. Secondly, it helps us to understand some of the reasons why so many educational innovations and reforms fail. By investigating implementation directly we can begin to identify the reasons why innovations fail or succeed.

Fullan (1992) examines school improvement through, what he calls an implementation perspective. He refers to the sixties and seventies as an era of innovation where changes were being adopted without anyone asking why. The era was a time of change for the sake of change and no forethought being given to important follow through work or basic reasons why. Fullan argues that implementation focuses on what happens in practice. It is concerned with the nature and extent of actual change, as well as the factors and processes that influence how and what changes are achieved. More broadly, his implementation perspective captures both the content and process of contending with new ideas, programmes, activities, structures, policies which are new to the people involved. In particular, the implementation perspective concerns itself with whether any change has actually occurred in practice.

'It demonstrates a bias for action in attempting to understand and influence improvements at the level of practice,' (Fullan, 1992:21).

Values and meaning are central to implementation success. The perspective is valuable only if the total set of findings is understood in combination. It is important to understand the relationship of implementation not only to innovation but also to teacher and school development. Implementation is learning to do and learning to understand something new. An innovation is something that is new to all people encountering it for the first time. Dealing with an innovation effectively means alterations in behaviour and beliefs. Behaviour will include new skills, activities and practices; while beliefs will include new understandings and commitments. Fullan argues that all of these factors are at the core of the implementation process.

Teacher development is another core concept for implementation, for specific innovations and generally how teachers develop over time or over their careers. If implementation involves new behaviours and beliefs, teacher development is equally important in the whole process of change and improvement. Professional development in support of specific innovations is the critical factor for success in this area. The long term view of teacher development is more complex as it involves the ever-increasing expansion of the teacher's repertoire by successfully implementing one innovation after another. Teachers, in this view, are destined to be continuously innovating, adding, subtracting, integrating, and redefining their practices and reflections.

Fullan also reverses the view of innovation leading to teacher development. It is possible to examine what teacher development looks like as you view the changing sea of innovation. What is ultimately important is the capacity of teachers, individually and collectively, to manage change continuously. In more detail, this includes the ability to find meaning among an array of innovative possibilities, and to become adept at knowing when to seek change aggressively and when to back off.

'To do this, teachers must understand the implementation perspective and the change process, or they will be at the mercy of external forces of change,' (Fullan, 1992:23).

Innovation and Development.

Simons (1987) makes the simple point that we cannot change for the better what we do not understand and our current understanding of how schools change is limited. In the seventies in-service teacher education began to change, supported by the arguments of the James Report (1972) which suggested that in-service begin in schools. Simons argues that the artefacts of curriculum reform (its theories, strategies, products, self-reports and evaluation reports) became the curriculum of teacher education courses. The notion of school self-evaluation emerged in the late seventies as a result of the economic and employment concerns by successive governments. Teacher educators saw school self-evaluation as a means of both protecting schools against reductionist measures and of providing a stimulus for reflective practitioners. Simons has very clear views on the purpose of evaluation.

'Evaluation should aspire to reflect the processes of teaching, learning and organisation. We need to know not so much what students can be demonstrated to have learned (the focus of product models) but rather what transpires in the process of learning and teaching, the outcomes we could reasonably expect from such transactions

and the strengths and weaknesses of educational provision. We need, in other words, to educate our judgements about the adequacy of provision for learning and the quality of experience students have.' (Simons 1987:197).

One of the best ways to improves judgements, she claims, is to study the processes of teaching, learning and organisation in order to be able to compare practice with intention. It is here that the usefulness of performance indicators becomes relevant. We cannot compare practice with intention unless the intention is clearly stated in an action plan and there are established performance indicators agreed to tell us whether or not the intention has been achieved. School self-evaluation is an integral part of this process.

Simons supports the view that schools are under increasing pressure from parents, politicians and employers to demonstrate their worth. many of the indices, however, focus solely on student outcomes. These are only one measure of the worth of a school and many other things need to be evaluated such as curriculum policies, learning opportunities, interrelationships and other forms of achievement. Detail of the above points is best articulated in a school's action plan. Part of the plan will include performance indicators and methods of monitoring to show to what extent the plan is being achieved. By its very essence the plan will be the articulation of the schools development; its aims, vision and how it is going to get there. The age of performance indicators is about to dawn!

School development is a key construct that is very relevant to both specific innovations and to generic teacher and school development. Specific innovations are more readily implemented in certain kinds of school climates. In these climates schools foster a learning orientation among their staff as well as their students, to bring about improvements. This is because implementation involves learning to do something new. Fullan (1992) argues that if there is strong collegiality, coupled with a commitment to continuous improvement, back up by policies and structures designed to support purposeful teacher interaction, then there is a good chance of working through an implementation process. The case study reported in this thesis would not have worked without the collegiality of the senior management team. If they were not committed as a team and agreed upon the development plans for the school the performance indicator system would have meant anything. The very context of the school and its climate being ripe for change or further development aided the study considerably. This indicates that there are certain pre-requisites for change, school improvement and school

development. Anything different would equate to innovation and change which is external and therefore not rooted in the thinking, planning and priorities for the school. It is also the case that the innovations and indicators of these effectively operate in clusters. No single item will survive on its own due to the complex interaction between single factors and the indicators that are appropriate.

Fullan (1992) is quick to remind us that there are few lone innovators. Innovation occurs when teachers interact with and support each other as they try out and support new practices, cope with difficulties and develop new skills. Schools provide a context for innovation but they are also the target of change and this is why fundamental questions change. The question is no longer, what are the characteristics of more effective schools, but rather how can schools become more effective. It is a subtle change in semantics but an enormous change in focus when carrying out school development research. The important point to make here is that from a range of perspectives on school improvement, development, evaluation and change, it is the elements of development and change that are inextricably linked and it is these which the school is ultimately seeking to achieve.

The Subtleties of Change.

For an examination of perspectives of change, I have drawn primarily on Fullan (1992) as he has synthesised a whole range of innovation and implementation strategies. Fullan identifies four subtleties of change as: active initiation and participation, pressure and support, changes in behaviour and beliefs, and ownership. Initiation is always a problem when there are large numbers of people involved. There needs to be an impetus to get things going. Very often a small group of people begin and the momentum builds from there. Active innovation, starting small, thinking big, bias for action, and learning by doing are all aspects of making change more manageable. Participation, initiative taking and empowerment are all key factors from the beginning. These, however, do not always get activated until after the change process has started. Fullan argues that pressure and support are both necessary for success, although we often think of pressure as negative and support as positive. There is a positive role for pressure in change. Many forces maintain the *status quo* and when change occurs it is because some pressure has built up or been applied that leads to action. Fullan maintains that during the change process interaction among implementers serves to integrate both pressure and support. An example of this is peer coaching. Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation. Support without pressure leads to drift and waste of resources.

The relationship between changes in behaviour and changes in beliefs requires further examination. It could be argued that most people do not discover new understandings until they have studied something very closely. In many cases, changes in behaviour precede rather than follow changes in belief (Fullan 1992). It is argued that when people try something new they often suffer 'the implementation dip'. This is where things get worse before they become better as people grapple with the skills and meaning of change. The role of ownership is Fullan's fourth subtlety in the change process. Ownership in this context is not acquired that easily. When people are in favour of certain change, they may not 'own it' in the sense of understanding it and being skilled at it. Ownership in the sense of clarity, skill and commitment is a progressive process. True ownership is the result of a successful change process.
Stenhouse (1975) makes the very important point that the key to improved student learning is teacher learning. *'There can be no curriculum development without teacher development'*. As part of a view of the learning organisation, Stoll and Fink (1996) claim that when teachers are professionally fulfilled, demonstrate job satisfaction, skills and knowledge, they are more likely to motivate students to want to learn. They claim that teacher learning has to be a goal and intermediate outcome of school improvement. *'In effective schools, lifelong learning incorporating adults as well as children is a norm, and emphasis is placed on developing the school as a learning organisation'*, (Stoll and Fink, 1996:152).

Changes are gradually occurring in the in-service education of teachers. There is evidence of a professional model emerging. It is my experience that one-off in-service sessions are being replaced by more sustained, coherent, inquiry-based programmes. Attempts are being made to bring teachers' and schools' development needs together. In this way professionals feel the value of their work in context with their own school and can apply the benefits of their work directly to their job. This can be achieved in various ways; reflective research and study, mentoring and coaching, relationships and appraisal.

If school improvement is reliant on teacher development, then the school should create a climate in which staff can learn and develop. A recent problem with this approach is that funding provided by some LEAs is not targeted at individual professional development, but at the institution's development instead. Emphasis, very often, is on target-setting and raising achievement. In addition to the above, teachers also have a

role in their own development. Teachers involved in improving their own schools, and not just their own classrooms, is clearly staff development in its broadest sense.

A performance indicator system if agreed by a school's senior management team could begin to address some of the above issues. If nothing else, such a system could provide sufficient staff development, clarity of planning and an indication of how much of the planning was being met at various stages of the work in progress. It could help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the system with a view to improvement and provide valuable feedback to staff in terms of development. In order to investigate the effectiveness of a performance indicator system, a careful balance of monitoring and evaluation is required. This will also have a bearing of how a performance indicator system translates, directly or indirectly, into the effectiveness of the school.

The constraints in operation cannot be underestimated. They range from the philosophical view taken by the key players to the day to daytime constraints that prevent work from taking place at all. The actual undertaking of the case study required me not only to run the school on a daily basis but also to work strategically with key staff and to document and evaluate the study as it progressed. It required the senior management team to articulate and often document their thoughts over the case study period. This resulted in the number of meetings being doubled in order to ensure the study's precision and accuracy. This would be taking place often within very busy periods of the school's timetable, amongst the planned work and the unplanned work involved in the running of a large school. I am sure that there were times when senior managers as well as other staff felt that they were having something done to them rather than being able to use the situation to facilitate their daily responsibilities. The next chapter examines how the case study was carried out and what methodological problems were encountered along the way.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 3
Milestones or Millstones?

Milestones or Millstones examines the methodology adopted in this thesis, paying particular attention to how the balance between quantitative and qualitative data was maintained in the case study research approach adopted. I decided to adopt a case study approach for three main reasons. Firstly, it enabled me to study the performance indicator system within a specific context; the environment of my school. Secondly, it allowed me to measure changes over time; specifically how the senior management team developed the performance indicator system and how the staff reacted to its implementation. Thirdly, this approach was responsive to the needs of particular individuals in the case, in this instance, the students and staff. The chapter also records exactly how the research was conducted and factors that influenced changes in the methodology as the research progressed.

The Case for Case Study.

The case for using a case study approach to the research is given here in three parts; one examining the definitions of case study, the second different concepts of case study, and the third the justification for using this approach in my research.

i) Definitions

Cohen and Manion (1980) state that case study research focuses on the characteristics of an individual unit, a child, an adult, a class, department, school college or local education authority. It involves an intensive study over weeks, months or even years. Cresswell (1994) takes a similar approach in suggesting that the researcher explores a single entity (the case) bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time.

Further features of the case study are noted by Yin (1989) and Stake (1994). In a review of case study Yin said that, *'the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events - such as individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations and the maturation of industries'* (1989:14). He argues that the language of the case study, and the form of the presentation, makes it capable of serving multiple audiences. This reduces the dependence of the reader upon unstated implicit

assumptions and makes the research process itself more accessible. Stake (1994) takes the matter further and reminds us that a case may be simple or complex and that the concept of *case* remains open to different uses. *'A case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning.'* (Stake, 1994:237).

Much of the development of the case study in the United Kingdom, according to Skilbeck (1983), owes a debt to the late Lawrence Stenhouse who came to public notice through the Schools Council Humanities Curriculum Project developed in the late sixties. According to Skilbeck, Stenhouse saw case study as a strategy which allowed a focus on the uniqueness of each institutional setting. However, it was through the evaluation of this project that case study in education came to be used as a major research evaluation approach in this country (see for example Simons, 1987). Skilbeck (1993) also indicates further critical features of the case study:

'The case study must be such that it captures the texture of reality, makes judgement possible for an audience, is not heavily theory dependent, but lends itself to comprehensive study..... The case must be seen in its individuality, not as a sample, but as a unique whole.'

(Skilbeck, 1983:6).

A useful summary of the potential of case study as a way of understanding the case in depth, in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and context, is offered by Punch (1998). He sees case study as having a holistic focus, and aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. (Punch, 1998:150).

ii) Different Concepts of and in Case Study.

Stake (1994) identifies three types of case study, the intrinsic, the instrumental and collective. The intrinsic case study is undertaken purely because the case itself is of interest. *'The researcher temporarily subordinates other curiosities so that the case may reveal its story.'* (Stake, 1994:237). In an instrumental case study the case is already identified and is of secondary interest, playing a supportive role to facilitate the understanding of something else. In a collective case study the researcher may study a number of cases jointly in order to explore the phenomenon or general condition. Several cases are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding about an even larger collection of cases. As a general point, case studies can form archives of descriptive material from which subsequent reinterpretation may reoccur, although there is always a danger of the data simply being viewed as a collection of descriptive material unique to one particular situation. Case

study data could even be viewed as parochial data that is not transferable to other situations because of the individual complexity of its social constitution.

Carr and Kemmis (1983) identify features of action research, which in my opinion, are similar to those of case study. Both can be forms of research carried out by practitioners into their own practices. They can both be seen as participatory, democratic forms of research for educational improvement. Just as Carr and Kemmis see action research as a form of practical inquiry characterised by *'a self-reflecting spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting'*, I think that case study has similar qualities. The concept of action research Carr and Kemmis advocate is similar to some forms of case study that advocate participation and democratic exchange. This was only possible in my study to some extent. While I have fed back findings and shared the development of indicators with the school's senior management team in particular, I would not claim it is an action research study in the way advocated by Carr and Kemmis, who affirm that the purpose of such research is neither to prove nor disprove theory, but to improve practice. In the action research approach, *'reflection and action are held in dialectical tension, each informing the other through a process of planned change, monitoring, reflection and modification.'* (Carr and Kemmis, 1983:206). In my research my aspiration was also to improve practice and I did reflect and modify the indicators as the research progressed, although not to the extent described here by Carr and Kemmis.

In my view there are also limitations to the case study and action research approaches. Several of them are dependent on assumptions that many teachers have time and motivation to carry out their own research. In reality, teachers do not have time to do this and schools' budgets are so restricted that there would not be funds available to release teachers from their job of teaching in order that they can carry out the research. There is also the question of motivation. Schools cannot guarantee that any proposals resulting from the research will be implemented. So any motivation that does exist may be quickly squashed by the constraints operating on schools, financially or otherwise.

The observations made by Carr and Kemmis also view schools as steady and stable institutions. My experience is that most secondary schools are large and busy places; rather like fast flowing rivers, which sweep people along. They deal with complex human issues by the hour and work at a pace to keep ahead of educational developments and the needs of their students. It is my view that research carried out by teachers in schools needs to be planned, funded and tied directly into the managerial

operation of the organisation. The research must have a direct purpose, which relates to at least one key issue in the school's development plan. In my view the above-mentioned authors are looking back to a time when schools were not subject to market forces, not measured in league tables, and not driven by a powerful political agenda.

iii) Justification.

The justification for adopting the case study approach in my research was the inherent advantages it offered to the kind of research I wanted to conduct, which was to understand whether and how a performance indicator system could improve the strategic management of the school. Adelman et al (1980) make the case that by being rooted in social situations case studies can recognise the complexity and embeddedness of social truths. They can then represent the differences or conflicts of viewpoint held by the various participants. Other researchers may use a case study to further their own work because a case study is never a closed piece of research. By detailing specific events in context, individuals reading it can relate to the events described and analyse their own setting and decide on its usefulness or otherwise. Adelman goes on to argue that the data generated from case study is often in harmony with the readers' own experiences. In the case of my school, there was information that only happened in that setting. Adelman et al (1980) describe this kind of data as *'strong in reality'* and for my senior management team and myself, the reality of the whole study was very strong because of the ownership we had of it and the rich texture of the data obtained from interviews and observations. For the whole period of the research and even afterwards, we remained close to the study because it was our daily work and a significant part of our careers. The results of the research affected us all on a daily basis and brought us closer to the school and the developments being created. Even for those who worked in the school the case study drew them to the research because it was a context with which they were familiar and in which they had invested. Adelman's view of case study data was quite appropriate because I was faced with the issue of balancing the study so that the actual research did not disturb the daily running of the school or provoke participants to behave any differently than usual. The challenge was actually knowing that the research would inevitably change the management of the school, yet not allowing the change to be too immediate or destructive.

To undertake a case study of an organisation requires willing participation from all personnel. This case study in particular would never have happened without the consent of the senior management team. In this I include not only their agreement but their

willingness to give their time, change some of their approaches, and be prepared to spend further time on the analysis of approaches, issues and matters arising, given that case study can generate enormous amounts of data.

In this case study, I adopted Cresswell's definition with Stake's intrinsic concept being the closest match. The case study is being undertaken because the case itself is of interest, although the research findings are likely to be useful to other schools and different areas of education. When considering the argument that case studies are rooted in social situations, I found this to be true but the complexity of the school as an organisation, this large web of human interaction, actually threatened the original simplicity of the research for reasons already mentioned. The implementation of the agreed performance indicator system triggered reactions from participants, which added further dimensions to the case study and its research questions. Basic conflicts of viewpoint often hold up the research until ways forward can be found. I had to develop an art of accommodating the different viewpoints without compromising the original study. How I did this is discussed later.

Methods.

Even within the wide use of case study there is a range of techniques, both quantitative and qualitative, used in the collection and analysis of data. Many case studies tend to use methods such as interviewing, observation and document analysis. However, it is quite possible, as Stake (1994:236) has pointed out, to have a case study which is statistical as it is through methods that yield statistics that one can understand the case. In this case study, I adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods which are described later in the chapter. The eventual written case study, which contains both descriptions and analysis of events, aspires to be accessible both to a research audience as well as to the participants and those in similar situations.

The dominant information gathering part of the research relied upon quantitative data, such as examination results, attendance figures, exclusion rates and budgetary data; information which many people often take at face value. However, quantitative data is itself subject to biases and this kind of data needs to be considered within a context (Hammersley 1992). Hammersley argues that drawing a distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is of limited use and in some cases leads to misleading conclusions. This supports my view that precise measurements arising from quantitative data often help to eliminate extraneous causal factors but do not in

themselves always identify progress in context. The second kind of data gathering in the study aspired to support this point by focusing on qualitative data where, through interviews and observations, data was obtained on staff reactions, relationships, management, and teaching and learning. Issues of 'morale' and 'professional satisfaction' could also be assessed through the use of qualitative methods. In summary, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data provided a more holistic picture and enabled the meaning of the performance indicators to be understood within the specific context of the school.

The case study was collaborative and involved a team of people (the senior management team of the school). The team members had to be participatory, involved directly or indirectly in implementing the research. It was self-evaluative, with modifications continually being made within the ongoing situation and the objective was to improve strategic performance. The study was built around a way of dealing with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation and was monitored over a period of time, using a variety of mechanisms. The resulting feedback was translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes and redefinitions. This brought about benefit to the process itself, rather than to some future occasion. No attempt was made to identify one particular factor and study it in isolation. This would only have separated it from its context and meaning.

What follows is more specificity about the methods adopted. There was a need for quantitative data, as already indicated, to underpin some of the agreed performance indicators. This was available in the form of school-based data and nationally generated data. The main sets referred to above included attendance data by way of school information and national averages and targets. The data was broken down into: actual attendance, authorised absence, unauthorised absence, and annual percentages compared to national figures. Exclusions were examined through fixed period exclusions, permanent exclusions and the reasons given for both types. Also available was local and national data on exclusions. Both collections of information assisted with the rationale behind the agreement of performance indicators by the school's senior management team. The student performance data was used as a benchmark to measure the need for certain performance indicators as well as the success of agreed strategies. These took the form of attainments at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Specifically of interest was the number of students achieving English, Mathematics and Science at Key Stage 3, levels 5 and above. Also of interest were the GCSE results; namely the

percentage of students who achieved five or more grades at A* to C. The school's Performance and Assessment Data reports (PANDA's) were used to assist with the analysis of much of its quantitative data.

In terms of qualitative data there were records of regular senior management meetings, field notes, and interviews with senior management team colleagues and other middle managers. There were also observations of other meetings in an attempt to measure the indirect effect of senior management strategies on the rest of the school. This sort of data was important to provide a human dimension to the study and construct a link with the quantitative data. League tables and the data presented in them can remain raw and crude measurements unless they are set and interpreted in a context with qualitative data. Using the PANDA reports helped to bridge the gap between the two kinds of data as it was necessary to agree strategies to improve some of the performance data. This was the 'value added' part of the data which is increasingly produced by central government, education authorities and schools themselves. The PANDA takes the school's data and puts it in context with schools of a similar kind. In this case it was with all secondary modern boys' schools. This was a useful point, which helped to link the qualitative and quantitative methods. The human element also helped to provide a context for the research. The very people who plan and manage the school on a daily basis also have a profound effect on the life of the school. Human elements like this, including those who deliver the curriculum (the quality of teaching and learning), as well as the conditions of service, can be affected by any performance indicator system.

Although questionnaires are seen as primarily quantitative, a lot of valuable qualitative data was also collected by using this method. Firstly, a pilot questionnaire was used to gauge staff understanding of performance indicators and their general reaction to using them in their work. There were 10 questions seeking their level of agreement or disagreement and a final open question seeking their broader views on the subject (see Appendix 1). The questions were designed to gauge understanding of performance indicators and introduce the concept of the indicators being part of the respondents' daily work. Answers were restricted to a scale of 1 - 6, from *'strongly agree'* to *'strongly disagree'*. When the returns were analysed, several changes were made before the main questionnaire was issued. The levels of agreement or disagreement were reduced from six to four in an attempt to limit the range of responses and sharpen the views given. The definition of a performance indicator system was made more explicit and friendly in the opening paragraph. This was so that staff would less likely feel

threatened by the concept. The number of questions was reduced from 11 to 9 in order to keep it as simple as possible. In doing so, I also removed phrases that assumed the respondents understanding of all the detail of the senior management team's roles and responsibilities, as well as drawing them into an unnecessary argument about the nature of data (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire data was used to help me decide the nature of the interviews with senior and middle managers. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix 3) which was adapted from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Inclusion Index. The results of this were used to inform the senior management team as well as all other staff in the school, of the views of students at the beginning of the case study.

Further qualitative data was collected from semi-structured meetings held with the senior management team twice each week. Semi-structured interviews were held with individual members (or in pairs) on a regular basis, especially when there was a need for clarification. Observations of the team carrying out their work, in relation to other staff, were conducted whenever a strategy had been agreed concerning the performance indicators being addressed. As the case study researcher, I observed the characteristics of the school with the purpose of examining in depth the many phenomena that constituted the life of the organisation. My observations were not covert; indeed the participatory role had some inherent advantages. I was able to study ongoing behaviour as it happened. The time scale enabled me to develop relationships that enhanced the research.

Data was also collected by interview whenever a significant plan or move had been actioned by a senior manager. I interviewed staff individually or in their working teams, such as Heads of Year or Heads of Department. Following on from this, I made observations of the middle managers working with their year teams or subject departments. This was mainly in their monthly meetings and it helped to measure the effects of the different strategies and whether or not they were addressing the issues raised and whether or not they had any effect on the performance indicators. I carried out all observations, which were participant, and the people involved had full knowledge of my reasons for joining them.

Field notes were kept by means of a research diary because I was mindful that the writing up of notes would take longer than the actual observations. The notes contained details of the context of the research as well as other pieces of information such as

details about the research participants as well as observations of various meetings and situations. As much detail as possible was logged in order to put the data analysis in a broader and more illuminating context. The notes also contained cross-references to observations and interviews that arose during the research as well as links to key sources of literature. This included indirect matters such as the pressure that staff sickness put upon the remaining staff. When having to cover for absent colleagues it was not then possible to continue with developmental work.

The use of electronic recording equipment was deliberately avoided because staff said that they were uncomfortable with it and I did not feel that a tape recording gave sufficient importance to context and the human dimension of school life. However, a side-effect of this was that all qualitative data was personally collected and witnessed by myself and filtered through my lens. There were both advantages and disadvantages to this. One advantage was that I gained a close understanding of the context from which the data originated. Another advantage was that the study was based on events which were discussed in my presence. This helped to secure the study as non-threatening to staff. However, there were also disadvantages such as the fact that recordings could not be used to check my own judgements, especially as I was known to have a commitment to the use of a performance indicator system.

Data Sampling.

In the methods section it was noted that there is a lot of data collected by schools and local education authorities as part of ongoing monitoring systems. The question was how to select from these sources for the purposes of this study. The collection of data by schools and local education authorities, ranges from attendance, exclusions and free school meal entitlement, to student performance, students whose first language is not English, ethnicity, and the number of students who have special educational needs. First, it was a matter of deciding what existing data was appropriate to use and how to use it. Sapsford and Jupp (1996) remind us that there are five broad types of sampling: random, systematic (for quantitative research), theoretic, opportunistic and purposeful (for qualitative research). In this case the purposeful model was chosen, whereby the research endeavoured to seek information from or via a particular category of people. The sample was immediately narrowed to the school's senior managers because of the nature of the case study, seeking to test whether or not the adoption of a performance indicator system would improve their strategic function. The study also needed to interview and observe a wider group, specifically the middle managers, who themselves

were able to comment on strategies adopted by the senior managers. The sample then was entirely self-selecting by the nature of the research. A further data filter was also built-in by the very nature of the performance indicator system adopted by the senior management team. So there were two major filters here to focus the data collection and analysis. The data collected was relevant to the performance indicators, which, in turn, regulated the strategies being adopted by the senior management team.

Quantitative data sampling resulted in the following sets of data being analysed: attendance, exclusions, student attainment at Key Stage 3 (English, Mathematics and Science), and student attainment at Key Stage 4 (all subjects). The quantitative data was collected directly from the school in the form of the performance data it held according to a nationally agreed format. Most of this data is published annually, with the exception of attendance and exclusion data, which the school can update on a weekly basis. Qualitative data sampling (meetings, interviews, and observations) involved the senior management team (level 1) and the middle management team (level 2). The middle management team comprised all Heads of Year and Heads of Department.

Ethics.

In terms of ethics, there were several principles that needed to be respected, particularly if I was to conduct myself in such a way that did not jeopardise future research at the school. I aspired to keep an open and honest relationship with staff and maintained important principles ensuring that:

- participants were kept informed about the purpose of the research;
- confidentiality of meetings at senior and middle management levels was respected;
- confidentiality of classroom observations and interviews with staff was maintained;
- staff were respected as fellow professionals by valuing their opinions (see below).

During the case study I also had to probe what Mason (1996) calls 'codified or standardised answers' to ethical or political dilemmas. This involved not only exercising the caution that all researchers are used to (ie doing no harm to those that are studied) but also actually developing a politically aware and ethical practice, based on contextual decisions about specific political and ethical issues. For example, two major teacher professional associations were working to contract during the case study. This restricted members of those associations to one meeting after school per week, not covering lessons for vacancies the school had not been able to fill, and cutting down significantly on bureaucracy. I had to be sensitive to this and not be seen as adding to

people's workloads, although many were happy to help.

Mason (1996) reminds us that qualitative data tends to be rich and detailed, hence the confidentiality and privacy of those who have been involved may be difficult to maintain in this type of research. This was true, as there were many meetings and confidential exchanges of views and information. When it was time to publish the findings of the case study I had to carefully balance confidentiality with what needed in my view to be made public. If I had held back too much of the contextual flavour of the study, then the findings would have been much less informative and useful. Finch (in Mason 1996) notes how much qualitative data is collected face to face between researcher and those involved. She goes on to say that interpersonal relationships develop between researcher and the researched, characterised by a high degree of trust. Ultimately,

'As a consequence, a researcher may be treated more as a friend or confidant than a 'detached' professional, and may gain access to data which the researched would share with the former category of person and not the latter,' (Finch in Mason, 1996:159).

This was very true of the senior management team. There was a strong professional bond between us, each with our own strengths, which helped to ensure a strong team approach. At the same time we all had known each other for at least eleven years and interpersonal relationships had developed further over this period of time. A case study does not have the convenience of hiding behind anonymous statistical analyses based on depersonalised numerical data. Much thought had to be put into the presentation of the thesis; thought, which preserved the vital data and respected the confidentiality of hard-working colleagues.

Validity and the Quality of Data.

During the case study the validity of all data had to be tested. This was done using triangulation. The term itself, claim Cohen and Manion (1994) is derived from a loose analogy with navigation and surveying. In social research, if one relies on a single piece of data there is a danger that undetected error in the data production process may render the interpretation incorrect. If, on the other hand, diverse kinds of data lead to the same conclusions then the researcher can be more confident of them. Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more sources of data used in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. By analogy, Cohen and Manion suggest, triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity

of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in doing so, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. It is also useful for gaining greater insights into issues and greater understanding of problems. I was not able to triangulate all the data but the senior management team was able to validate much of the interview data gathered.

To ensure validity, the collection and analysis of quantitative data on attendance, exclusions, student performance at Key Stage 3 and performance at Key Stage 4, data was checked at school level and with the education authority. As an additional check, the Autumn Package and school Performance and Assessment Data (PANDA) issued annually by the DfES, was very useful; especially when looking at trends over time. The checking of further administrative systems linked with the agreed set of performance indicators was double checked by the senior management team and the administrative staff linked with the work. The main issue here was the central data system for student achievement. Where other staff became involved, particularly in the programme of monitoring and evaluation, checks were made between the classroom teacher, the appropriate line manager and the appropriate senior manager. Documentation, such as the lesson observation records and the agreed performance objectives, was used as a further method of validating data. In the area of development planning and implementation of the plans (eg Information and Communications Technology) triangulation was immediate with documentation, teaching and teaching outcomes all running together.

This leads to my concern for the quality of data and the considerations made during the case study to ensure that all collected data was reliable. A wide range of factors contributes to the reliability of data. Inappropriate questions in a questionnaire or interview, or inaccurate recording of information at source will generate data, which will compromise the research. A careful sampling strategy was important as already noted. The strategies below were employed to limit the negative influence of bias. Due consideration had to be given to the reliability and validity of data, as well as personal and procedural reactivity. In terms of reflexivity, I was very much aware that I was no ordinary researcher working in a school for a few months. My position as Headteacher made my role potentially more difficult but also worked to my advantage. I found that I had to be doubly careful about the way I went about the research and the professionalism with which I led the research. My first point was to be as open as possible with all concerned. This open style included the staff and Governors, as they

were the ones directly affected by the research. Parents and students were indirectly affected, hopefully by the positive affects of the research. Staff had to be perfectly clear about what I was doing, how the data would be used, levels of confidentiality, and reasonably sure that I was not about to double their workload! Staff, who wished to question what I was doing, see the performance indicators, or examine the quantitative data being collected, were very welcome to do so. Professional association representatives actually did this to ensure that I was not needlessly creating work for an already busy staff. At the beginning of each meeting observation I would explain the situation and what I was in the meeting for. This became very useful because many staff used it as a means of being updated on 'where we all were'. It could be argued that my very presence affected the data collected and that staff would have reacted quite differently with a different researcher. I believe that I brought particular values to the research, especially my belief that an agreed set of performance indicators could improve the strategic function of the senior management team but I also strove to be thorough and impartial throughout. However, I am aware that my strong beliefs may well have shown through and possibly affected how staff reacted as well as my interpretation of the data.

Analysis and Reporting.

Punch (1998) draws attention to the diversity of qualitative data analysis and other writers have sought to identify the common features. For example, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest a *'fairly classic set' of* six moves common across different types of analysis. Tesch (1990), while concluding that no characteristics are common to all types of analysis, identifies 10 principles and practices and no fewer than 26 different approaches to the analysis of qualitative data. This variety and diversity in approaches underlines the point that that there is no single right way to analyse quantitative data. Much depends on the purposes of the research. Punch (1998) argues the importance of integrating the method of analysis from the start, rather than being an afterthought.

Much analysis in the case study was ongoing but the formal data analysis fell into two parts; the quantitative half and the qualitative half. The main point, Punch (1998:113) stresses, is that, in any project, the way the data are analysed is governed by the research questions. So with the mass of school data I collected on attendance, exclusions and student attainment, the main concern was to identify the reasons behind the patterns identified in the data in relation to my research questions. This was where the bridge between the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data began to be built.

The analytic process involved several processes running simultaneously, each with their own stages of; data reading, data selection, interpretation and presentation. The qualitative data was read and closely scrutinised in order to recall the events and experiences it represented, such as what was done, what was said, and what really happened. Important factors were separated from unimportant ones; similar factors were grouped, and complex details were sorted and simplified. There were times when selected data was presented in a form that was easier to take in at a glance. Sometimes this was a written outline or a diagram such as a mind map or flow chart. It was certainly an expedient way of recording the views expressed at a meeting or thoughts conveyed during an interview. Thirty-two lesson observations were recorded using proforma arising from the school's performance management programme. A total of 46 interviews were conducted. The fact that decisions were continually made to refocus the study, develop analytical questions, and plan further data collection in the light of previous observations, meant that most of the analysis was ongoing. When handling data which is effectively social interaction within an organisational setting, I had to be careful to screen out as much as possible what I called the parallel data; that is anything that was not directly related to the research question. This was made easier for me in this case study because the school setting provided a tight focus. The school's development and action plans gave direction to the range of performance indicators that were most useful. There was a set number of senior and middle managers to consult. As a result of this, the school setting conveniently limited the following:

- the number of key issues and associated performance indicators;
- the number of individuals working with the performance indicators;
- the number of middle managers leading subject areas or pastoral teams;
- the number of questionnaires and interviews used;
- the appropriate areas of quantitative data to be collected.

The reporting of the case study is mostly from my perspective, though I have drawn on interviews with staff, questionnaires with students and staff, and the views of my senior management team when appropriate to indicate that the various views represented here are shared, in the main, throughout the school. Where it is only my opinion I have said so. However, it remains the case as Simons (2000) has recently commented, *'the one who writes the script is likely to have a stronger voice in the text,'* (Simons 2000:40).

The next chapter describes the first part of the case study in detail. It clarifies the school's position in terms of effectiveness and gives an exploration of the action plan that resulted from the 1998 OFSTED report. It goes on to describe how this data provided a basis for drawing up a set of performance indicators which help to address key issues including the improvement of strategic performance.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 4
Hearts and Minds

This chapter is the first of three which relates the story of the whole case study. It gives the background to the school and explores the action plan that evolved from the 1998 OFSTED report. It shows how the action plan and school performance data was used as a basis for designing a set of performance indicators which would improve the senior management team's strategic performance. Chapter 5 will explore the indicators in greater depth and examine their feasibility within the wider context of the school. Chapter 6 will focus on the implementation of the performance objectives and the implications they had for the running of the school and staff's management responsibilities.

The School Background.

The school was established in 1877 and served the Winton and Moordown areas of Bournemouth as a general council school for the 3-14 age range, for boys and girls. In 1911 it was rebuilt and became a boys' school in 1956 when a local girls' school was constructed in the area. In the 1980's it had a roll of 650 boys in the 11-16 age range. For various reasons (community links, examination results, standards of discipline, school uniform etc) the school was, and still is, continually and significantly oversubscribed. The school is very much part of the local community with generations of the local population having attended the school. It is not uncommon to find boys whose brothers, uncles, fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers have all been students at the school. The school is non-selective and operates in the borough of Bournemouth. I joined the school as Headteacher in 1990 on the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS). I work with 3 Assistant Heads; Curriculum, Pastoral and Administration. They each have a 60% teaching commitment as well as specific responsibilities. As the Headteacher I am responsible for all personnel matters, careers education and guidance, special educational needs, child protection matters, and information and communications technology. The Assistant Head - Curriculum is responsible for curriculum development, reporting and assessment, staff development, appraisal, national records of achievement, Easter revision courses and the induction of new and newly qualified staff. The Assistant Head - Administration is responsible for

the timetable and daily cover, statistical returns, parent consultations, the school calendar, and data management within the school. The Assistant Head - Pastoral is responsible for all year tutors, the pastoral and discipline policy, student monitoring, staff duties, prefect duties, cycles and cycle safety, as well as being the school fire officer. At the time of the research the school senior management team had recently been altered as a result of staff changes and the pressing need to address a financial deficit. The senior management team's profile was, in management terms, 'flattened' removing the post of Deputy Headteacher, leaving the Headteacher and three Assistant Heads with the following responsibilities:

Headteacher

Personnel
Careers
Special Educational Needs
Child Protection
Information and Communications Technology Co-ordinator

Director of Studies	**Data Manager**	**Senior Tutor**
Curriculum Development	Timetable and Cover	HOY Co-ordinator
Reporting and Assessment	Statistical Returns	Pastoral/Discipline Policy
INSET	School Calendar	Student Monitoring
Appraisal	Parent Consultations	Staff Duties
NRA's	Data Manager	Prefect System
Easter Revision Courses		Fire Officer
NQT Programme		Cycles and Cycle Safety

An Advanced Skills Teacher for the area of performance management also assisted the team.

The school is one of 10 secondary schools in Bournemouth. When I joined the school as Headteacher in 1990 the school had very old and inappropriate buildings and operated on three sites. Successive councils had promised a complete rebuild since 1956. this was still on the agenda when I arrived. In fact there were several pressing priorities over and above the day to day running of the school.

Firstly, the student numbers and significant over subscription had to be sustained to help the campaign for a rebuild. This was also important in the maintenance of staff morale, recruitment and retention. Secondly, it was important to maintain a curriculum, core and elective, which attracted student interest, complied with the National Curriculum and satisfied the needs of local employers and further education establishments. Thirdly, due to the student-led funding (age-weighted student units or AWPU's) student numbers had to be maintained, especially when operating within a volatile LMS formula.

Eventually the school was completely rebuilt and opened in September 1995. Three years before this date the annual intake had increased from 134 to 150 to accommodate the continual high demand for places. The new school was designed for 750 places instead of the previous 650. In September 1997 it was forced to take 180 students due to the high number of requests from parents living within the school's local area and from requests out of the area. In recent years it has become commonplace to have 250 applications for the 180 places available in year 7. Due to the number of successful appeals by initially disappointed parents, the school roll will be over 900 by September 2001. As a result of this another building programme was started in 1999 to extend the teaching accommodation.

As Headteacher I am responsible for the day to day running of the school, 45 teaching staff and a further 20 support staff. The annual budget is currently £2.3m. Since my appointment I have been part of an organisation which has swiftly moved through the 1988 Education Reform Act to the national Curriculum, LMS and Local Government Reorganisation. In addition to all this the complete relocation to brand-new buildings had to be managed.

The school has a hard working and committed teaching staff, whose qualifications and specialist skills match most curriculum requirements. Between 1993 and 1999 staffing decreased while the student roll increased making the number of students per teacher higher than in many other schools. The staff is split evenly between the sexes and there is an even spread of ages from those in their mid 20's to those in their late 50's. There is a very efficient team of administrative and technical support staff.

The basic characteristics of the school, based on January 1999 figures, showed that the size of the school was about the same as other secondary schools (840 students

compared with the average size nationally of 934 students). The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals (10.2%) was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of speaking English as a second language (1.2%) was slightly higher than in most schools. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs, including statements, (31.7%) was above the national average. The percentage of students with statements of special educational needs (1.9%) was broadly in line with the national average. For students entering the school prior attainments at Key Stage 2 are varied and the intake includes some very able students and a significant number with severe literacy, numeracy and behavioural problems. Approximately 70% of students from year 11 continue their education in other establishments at 16+.

The majority of students enter the school because they have not been offered a place at nearby grammar schools. Levels of performance of a significant number of students are below those expected nationally for students of the same age. In the last 2 years, however, the average levels of attainment on entry to the school have risen. The results of Key Stage 3 tests in 1997 were above the national average in English and science, and well above for mathematics. In 1998 key stage 3 results rose in all 3 subjects and were well above the national average for the standard expected. The school has experienced a fluctuating pattern of performance in GCSE examinations at the end of key stage 4. Since 1993, between 46% and 33% of students achieved grades A* - C in five or more subjects. In 1997 46% of students reached that standard compared with 47.6% of all students in Bournemouth schools, 43% in all maintained schools, and 23.9% of all boys in modern schools nationally. The 95% of students that year who achieved at least 5 passes within the grade range A* - G was better than both local (88.4%) and national (88%) averages. In short, the school does incredibly well with the students it is given.

The school's performance needed to be evaluated with strengths and weaknesses identified before appropriate performance indicators could be agreed. This task fell into two parts; identifying key issues concerning the whole school's performance, and identifying issues regarding the work and effectiveness of the senior management team. The school's development plan as well as the annual Autumn Package and PANDA were the most useful in identifying areas for development. The Autumn Package is a DfES guide to using the school's data to compare and analyse student attainment. The school's most recent OFSTED report (December 1998) also confirmed the key areas.

In its report on the school in 1998, OFSTED identified five key issues for development:

Key Issue 1.
Raise the levels of performance attained by individuals by introducing an effective system of recording, tracking and monitoring progress to inform target setting.

Key Issue 2.
Enable all members of the senior management team to take a more active role in the strategic management, quality assurance and further development of the school by reducing their time spent on routine administrative matters and teaching.

Key Issue 3.
Secure greater consistency in the implementation of agreed policies and practices, particularly those concerning expectations of classroom conduct. Evaluate all policies, practices, decisions and developments in terms of their probable effect on students' standards of attainment and learning experiences.

Key Issue 4.
Implement more rigorously and consistently, at all levels of management the planned strategy for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning.

Key Issue 5.
Improve the level of staff competence in the use of Information and Communications Technology in the support of learning across the curriculum. Provide appropriate managerial and technical support to secure for all students sufficient planning opportunities for skill development and capability assessment.

OFSTED.
The standards achieved by students in the school were judged to be 'good' by OFSTED (1998). They placed this finding in the context of the school being one of 10 secondary schools operating in the town. Amongst these ten schools are two single sex grammar schools, a Catholic comprehensive school, three co-educational secondary modern schools, two girls' and two boys' secondary modern schools. my school is one of the boys' secondary modern schools mentioned above. The grammar schools take approximately the top 18% of the ability range and the local education authority

allocates places by virtue of the local areas that schools serve. The school's performance must be viewed with the above information in mind. The management and efficiency of the school was also judged to be 'good'. Over the last 4 years the average GCSE points score was 35.78 (above the figure for boys nationally and 0.55 below the figure for all students nationally). The average percentage of GCSE grades at A* - C was 40%. In the last year the proportion of students obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* - C was close to the national average. The proportion of students obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* - G was above the national average. Even from these figures it is clear that the school helps its students to achieve a good standard of education. OFSTED also confirmed that the school provided good value for money.

Much of the above directly relates to the issues surrounding the use of performance indicators in the school. To use indicators which were related to national data, such as a national average for the percentage of students who achieved 5 or more GCSE passes at A* - C, would compare the school to every school in the country. This would include comprehensives, grammar schools and even the independent sector. In our early deliberations the senior management team considered that benchmarking would be necessary which compared schools with similar ones. In this case, comparing the school with other secondary modern schools would be better. The senior management team decided, however, that it would be even more accurate to refine the comparison further to boys' secondary modern schools. So, in the school context of its position in the borough and the other types of schools in operation, the statistical data about the school is relevant. The school does not operate in a totally comprehensive or totally secondary modern context. It is a true mixture with demands for places coming from at least one other neighbouring borough. The performance figures given and the comments from OFSTED are even more meritorious given the background of the school compared to others in the borough.

Analysis of Needs.

When the senior management team analysed the school's performance more closely there were several identifiable issues which could be addressed to help raise achievement further. These were identified from the senior management team's knowledge of the school and were confirmed in the 1998 OFSTED report. They are set out as follows:

- teaching staff needed to make greater use of the data they collect to assist with more accurate planning of lessons;
- differentiation, individual target setting, and analysis of progress; homework needed to be set more consistently across the curriculum to assist students with their knowledge and understanding of courses being studied;
- students needed to be monitored regarding their pastoral development and this needed to be mirrored academically;
- form teachers needed to be helped to develop a wider role, which is involved in tracking and mentoring student progress;
- all staff needed to be trained further in aspects of behaviour management;
- all students needed to be given greater opportunities for responsibility and to become involved more in the life of the school.

The key issues identified for development, for which the senior management team would be directly responsible, came as no surprise. They gave the senior management team an opportunity to evaluate the overall effectiveness and structure of the senior management team. It is important to remember that at the start of the case study there were many management developments on the horizon nationally such as Threshold Applications, Performance Related Pay and Inclusion. There was also the school development plan to progress which included Raising Achievement and Behaviour Management. Specifically, the senior management team was expected to lead the way in addressing the 5 key issues. The key issues are restated below and followed by precise success criteria agreed by the senior management team. The following strategic responses were agreed in relation to each of the issues:

Key Issue 1.

Raise the levels of performance attained by individuals by introducing an effective system of recording, tracking and monitoring progress to inform target setting.

The success criteria for this key issue were:

* establishment of a centrally recorded Baseline Assessment for Year 7 in such a way to enable an overview for tracking and monitoring;

* by January 2000 recording of all levels of attainment for all year groups on a database and consequent publication of student attainment data for staff;

* staff to utilise data to inform teaching strategies, help students to identify targets and consequently improve individual attainment;
* integration of Individual Education Plans (IEP's) with individual student records;
* establishment of a pilot monitoring programme for students, fully evaluated after 12 months;
* establishment of a reporting system to parents which encompassed student progress and targets within an annual programme.

The strategies for achieving the above were planned as follows:
1. establishment of an appropriate software programme for the management of baseline assessment data;
2. provision of levels of attainment by subject leaders for all students in order to establish the database;
3. establishment of a management structure to process all appropriate data;
4. establishment of a Reports Working Party to review the nature and frequency of reporting;
5. identification of training and resource needs throughout a 3 year period including the development of software.

The over-riding performance indicator for the above developments was determined by the senior management team to be the efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team and its consequent use by staff to raise achievement.

Key Issue 2.
Enable all members of the senior management team to take a more active role in the strategic management, quality assurance and further development of the school by reducing their time spent on routine administrative matters and teaching.

The success criteria for this key issue were:
* restructuring of senior management team with associated job descriptions in order to achieve the Action Plan;
* decreased class contact time for the senior management team phased over a 3 year period;
* senior management team working to an agreed set of performance indicators in order to improve the strategic management function and ensure progress of whole school targets.

The strategies for achieving the above were planned as follows:

1. revision of senior management team framework and related job descriptions;
2. revision of senior management team contact time across 3 years;
3. agreement of performance indicators which arise from particular strategic functions of the senior management team and related Action Plan.

The over-riding performance indicator for the above strategies was determined to be the senior management team working to regularly evaluate progress and their increased strategic role.

Key Issue 3.

Secure greater consistency in the implementation of agreed policies and practices, particularly those concerning expectations of classroom conduct. Evaluate all policies, practices, decisions and developments in terms of their probable effect on students' standards of attainment and learning experiences.

The success criteria for this key issue were:

* all staff fully understand and meet expectations concerning daily routines, procedures and behaviour;
* all students are aware of and understand the school's expectations concerning work, behaviour, courtesy and appearance, and are fully supported in meeting these;
* successful mentoring and professional development of staff within existing management structures leading to enhanced performance;
* improved behaviour of students in lessons and between lessons;
* ongoing evaluation of existing structures and their effectiveness;
* wider range of Behaviour Management strategies utilised by staff.

The strategies for achieving the above were agreed as follows:

1. organisation of staff meetings to discuss and clarify shared values and responsibilities;
2. provision of assemblies to clarify the school's expectations to students;
3. continuation of the existing programme of increased student involvement in the life of the school and increased system of rewards;

4. more active leadership by middle managers in the mentoring of staff;
5. improved monitoring of student behaviour and staff intervention during lessons and between lessons.

The over-riding performance indicators identified for the above developments included quantitative data (attendance, exclusions, Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 results) and qualitative data (students having and taking more opportunities to take an active role in the life of the school).

Key Issue 4.

Implement more rigorously and consistently, at all levels of management, the planned strategy for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning.

The success criteria for this key issue were:

* structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) established in each department;
* programme of M & E established, assessed and monitored;
* early identification of problem areas and subsequent intervention.

The strategies for achieving the above were agreed as follows:

1. allocation of responsibility for the school's Monitoring and Evaluation programme to a member of the senior management team;
2. implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation of all staff;
3. recording of the process on agreed format with targets set where appropriate;
4. provision of individual teacher support where necessary;
5. provision and monitoring of opportunities for teachers to extend the range of their teaching and behaviour management strategies;
6. linking of Monitoring and Evaluation to Staff Development.

The over-riding performance indicators for the above strategies were identified as; evidence of a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation in each department or team, the successful implementation of the new system of performance management (appraisal), as well as evidence of relevant training made available and taken up by staff. In addition to this there would be the number of staff applying for and obtaining threshold status, and the number of staff progressing along the upper pay scales from September 2000.

Key Issue 5.

Improve the level of staff competence in the use of Information and Communications Technology in the support of learning across the curriculum. Provide appropriate managerial and technical support to secure for all students sufficient planning opportunities for skill development and capability assessment.

The success criteria for this key issue were:

* evidence of increased Information and Communications Technology skill development by staff and students in both key stages;
* improved use of Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum through curriculum audit and co-ordinated action plan.

The strategies for achieving the above were agreed as follows:

1. appointment of a member of the senior management team with specific responsibility for Information and Communications Technology co-ordination;
2. appointment of Network Manager and acquisition of appropriate hardware and software;
3. provision of programme of staff development and training for Information and Communications Technology;
4. completion of a whole school Information and Communications Technology audit across the curriculum.

The over-riding performance indicators for Key Issue 5 were identified by the senior management team to be the publication of an official Information and Communications Technology Development Plan, evidence of a formal staff training programme for Information and Communications Technology (personal and professional), Information and Communications Technology being taught across the curriculum and students achieving minimum levels of Information and Communications Technology capability each year.

Summary of Agreed Performance Indicators.

After consideration of all the above strategies and success criteria, the performance indicators agreed were:

- the efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team and its consequent use by staff to raise achievement;

- further use of quantitative data (attendance, exclusions, SEN) and qualitative data (students having and taking more opportunities to take an active role in the life of the school) by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness;
- evidence of a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation in each department or team;
- the successful implementation of the new system of performance management (appraisal), as well as evidence of relevant training made available and taken up by staff. This included the number of staff applying for and obtaining threshold status and the number of staff progressing along the upper pay scale from September 2000;
- the publication of an official Information and Communications Technology Development Plan, evidence of a formal staff training programme for information and communications technology (personal and professional), information and communications technology being taught across the curriculum and students achieving minimum levels of information and communications technology capability each year;
- the senior management team working to an agreed set of performance indicators with regular evaluation of progress and an increased managerial/strategic role.

Further discussion of these indicators confirmed several important points covered in the review of literature concerning change processes. Fullan (1992), for instance, in the context of school improvement, has made the point that there are few lone innovators and that support is needed when introducing new challenges. Innovation occurs when teachers interact with and support each other as they try out new practices and cope with difficulties and new skills. This indicates that new practices cannot be introduced in isolation. Furthermore, success is reliant on more than one person due to the complex web of interaction which exists in any organisation. In the case of the above indicators it was interesting to note that each one relied on at least several others. They were interdependent. Similarly, each senior manager was dependent on other members of the team in order to fulfil his role in a meaningful way to result in effective practice. Success also depended upon each senior manager accepting the strategies as a new way of working rather than a 'bolt-on' arrangement. Much relied on the winning of hearts and minds! The decision to continue working as a team with an agreed set of indicators was consistent with the theory of change outlined by Fullan (1992).

The Use of First Line Indicators.

As an initial step the first line indicators (those which were more immediate and obvious) were identified for all areas. These were seen as the more simplistic indicators which relied on quantitative data. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 data provided results profiles for individual students, teaching groups, age cohorts and comparisons of different years, other schools locally, statistical neighbours and results nationally. In simple terms, the data could be taken at face value, in black and white. Staff could readily identify rising or falling results. This could indicate how the department was performing as a whole or even with regard to one person's teaching groups. Since 1993 the school has recorded this data as a whole and by subject. Each year results are broken down by grades, percentage A* - C, percentage A* - G, and by average point scores. Although this gave a general indication of which subject areas achieved a greater number of higher grades, the analysis went no further. What was needed was a way of each subject area analysing its own results and identifying areas of concern or success. From this point it would be necessary to identify strategies to strengthen weak areas, either concerning specific topics within the subject or specific teachers themselves. Another concern was how the results were interpreted and how the interpretation would lead to appropriate strategies being adopted by the teacher, department or school as a whole in order to raise attainment. It was agreed by the senior management team, however, that staff needed the data in the first place and then training to use the data in an informed way. Arguments amongst the senior management team arose concerning the 'value added' part of such analysis. What about the 16% who go to grammar schools? What about the number of special needs children in the school? What about the way in which data is interpreted and, indeed, manipulated? These were some of the questions raised. In the case of GCSE for example, currently all students must be included in the data from the beginning of Year 10; regardless of the fact that they may have been permanently excluded from school or may be persistent non-attenders, or simply fail to turn up for examinations at all. Even as few as two or three students falling into any of the above categories can affect the school's performance data significantly. So even at the level of first line indicators nothing is quite so simple when you start to look behind the data in league tables.

Reflections on the Data.

Data relating to attendance and exclusions received a similar analysis by the senior management team. Basic data on the number of permanent or fixed period exclusions each term or year could be readily compared, within the school, with other schools in the LEA, with statistical neighbours and nationally. A reduction in the number of exclusions over a period of time could indicate that student behaviour was improving due to any number of factors. A closer analysis indicated that either the school was suddenly prepared to accept inappropriate behaviour it had previously resisted or that staff were managing student behaviour in a different way. A rise in the number of exclusions could also be interpreted as behaviour worsening within the school or the school suddenly clamping down on inappropriate behaviour after a previously more relaxed regime. In this case, the school has reduced permanent exclusions dramatically over the last three years. This has been due to the adoption of additional strategies concerning curriculum provision for the disaffected as well as early intervention regarding behaviour. The curriculum provision was examined with regard to making it more appropriate for adolescent boys who had learning difficulties and a distinct lack of interest in school. For many years the school had expected all students to study and sit 10 GCSE's. This was revised in 1998 and not all students are now expected to study 10 subjects. Those with particular learning difficulties can now study fewer subjects providing they accept additional learning support. With this change there has also been a move towards a work related curriculum whereby students may be off site two days each week in the world of work. This is then combined with approximately five GCSE subjects and is usually sufficient to motivate and maintain students' interest and motivation through the rest of their school career. The greater concern was to provide additional information with exclusion figures so as to avoid short, meaningless interpretations which show little or no understanding of the work being done behind the data.

Exclusions data was also useful to track on a termly basis, as a whole school and by age cohort. Reduced levels of exclusion would certainly mean that the school was dealing with behaviour management more effectively and that this was resulting in less challenging behaviour for students. Reflected in this analysis was the fact that strategies had been put into place to involve more students in the life of the school generally, with greater rewards and more achievement being recognised by staff. It was also an indicator that a greater number of staff were managing student behaviour more effectively, hence reducing the opportunities for inappropriate behaviour and not

allowing situations to escalate where possible. It was not easy to quantify how students felt generally about the life of the school and how they fitted into it. Numbers of students involved in particular extra-curricular clubs and activities could be determined but it was felt that additional qualitative data was needed regarding attitudes and thoughts about the school. This aspect needed further thought as it was an important part of the whole case study.

The Interpretation of Indicators.

In the case of this study the senior management team agreed that the above quantitative data all said at least something about the school's effectiveness. Attendance data, over a period of time, would certainly give facts about the levels of attendance, authorised absences and unauthorised absences. In order to raise attendance in order to meet nationally set targets, the senior management team would need to initiate and maintain certain strategies. This would involve close monitoring of individual student attendance, registers taken at the beginning of every lesson, liaison with home and Education Welfare Services, sanctions to deter truancy and lateness, and individual rewards for high levels of attendance. The school is recognised by OFSTED and the local education authority as good at the work it does in this area, as well as being successful with students permanently excluded from other schools in the borough. One of the performance indicators needed to go beyond this to be able to show how key staff worked with families and other agencies to overcome severe problems which had been generated over the years, on the home front, and often a long time before the student was taken on roll at the school. An enormous amount of staff time is taken up on pastoral issues of this nature and the success of this policy will make or break a student's chances of success in school. This is where the academic and pastoral underpin each other; both being necessary for a student's success. At the moment this vital work is not given full recognition in the school, especially as a valid part of target-setting and student achievement.

As stated earlier, the Performance Management of staff (appraisal) was also seen as an area which could be monitored and measured successfully. The number of staff applying for and obtaining threshold status was a simple measurement and automatically gave an indication of the numbers accessing the higher pay scales from September 2000. What would not be easy to document in any public way were the specific targets and development needs for each member of staff. There was a requirement that each individual teacher's performance management objectives had to

be agreed by 31st January, 2001. This gave an impetus to the professional development of individual and whole staff needs. This informed the school's programme of monitoring and evaluation and gave it some meaning beyond whether or not such a system existed.

The publication of an official Information and Communications Technology Development Plan for the school would provide basic information useful to both senior and middle management. The information would include the number and nature of the school's computers, how their use was organised, software programmes, mapping of Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum, and plans for future spending on Information and Communications Technology and its development. It would also be easy to determine the staff training programme for Information and Communications Technology, in terms of personal development and how they would use their skills professionally in the teaching of their subject. What would be less easy to determine would be details of how each member of staff ensured their continued development in this field, particularly keeping abreast of Information and Communications Technology innovation for themselves and in the classroom. There would need to be a longer term monitoring role to determine how they were using Information and Communications Technology in their subject as both approaches to teaching the subject developed and Information and Communications Technology developed technologically in the world at large and within the school. All five areas can be progressed individually but in the pursuit of school improvement and a high quality of teaching and learning, all five impact upon each other.

To continue with the more complex second tier indicators, questions were raised as to how they could be measured. The fact that staff generally were using attainment data was not a problem. Staff could show how they were using the data if asked and this could be corroborated by their head of department or team leader. How this resulted in attainment being raised could also be tested. The efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team could be only be measured in two stages; firstly, the fact that senior management team was using attainment data in order to carry out their daily management tasks; and, secondly, that they were using it efficiently. It was this second question that caused most debate within the senior management team. Exactly how efficiency could be measured as a performance indicator was not too clear. Readily available data being used in the wrong way, possibly with an inappropriate interpretation, could prove to be misleading and quite inefficient in terms of time and

conclusions drawn.

Finally, proving the fact that the senior management team was working to an agreed set of performance indicators was not a problem in itself. The greater problem was to be able to measure whether or not this was increasing their strategic effectiveness. The OFSTED report raised the issue of the senior management team being too much involved in the day to day running of the school and insufficiently strategic. It is a thin line which separates the two and a senior manager's strategic function can change to operational within seconds depending upon the circumstances. For example, a Senior Management Team meeting can be interrupted without warning if a member of staff needs assistance or there are unidentified people on the school campus. The two modes of operation interchange by the hour and sometimes by the minute. A more accurate definition of the issue was likely to be the fact that senior managers needed to show how they carried out their strategic function through documented meetings and action planning. Even with this evidence and the satisfaction that senior managers were being strategic, a judgement still had to be made about its effectiveness. Questions needed, therefore, to be raised about what is effective, to who, and in what way.

Consideration also had to be given to the original research questions. The question of what constitutes an appropriate performance indicator system for the school's senior management team must take into account factors such as; what is relevant for the school at the time (statutory requirements, developments and key issues to be addressed in the action plan), what is possible (human resources, support services and other resources), and what is achievable, bearing in mind that there are 900 students to be taught every day and that most staff have a substantial timetable commitment. Any performance indicator system, when agreed, can only be deemed appropriate if it is realistic and looks useful in helping managers to achieve targets and specific tasks. It should be seen as a tool and not something which is being 'done' to people in order to relentlessly accumulate data and hold high places in league tables. The key players will be those who lead the innovation and those who will ultimately play a part in the successful implementation of the action or development plan. In this case study the staff largely involved are the senior and middle managers. These are the staff who have responsibilities either for specific parts of the action plan, or are heads of department or pastoral teams. Either way they are responsible for particular key aspects of teaching and student welfare in the school and consequently the professional development of other staff.

To Manage and Monitor.

One of the main issues early on in the case study was how the performance indicator system would be managed and monitored. The fact that this particular case study was a piece of research in itself ensured that it was driven (by myself), holding regular meetings with the senior management team and any other staff involved. The justification for making a performance indicator system and relating it to the operational and strategic management of the school remained an important question throughout the case study. It helped to give perspective to the research as a whole and served as a safety valve in case the study began to wander and follow secondary issues too far. As outlined in Chapter 1, in the context of any organisation there are economic reasons for designing and using a performance indicator system. The organisation must function and fulfil its actual purpose for existing in the first place. The system should help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the organisation with a view to improvement and provide valuable feedback to staff in terms of development.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data.

So in the early stages of the study there were already distinctions emerging between the use of quantitative and qualitative data, how each was handled and what seemed to be developing as subsets of performance indicators underpinning the main ones. This looked promising as a way of handling the two basic kinds of data. Quantitative data could be taken at face value at any time, as people do when they scan a league table of examination or attendance results. However, there are problems in doing this because a league table does not give the full context of the school. This study endeavoured to take the analysis further by using sub-indicators which were softer and more qualitative. These were the vital leads to reasons behind the hard data; the why and wherefore of each indicator. Hence there was a double value to the performance indicator system as a whole; the numeric results and the more subtle reasons behind the results which would help to inform strategic and managerial decisions.

The next stage was to re-examine the stated performance indicators and sharpen them into being more specific for the purpose of serving senior management. Account had to be taken as to how the quantitative and qualitative data was treated, especially with the

new 'double-edged' performance indicator system. The difference between these two sorts of data needed to be explored further. It had to be decided precisely how each indicator was going to be used and ultimately translated into managing the effectiveness of the school. This was influenced by the interview and questionnaire data, particularly regarding staff attitudes to performance indicators and students' feelings about the school and their involvement in it. Having explored the action plan and how this translated into a performance indicator system, the next chapter explores the indicators in greater depth and examines their feasibility within the context of the school.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 5
The Principle of Measurability.

It is now important to explore the over-riding performance indicators in greater depth and examine their feasibility within the context of the school. This will include a detailed description of each indicator and how it was refined for its particular purpose in the case study. Issues that the indicators were to address included the handling of quantitative and qualitative data associated with each performance indicator. Detailed discussion about the initially agreed performance indicator system, its specific parts, functions and frequency of monitoring and evaluation is all described in this chapter. Fitz-Gibbon (1990) reminded us in an earlier chapter that the development of performance indicators was necessary to enable effective monitoring and evaluation to take place. As the case study progressed, the main issue was to find the most appropriate performance indicators and refine them. Choosing the wrong indicators could be damaging to an organisation and it is important that managers adopt ones, which are appropriate for the institution and feel they can work with them. For each performance indicator questions needed to be considered about the implied messages and behavioural implications. What implications would staff draw? How would they respond? How would this affect reactivity; the tendency for measurement to have an impact upon that which is measured? Given some of the known staff perceptions of indicators, it was likely that the idea would be met by both logical and emotional reactions. If this resulted in alienating the participants, then the performance indicator system would be unlikely to function.

To be absolutely clear about this stage of the case study, the over-riding performance indicators, as discussed in Chapter 4, were:

- the efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team and its consequent use by staff to raise achievement;
- further use of quantitative data (attendance, exclusions, SEN) and qualitative data (students having and taking more opportunities to take an active role in the life of the school) by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness;
- evidence of a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation in each department or team, the successful implementation of the new system of performance management (appraisal), as well as evidence of relevant training made available and taken up by staff. This would include the number of staff applying for

and obtaining threshold status, and the number of staff progressing the upper pay scale from September 2000;

- the publication of an official ICT Development Plan, evidence of a formal staff training programme for ICT (personal and professional), ICT being taught across the curriculum and students achieving minimum levels of ICT capability each year;
- SMT working to an agreed set of performance indicators with regular evaluation of progress and the increased operational/strategic role of SMT.

The Efficient use of Data.

The first suggested indicator, concerning the efficient use of attainment data to raise achievement, was directly linked to the first key issue arising from the 1998 OFSTED inspection. The issue was to raise the levels of performance attained by individual students by introducing an effective system of recording; tracking and monitoring progress to inform target setting. On the surface this appears to be an entirely logical and straight-forward proposition. When examined more closely it is fraught with complexity and laden with issues regarding student performance, value-added, student progress and teacher planning. Under discussion the senior management team broke the area down into several issues:

- test scores across the school's age range;
- how much of this data to record centrally;
- the most useful way in which to record the data;
- access of data for staff, ways in which the data could be used to inform planning and target setting;
- implications for staff training.

Further to these more immediate issues were the more complicated ones such as: how recording, tracking and monitoring would impact upon student progress, how it would also affect teacher planning; and if there would be any effect on general teaching and learning styles. With this entire set of issues in mind, discussions had to be influenced by what we later came to call 'the principle of measurability'. The test of an effective performance indicator is how well it can be monitored and measured. By this I mean measuring the degree to which the objectives and related indicators were achieved.

Firstly, the senior management team identified all the relevant student attainment data, which would need to be collected. Essentially it was necessary have details of students' prior attainment before joining the school in Year 7. These were the Key Stage 2 levels

in English, Mathematics and Science for every student. We also needed to know details of baseline testing carried out on entry to the school. This included; reading and spelling ages, non-verbal reasoning test scores and grades achieved in English and Mathematics tests. As students progressed through the school there were points identified as milestones of progress. One of these was scores at Key Stage 3 in English, Mathematics and Science. Putting all this on a central database was simple but did not help staff to achieve anything very effective as regards influencing the rate of student progress. There were two more things, which could have been done to achieve this. One was to take a National Curriculum attainment level and target level for each student in every subject, in January and July of each year. The other was to use the Key Stages 2 and 3 levels to predict the chances of future levels being achieved. The mechanism for doing this already existed in the Autumn Package from the Department of Education and Skills (DfES). For example, an average points score in Mathematics at Key Stage 2 can be converted, via pre-published graphs, to indicate the chances of various levels at the next key stage.

The most useful way in which to record the data, it was decided, was on a central database by way of a spreadsheet. In this way staff could identify individual performance, or by teaching group, or by cohort. Access would be via the school's administration computers, which were in various offices, and three additional ones were established in the staff room. In this way the staff had access. However, they needed training on the handling of the data and on using the data to inform planning and individual target setting.

The more complex issues included looking at the desired and likely effects on student progress. Clearly, one of the desired effects would be that student progress improves. The addition of mentoring and target setting, it was assumed, would also mean that they became more engaged with their work and more responsible for their own learning. Student progress measurement could easily be traced via the new system described above. Measuring how students became more engaged with their work and more responsible for their own learning was a little more difficult. It was at this point that we moved away from quantitative data and into the qualitative arena. Discussions arose about ways of measuring student interest and motivation. Adopting a case study framework helped here. With a case study we could step directly into the context of the school, into classrooms and playgrounds and actually ask students and staff what their perceptions were. The data from this part of the study is explored in the next chapter.

Logging this data was another matter because it did not fit into the spreadsheets on the central computer. The comments were recorded, however, particularly via the students and staff questionnaires. The student questionnaire findings were published to all staff, students, governors and parents. This made the data public, transparent and accessible to all. On the other hand, it was also data that was held more in the hearts and minds of students and teachers. This posed problems later because of the swings of emotion and viewpoints from various age ranges of students and from the ever-changing mood of the staffroom.

Another of the desired but complex effects of recording and monitoring student progress was that of more effective planning by teachers. In many cases even planning for a particular ability group results in a broad shotgun blast of objectives and activities for each lesson. Knowing the students' prior attainment, chances of achieving certain levels at the next key stage, and personal targets for that particular subject, it was thought, would help the teacher to sharpen and differentiate work even in a clear top or bottom set teaching group. It was also thought by the senior management team that there would be a related effect on teaching and learning styles; possibly resulting in more independent study, research outside the classroom and the teacher becoming more a facilitator of learning rather than a fount of all knowledge. These matters could be measured, it was decided, but over time rather than within the term or academic year. Measurement of this would be achieved by using the review meetings and classroom observations that were part of the performance management arrangements for staff. This was one of the first moments, however, that the edges of qualitative and quantitative touched, overlapped and sparked! More of this is discussed in the next chapter.

Following this discussion, the refined performance indicator for this area (with its associated success criteria) was agreed as follows:
The efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team and its consequent use by staff to raise attainment.
The wording of the actual performance indicator was not changed here although the success criteria were clarified and shortened. It was agreed by the senior management team that the frequency of staff accessing the available data was important as it would indicate regular use of the data. The evidence of staff using data to inform planning was another change to the success criteria. This mean that the senior management team were looking to see how the data was used, not just the fact that it had been accessed. This

would be further reinforced when there was evidence of departments using the data to predict grades and set targets with cohorts, groups and individual students. The move towards target-setting in itself would also signal a change in planning and teaching approaches.

Success criteria, showing origins of potential data in brackets:

- setting up the central data system (school's ICT administration system);
- frequency of staff accessing data on the system (Systems Manager);
- evidence of staff using the data to inform planning and student targets (Middle Managers);
- students being assessed as on target for predicted levels (Heads of Department);
- any changes in the teacher's role regarding teaching styles (Performance Management Framework);
- any changes in the style of students' learning. (feedback from staff and the School Council).

The Nature of Data.

The second suggested indicator concerned the use of further quantitative and qualitative data by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness. The immediate data we were concerned with was that on attendance, exclusions and Special Educational Needs (SEN). The attendance figures could be broken down into those related to individuals or a particular group. Patterns could be detected to identify and establish target groups of students to be worked with if necessary. So already our discussions had moved from the initially useful quantitative data on attainment to the more grey area where students caused concern regarding attendance, why they caused concern, what strategies could be used to improve their attendance and how we could measure the effectiveness of strategies used to help the situation. Quantitatively, the attendance could be measured as up, down or indifferent. Qualitatively, it involved a more complex, less standardised in approach and on a far more long-term basis. The tools of measurement also needed to be different, particularly as the senior management team were looking into reasons why things were as they were. It was important to consider where all the attendance concerns were coming from and whether or not there were links with students who had special educational needs. The registration of students who have these needs was divided into three main reasons; physical difficulties, learning difficulties and behavioural concerns. At the time of discussion, the senior management team thought that any one of these areas could have been a link or reason

for non-attendance. So it was a matter of looking at existing data and determining whether or not links existed. With exclusions, we also wished to determine if the students involved had a link with attendance, special educational needs, or both. Exclusions fell into three main types; fixed period exclusions (short term) fixed period exclusions (long term) and permanent exclusions. A short term fixed period exclusion was usually one of three or five days for either an unprovoked attack on another student or swearing at a member of staff. A long term fixed period exclusion was usually one of ten or fifteen days for repeated incidents of disruption or anti-social behaviour. The slightly longer timescale gave the school time to work with parents and other agencies to prepare the student's successful return to school. Permanent exclusions are the ultimate course of action open to a headteacher where they believe that the school has done everything possible over a period of time, yet it is in the student's and the school's interests that the exclusion is permanent. The action taken would be to safeguard the health, safety and learning opportunities of everyone else in the school. It is important to note that all of the above are subject to the right of parents' appeal. In terms of measurability, the data is quite simple in examining if the number of fixed period or permanent exclusions has altered over time. More importantly, it is useful to know the apparent and underlying reasons for such behaviour and how it can be addressed in order to avoid the difficulties in the first place. This was solved at a later date in the case study by designing a post-exclusion form that recorded these reasons, as well as strategies for successful re-admittance to the school. The existence of the forms would then give a basis for analysis.

Further to the above, the senior management team perceived a need to try and engage students more positively in the life of the school. This was done through involving students in various projects and improving the way in which they treated the fabric of the school and the school environment generally. It was also believed that this would gradually extend to increased student performance and aspirations. Ideas put forward included increasing the range of extra-curricular activities open to students as well as a school council. All were feasible to introduce. The challenge was in the measurability of the long-term effect. The senior management team agreed that the most effective way to measure this was through the School Council.

The refined performance indicator for this area (with its associated success criteria) was agreed as follows:

Further use of quantitative data (attendance, exclusions and SEN) and qualitative data

(students being more involved in the life of the school) by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness.

The wording of the actual performance indicator was not changed but the success criteria were structured in such a way as to reflect the degree to which students were present, engaged, motivated, and maximising their opportunities at the school. This was where quantitative data would be explained by qualitative data.

Success criteria, showing origins of potential data in brackets:

- analysis of attendance (actual attendance, authorised absence, unauthorised absence);
- reduction of exclusions (permanent, short fixed period, longer fixed period);
- number of SEN students with a statement of educational need registered and why (SENCO and Student Welfare Officer);
- number of students engaged in at least one extra-curricular activity (Further questionnaire)
- establishing and then monitoring the work of the School Council (minutes of School Council meetings);
- frequency and nature of school repairs (termly Site Manager's report);
- staff view of general student behaviour over time (feedback from form teachers' records).

Monitoring and Evaluation.

The third suggested indicator concerned a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation in each department or team linked with Performance Management. The idea behind a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation was that it would operate on several levels to guarantee a standard of curriculum delivery and consequent student performance. At classroom teacher level it was seen as a case of the teacher evaluating lessons and schemes of work as their work with students progressed. For example, after one lesson it may be decided that a different approach be taken to a certain topic. On another occasion it may be decided to change the method of assessing certain skills. It is an example of how effective teachers work. They evaluate their lessons in terms of their own performance, student outcomes and whatever would make the lesson or series of lesson more appropriate and effective.

At Head of Department level, monitoring and evaluation includes the issue of knowing what all the members of the team are doing, whether or not they are doing it effectively and within the framework set by the Head of Department. Talking to colleagues and more formally at departmental meetings much of this monitoring and evaluation can be conducted. What is not often carried out is the monitoring of lessons delivered by departmental colleagues by the head of the department. With a specific and objective performance indicator system, the process is formalised and systematic. Most observations by heads of department tend to be ad hoc, whenever time permits and something more pressing is not imminent. So when a senior manager asks a head of department how they know if staff in their team are setting homework regularly, it is impossible to say definitely unless they have observed it or have a system of monitoring such activity.

The higher levels of monitoring and evaluation involve senior managers and then governors. Senior managers need to know that teaching staff, as well as heads of department, are doing the work they are supposed to do; and vice-versa. This extends beyond the classroom to the quality of planning, record keeping, report writing and continuing professional development for that individual. As from September 2000, monitoring and evaluation was extended to include performance objectives related to higher pay scales for the teaching profession. There is also, the senior management team decided, the issue of governors knowing what is going on in the school. They have a duty to monitor and evaluate the curriculum and a wide range of other statutory duties, many of which will be delegated to the headteacher. Governors certainly need a systematic way of knowing whether or not the headteacher is achieving his/her performance management objectives. Governors also rely on the headteacher to report termly on all matters related to the running of the school. It is apparent that schools need to operate systematically a whole range of monitoring and evaluation procedures, simply to be assured that all is as it should be and to inform the governors and the staff how the school is performing in comparison with similar schools.

The more complex area here was how to measure the influence of performance management on staff. The senior management team thought that there would be improvements in the quality of teachers' planning and classroom performance, though with many teachers the effects may take longer to become apparent or even have a negative effect. It was agreed that this was a highly sensitive area and that some of the research may not be in the interests of particular individuals, although commitment to

performance objectives was now a statutory part of their conditions of service. The recording of staff performance objectives was not an issue because of the change in conditions of service. However, there needed to be a finer method of measuring the effects of performance management on staff as professionals in the classroom and their continuing professional development. Further to this there would be likely effects on staff as members of the school community, especially as some passed the Threshold and some did not. Whether or not these effects were positive or negative would have to remain to be seen.

The refined performance indicator for this area (with its associated success criteria) was agreed as follows:
Evidence of a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation across the school, which includes the implementation of Performance Management.
The wording of this performance indicator was changed to cover work done in all areas of the school (*'across the school'*) not simply in subject areas. The senior management team agreed that a student's progress and success in the school depended on a mixture of things, not simply success in some subject areas. This is where the pastoral work carried out in the school by staff was seen to be important. Performance management became one of the success criteria and did not have to feature in the main title of the performance indicator. It was something that was going to happen anyway, by statute, rather than something that the school had invented. The management of performance management, however, was an issue, together with guiding and monitoring the take-up and direction of staff development.

Success criteria, showing origins of potential data in brackets:

- adoption of a performance management policy (school policy documents);
- records of initial staff training and subsequent INSET in years to come (records from Assistant Head - Curriculum);
- further governor training where appropriate (governor training records);
- securing performance objectives for all staff (performance management records);
- improved effectiveness of staff in the classroom and in their management roles (student attainment data and classroom observations);
- staff obtaining Threshold status and progressing along the upper pay scale (personnel and payroll records).

Information and Communications Technology.

The fourth suggested performance indicator concerned the development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) across the school. The development of the ICT plan was a relatively straight-forward issue in this case. The importance here was to ensure that the plan included ICT provision across the whole school in a planned way over a period of time. The planning had to include an audit of equipment and the appropriate infrastructure for the delivery of ICT. The use of software in each subject area of the school needed to be addressed as well as training for staff. The plan had to address quite specific areas such as the development of access throughout the school to ICT. This included students and staff as well as Internet and e-mail access. Raising attainment through the use of ICT to support the curriculum also needed to be included. The plan also had to contain strategies for developing staff competence in using ICT appropriately to support teaching and learning and for personal professional use. In addition to this there was a requirement from the DfES an LEA to address the role of ICT in independent learning. This included the school Intranet and developing the use of web-based materials to support the curriculum. The plan also had to include the development of community links with school ICT development. The creation of a school website, the involvement of parents, e-mail projects, community use and the provision of out-of-school opportunities for ICT use. Crucially, the senior management team added a requirement to develop and implement a system for recording and assessing students' ICT capability. This required a recording system linked to an ICT delivery map as well as a process of monitoring and review. Everything had to be costed as the school was accountable for the spending of direct government grants as well as any prioritised funding from its own delegated budget. Approval of the plan by local education authority officers released pockets of funding to the school. Parts of the plan involved simple audit activity. Other parts needed to articulate a vision for ICT development and create a framework within which this was to be realised.

In my view the plan was worthless unless staff were involved in the process and had ownership of substantial parts of it. Experience showed that some staff embraced the use of ICT and others were reluctant to dip their toes into the water. In fairness to staff this was often based on the fact that the school's ICT infrastructure was incomplete. Some subject areas were well ahead in the field of ICT and others had to break new ground. The school had the problem of creating an infrastructure for ICT development as well as an atmosphere where staff would want to further their own professional development in this area. In terms of measurability, the issues raised were relatively

easy to monitor and gauge. The infrastructure could be developed and tested, as could staff progress in furthering their range of ICT skills.

The development of staff ICT skills fell into two parts. Firstly, there was the development of personal ICT competence (knowing a word document from a spreadsheet) and secondly, the ability to use ICT as part of their classroom teaching. These matters were potentially very interesting, as the accelerated ICT capability of students was often a good match for staff. There was the added complication of government funding for ICT training for teachers. This was widely publicised, as a readily available sum in excess of £400 per teacher and further incentives of £500 per teacher towards the purchasing of personal computer hardware. Both served to raise expectations immediately and both very quickly had a negative effect. The government funding for ICT training was not devolved directly to schools. It was given to local education authorities so they could determine the mechanism for spending the money on behalf of teachers and schools. Many tendered out to training providers. Schools were then required to choose a provider and delegate two or three staff to take initial training. After this the staff were expected to use the cascade method of training staff back in their own schools. The whole idea of staff having a fixed sum of money to spend on their own ICT training was dashed. Disappointment was running high and interest immediately dropped. If staff had been given a fixed sum each to purchase a course of ICT training, which suited them, I am convinced that the interest level and motivation would have remained high. Schools were left to manage this level of disappointment and were still expected to progress the training plans. There was a further setback regarding the £500 grants available to staff for the purchase of personal computer hardware. The offer was restricted to specific outlets and specific makes of computer which immediately restricted people's claims. A fixed sum of money was allocated by the government, so when it ran out some months later, the offer was frozen until a possible new sum of money was made available the following year. To add insult to injury, the £500 was taxable! The disillusionment that all this created again left schools with a very difficult situation to manage. Staff were not convinced that the government was at all serious about the incentives advertised. School managers needed to ensure that progress was made with training and that staff were committed to carrying the reforms through. However, in the climate promoted by the structures indicated above, it was difficult to make immediate progress on this issue.

A further issue of ensuring that ICT was written into the curriculum at all levels and in all subjects needed to be addressed. Again, we were starting from a very mixed position across the school. Some subjects were already using ICT as an integral part of their teaching and learning strategies. Students covered schemes of work and their progress was reported with ICT central to their methods of learning and even to the presentation of work. This was often the case in the most unlikely areas of the curriculum. Part of the plan was to map all subjects with regard to what each elements of ICT they delivered. From National Curriculum documentation, the likely areas for coverage by each subject were clear and logical. The challenge was to remove obstacles and other potential problems from areas where there had been little ICT development. Again, the infrastructure needed extension and upgrading. Essentially the infrastructure needed to be realistic, affordable and supportable in terms of technical and managerial expertise. As regards the staff development issue, it was relatively easy to establish a training platform of three computers in the staff room for staff. We were moving into an era whereby each student and member of staff would shortly have their own e-mail accounts and access to various information networks from every room in the school. All this was quite feasible. Only the scale of the operation remained daunting.

As well as the achievement of the above ICT issues, success was also measurable by the impact it had on the quality of teaching and learning. Staff were quite clear from the start that if all this ICT development was to mean anything, it would improve teaching, learning and, above all, students' levels of achievement. Although this was a much longer-term measurement, it was agreed that there were more immediate indicators that could be relied upon. As with staff, we were expecting a raised level of ICT capability amongst the students. This could be measured by the combination of curriculum mapping and ICT capability records. The curriculum mapping would indicate which aspects of ICT were going to be facilitated and delivered by which subject areas. Part of this included the recording of student progress in these areas with their respective ICT skills. At a basic level, therefore, there would be some indication of subject delivery of ICT and how far students had progressed with the skills in each area. This was all quite feasible even within the existing management and curriculum structures. It was here that the senior management team agreed that quantitative information would be useful. The more demanding part of the operation was gauging the level of impact on teaching and learning across the curriculum. It would involve an analysis of how much more staff were using ICT as part of their curriculum delivery. Equally important would be an assessment of students' use of ICT for aspects of their work; such as research, data-

handling and presentation. The feasibility of this would depend not only upon the senior management team but also the team leaders such as heads of department. ICT development would need to become part of how people work, not simply satisfying a requirement. Hence, the long-term nature of measuring the objective and the performance indicators. The measurement would have to be done through the school's performance management framework.

The refined performance indicator for this area (with its associated success criteria) was agreed as follows:
Implementation of an ICT Development Plan which includes the development of staff and students in this area.
The wording of this performance indicator was changed to put the emphasis on implementation rather than publication. The plan would be published anyway; the challenge was in the successful implementation of the plan which depended on many elements being put into place. A key part of this was the training of staff in ICT. Further reassurance about the ICT strategy being achieved was ICT featuring in schemes of work written by staff and in the work completed by students.

Success criteria, showing origins of potential data in brackets:

- a published ICT Development Plan (Headteacher and Governors);
- evidence of a suitable ICT infrastructure and staff training platform (Assistant Head - Curriculum and ICT Manager);
- evidence of a staff training programme for ICT, personal and professional (Assistant Head - Curriculum);
- evidence of ICT in all subjects' schemes of work and taught across the curriculum (Heads of Department);
- student achievement of minimum levels of ICT capability each year across the curriculum (student attainment records).

Use of Performance Indicators by the Senior Management Team.

The fifth area of focus was a summary, in a sense, of all of the above. It was necessary to stand back and assess to what extent the senior management team actually were working to an agreed set of performance indicators. It was simple to check whether or not performance indicators had been agreed. It was a more complicated task to continually check the evaluation of progress and the balance between the operational and strategic role of the team. The first issue was the objectivity of the senior

management team evaluating itself. This would have been expedient but hardly objective. On the other hand, asking senior managers from elsewhere, consultants or governors to evaluate the whole process would also have required time-consuming briefings, explanations and presentations; what I call 'servicing' the process. This issue caused much discussion amongst the senior management team. Ultimately this final area of focus needed to be monitored and evaluated objectively. There would be a certain amount of self-evaluation, it was thought, that could and should be done by the senior management team. There were several reasons for this view. Firstly, these were the very people who had worked with the objectives and performance indicators for a sustained period of time and so could be expected to have a clear idea of the difficulties and successes. Secondly, they were the very same people who also carried the responsibility of moving the school forward developmentally and took the credit or the blame for success or failure. Thirdly the senior management team would have ready access to data and procedure, which they knew very well. So it was quite valid for the team to at least present outcomes and explanations. However, it was also necessary to obtain a different view of the senior management team's tasks and roles and the use of school governors for this purpose is outlined below. From the end of February 2001, every teacher was obliged to agree performance objectives with their line manager or team leader in the areas of professional development and student progress. In the case of the senior management team, the three assistant heads agreed their performance objectives with myself. Interestingly, the individual performance objectives of each senior manager pointed towards the same ends and covered the following areas:

1. Professional Development.

- *improved knowledge of computer programmes with a view to enabling staff to monitor students more effectively. Programmes to include: Excel, Integris and Arc;*
- *establishment of an effective system for managing staff development and training which will enable the recording and monitoring of staff development needs more closely in line with financial and curriculum planning.*

2. Student Progress.

- *the development of recording, tracking and monitoring student progress;*
- *integration of the work of the Student Welfare Officer, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Careers Adviser and Year Heads to enhance student support and guidance;*
- *use of differentiation to ensure students' progress at GCSE level is in line with targets set following Key Stage 3 SATs;*

- *continued development of a student recording and assessment programme, incorporating ICT to the extent that student reporting can be delivered to a high standard.*

3. Management and Leadership.

- *to continue to develop a student recording and assessment programme, incorporating ICT to the extent that student reporting can be delivered to a high standard.*

In addition to the above self-evaluation by the senior management team, it was decided that the best way of ensuring objective monitoring and evaluation was to use the school governors. They already had similar roles with regard to the school development plan and the post OFSTED action plan. This would be a logical progression of their work and could be scheduled into their existing meetings and visits. It was agreed to ask the members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to monitor and evaluate this particular objective. The committee was made up of the Chair of Governors and the chairs of all the various other committees and sub-groups. This group, above all other governors, knew the school plans and were familiar with development work in progress. Monitoring was conducted by way of a half-termly meeting with the school's link inspector from the LEA. The group used these meetings to evaluate the progress made.

The refined performance indicator for this area (with its associated success criteria) was agreed as follows:

The senior management team working to an agreed set of performance indicators, which are monitored and evaluated.

The wording of this performance indicator was altered to focus on the fact that the senior management team were working to the agreed set of performance indicators. With the success criteria being achieved it would mean that the senior management team were taking on a more strategic role anyway.

Success criteria, showing origins of potential data in brackets:

- the adoption of an agreed set of performance indicators (Action Plan and SMT records);
- evidence of progression towards each objective and indicator (Action Plan evaluation and SMT records);
- evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the above process (Monitoring and

Evaluation records).

From the above, the performance indicators agreed, along with their respective success criteria, seemed to be quite feasible. The performance indicators connected with each success criteria vary between what is very clear and often quantitative, and those, which are less easy to measure in the short term. This chapter has indicated how the senior management team came to identify some indicators as long-term in nature and reliant on human behaviour. In this case we were concerned with human reaction to change; namely situations which challenged their professional ability and affected their working environment. The challenge was how to assess changes of very complex interaction; especially the quality of teaching and learning. Much of this was concerned with the monitoring of long-term behaviours. This type of complex monitoring, the senior management team agreed, would have to be conducted as part of the school performance management process, combined with the regular analysis of quantitative data. We were attempting to measure the effects of agreed strategies on processes which for decades had gone unquestioned and then suddenly put in the rubric of the league table, the spotlight of the OFSTED report and declared open season on by education's critics.

The next chapter will explore the application of the above performance indicator system. Each performance indicator will be examined, with its related success criteria. Bearing in mind the principle of measurability, each indicator will be evaluated in an attempt to ascertain the effect upon the strategic capability of the senior management team and the effect on the school generally.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 6
When Two Worlds Collide

This is the final chapter of three which explore the detail of the case study. The application of the above performance indicator system provided many insights to the school as a complex human organisation Each performance indicator and its related success criteria was examined in turn by the senior management team. Bearing in mind the principle of measurability, that if it is not measurable then it is not a reliable indicator, each indicator was evaluated in an attempt to ascertain the effect upon the strategic capability of the senior management team and the effect on the school generally. I do not mean measurement in the mathematical sense because strategic capability can only be assessed in broader terms. It is worth remembering that the agreed indicators were applied in the context of a large and busy organisation. The many variables at play in a large secondary school could not simply be clinically acknowledged and ignored. Students, staff, governors, local government and central government initiatives all came into play and affect how the performance indicator system could be introduced. As you will read, the variables were many and all had just as much effect on the indicators as the indicators had on them. The world of the school as a human organisation and the world of measurement and performance often collided. Issues which affected the performance indicator system often arose when they were least expected.

<u>The Efficient use of Data.</u>

The efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team and its consequent use by staff to raise attainment.

The first performance indicator concerned the efficient use of attainment data to raise achievement. As discussed in the previous chapter it was initially thought by the senior management team to be a relatively straightforward proposition. The success criteria were simple and included the following:

- setting up the central data system;
- frequency of staff accessing data on the system;
- evidence of staff using the data to inform planning and student targets;
- students being assessed as on target for predicted levels;
- any changes in the teacher's role regarding teaching styles;
- any changes in the style of students' learning.

At the start of the case study the central data system was almost non-existent. At best it contained a special educational needs database, which accounted for only a fraction of the school's student population. Data from primary schools was available but only in each student's personal file. There had been promise of a local authority database for some years but it had not come to fruition. The school, like others in the education authority, decided to formulate its own central bank of data, which could be used by all staff to monitor student attainment and progress. The need for all schools to do this was accentuated by the fact that in May 2000 teachers applying for Threshold status needed to show evidence of progress with students they taught.

The decision to establish a central database immediately raised the question of who was going to input the data as well as questions relating to the quantity and frequency of information being stored. After further meetings with the school's heads of department and heads of year, it was agreed to collect details of students' prior attainment before joining the school in Year 7. These were the Key Stage 2 levels in English, Mathematics and Science for every student. We also included details of baseline testing carried out on entry to the school such as reading and spelling ages; non-verbal reasoning test scores and grades achieved in English and Mathematics tests. A clerical assistant who was directly responsible to a senior manager put this information on the database. In terms of monitoring the rate of student progress, a National Curriculum attainment level and target level for each student in every subject, in January and July of each year, was also collected. In this way the various attainment levels in the different key stages could be used to predict the chances of future levels being achieved.

Difficulties immediately arose because staff saw the development of the database as additional work rather than a more efficient way of working. This was countered with the logic that the senior management team only wanted them to use what was already in their record books. All staff set and marked work; they even prided themselves on knowing their students in terms of capability and attainment. The senior management team simply required staff to hand a fraction of this information to a secretary so that it could be put on to a central database on their behalf and for their future use. What became more interesting to the staff was the fact that the existing data they were being asked to share could also be used by them to inform planning. The training platform was established in the staff room, other computers were made available for staff so that they could access data for any student in the school to compare performance within a

subject, across subjects, within the teaching group, across the cohort and with the school historically. Data available in this way could be used to inform planning, including differentiation and the progress of special educational needs students and those with individual education plans or statements. It was also a valuable indicator for the underachievement of the more able students. The Autumn Package, used correctly, would take a student's previous key stage level in a subject and indicate what they should achieve at the next key stage.

Another hurdle was the fact that many staff did not have the ICT capability required to manipulate the data and present it in different formats. Some preferred not to get involved with this and others were ready for the training on hand. Government funding for ICT training was available to schools via registered providers, via the local education authority. There was also the offer of discounted computer equipment for teachers. Within this framework staff had the opportunity to develop ICT skills, and in doing so, improve their effectiveness as a classroom teacher. The developed ICT capability provided advantages in their teaching and in their administration. The training was very slow to get off the ground with staff having to commit themselves to training beyond the school day. Even where colleagues were willing to give this commitment, the process was made harder by the fact they were starting work again after a full day in the classroom and were not arriving fresh at the training. Some staff objected to the principle as a whole and thought that training should have been provided within school time so that they were not committed beyond the bounds of their working week. This attitude, where it did prevail, was short-lived due to the fact that progression up the pay scales via performance management outcomes was made law from September 2000. For the die-hards it was either professionally develop and progress the pay scales or stagnate on the common pay scale and see students' ICT capability overtake their own.

The Persuasion of Performance Management.

The introduction of Performance Management from September 2000 for headteachers and from February 2001 for teachers, assisted the process. Performance objectives had to be agreed by everyone and assessed by a line manager, or governors in case of headteachers, on an annual basis. This included agreeing objectives on student progress and continuing professional development. Within this, the central database and use of attainment data to inform planning became closely linked. Staff needed the data in order that they could show progress. The performance management framework also

required staff to have their lessons observed at least three times each academic year. The lesson observations would also require the existence of a detailed lesson plan, which had clear objectives, differentiation and addressed individual students' learning needs. These requirements assisted the measurement of the success criteria for this performance indicator.

The senior management team and heads of department could readily see evidence of staff using the data to inform planning from the lesson observations and related documentation. Progress was slow at first but the use of data started to steadily grow across a broad front. Members of the Science department who had pioneered work on Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education (CASE) helped this. This work included teaching highly structured science lessons with clear objectives and stages. The work also involved the observation of lessons from colleagues who were CASE trained, and being provided with direct feedback concerning lesson quality and learning outcomes. Having these colleagues within the staff helped to win the trust of others and gave real meaning to the concept of peer-led education, or staff training in this case.

The hardest part of the use of data for staff was the prediction of future student levels for the next key stage. In the middle of the case study the senior management team decided to remove a layer of bureaucracy for staff. Instead of requiring all staff to calculate student predictors it was decided to do this centrally for all subject areas and then allocate the data to each head of department. The true job of the classroom professional was to take the data (the predicted levels) and adopt teaching strategies so that the predicted levels are achieved, if not exceeded. In this way teachers are aware of the potential of such data but not distracted from their original tasks of securing the best quality teaching and learning possible in their classrooms. This decision was welcomed by the staff and was one of the main turning points of the whole development.

Changes in Teaching and Learning Styles.

The measurement of changes in teaching and learning styles proved to be difficult over a short period of time. There were so many variables or influencing factors, some immediate and others of a more long-term nature. These included: National Curriculum requirements, teaching resources, lesson timings, percentage of timetable time for a subject, student dynamics within a teaching group as well as the ability range and level of motivation. National Curriculum requirements clearly influenced schemes of work and individual lesson planning. From my interviews with subject leaders there were

varied requirements for fieldwork (History and Geography) and practical assessments (Science, Art and Technology). Some staff argued that this gave some subjects an 'edge' whilst others almost saw themselves as 'book bound'. Some staff even protested that at Key Stage 4, students prioritised their subjects when behind with coursework, giving the core subjects priority over others. There was some evidence that this was true and it was no doubt influenced by further education providers giving conditional offers of places. Student dynamics within a teaching group also varied tremendously, simply by the presence of students with special educational needs. Staff also claimed that levels of motivation, ability, concentration and cooperation all affected lessons from subject to subject, seemingly at whim.

To actually observe a lesson and say that the students' learning styles had changed or that the teacher's teaching style had changed was not possible. What could be observed over time was student progress and the quality of their work. What was observed over time were improvements in the quality of lesson planning. Lessons plans had clearer objectives, students with statements of special educational need were recognised in the planning, students with individual education plans were acknowledged and lessons were better differentiated to take all of this into account. It was here that the difference in quality was manifested. If students failed to understand a concept the teacher tried several other approaches. Previously, they said that they might have simply repeated the explanation louder!

Targets.

The requirement to set targets for students individually and as a cohort provided another success criteria for this overall performance indicator. When the senior management team monitored how staff were assessing students in relation to their predicted levels of achievement, it was immediately apparent whether or not staff were setting targets at all. As part of this, it was even possible to assess the detail of target setting used. This varied from one simple national curriculum level target to targets for specific areas of a subject or stepped targets over a period of time. The single national curriculum level target was the minimum requirement and perfectly acceptable if the procedures using prior attainment and the Autumn Package had been followed. It was sufficient to plot a student's current level and the level they should achieve in the future. To achieve the predicted level staff said that they had to use the data to inform planning, in terms of differentiation and the pace and challenge of work taught and set.

Specific and stepped targets indicated another level of evolution in the teacher effectiveness chain. The feeling was that if staff were going to adopt target setting as a way of working, then they might as well use it to the greatest effect possible. In a single complex subject where there was a known area of working which was quite distinct from another, it was logical to separate out targets. Examples were, in the various areas of science or the split between practical and theoretical work in the area of Physical Education. Students studying GCSE Physical Education were often those who were good at the practical aspects. The written or theoretical aspects were far more difficult and therefore required additional help and a different approach completely. In these cases, specific or stepped targets were very useful and had been generated out of logical necessity. The use of these advanced targets revealed not only the required success criteria for the performance indicator but a level of teacher thinking which went beyond the basic requirement.

The Nature of Data.

Further use of quantitative data (attendance, exclusions and SEN) and qualitative data (students being more involved in the life of the school) by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness.

The second performance indicator involved the acknowledgement that staff needed to use the full range of data available in order to enhance the school's effectiveness. The immediate, quantitative data needed to be examined more closely and there was an attempt to encourage staff to value qualitative data as well. An emerging concern from the senior management team was that as a school we only took note of quantitative data, which was black and white, and secure in the eyes of staff. We needed to scratch below the surface and find out the causes of this seemingly simplistic way of measuring schools' performance. The success criteria included the following:

- attendance (actual attendance, authorised absence, unauthorised absence);
- exclusions (permanent, short fixed period, longer fixed period);
- number of SEN students with a statement of educational need registered and why;
- number of students engaged in at least one extra-curricular activity;
- establishing and then monitoring the work of the School Council;
- frequency and nature of school repairs;
- staff view of general student behaviour over time.

In relation to the above success criteria the school took the opportunity of taking a bold and visionary move by appointing its own, full time, student welfare officer. The job description concerned a coordinated attempt to remove as many potential obstacles as possible, which stood between students and their success at school. The student welfare officer would work with the appropriate staff in school such as; Heads of Year, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Health Education Coordinator, and outside agencies such as the Youth Offending Team and Social Services. For the first time ever the school had its own full-time member of staff who knew the school, the parents and the students. It was also somebody who had both an Education and Social Services background, having many contacts across the borough.

The thinking behind the innovation was also to put some meaning behind the attendance, exclusions and SEN statistics which were generated each term and featured in reports to governors, education officers and council members. If the school's attendance was below 90% or if unauthorised absence was above 0.1% then it was useful to know why and what could be done to improve the situation. Regular contact with the parents of students whose attendance was low did raise attendance to 93% in the first term, which was a 2.7% improvement on the previous figure. If exclusions (fixed-period or permanent) existed it was important to know why and what work was being done to improve the situation. During the period of the case study, fixed-period exclusions rose by 8%. Only further analysis showed that national moves towards inclusion, combined with the fact that £6,000 would be taken from a school's budget for every student it permanently excluded, meant that very few students were permanently excluded across the borough. This resulted in a rise in the number of fixed term exclusions because schools were trying to include students they would have previously permanently excluded. This also gave rise to the greater use of longer 45-day exclusions, which was the maximum allowed each term. So a rise in the number of fixed-term exclusions could either be interpreted as a school with 'problems' or a school trying to cope with the challenges of inclusion. Either way, it did not change the staff view that they had to manage an increase in challenging behaviour in the classroom.

After one term of the new student welfare officer's appointment, attendance was up by 2.7% and permanent exclusions had disappeared. Almost permanent non-attenders started to come back into school and we were increasingly flexible with work-related curriculum packages for the most disaffected students. This consisted of a package

which allowed the student out of school for an extended work experience or college training placement, in return for three or four days in school. Even the most disruptive students were put on restricted timetables, limiting their attendance to mornings only in some cases. It was evident that the success criteria related to this performance indicator prompted us into using a creative solution to a worsening problem. Knowing that we were going to measure and monitor this type of data and seek explanations as to its levels, certainly sharpened the resolve to do something about the problem which was of benefit to all concerned. The secret of success here was simply in the application of the performance indicator.

Attempting to measure the number of SEN students with a statement of educational need and why they were registered was not a problem in numeric terms. The challenge was to measure it in the sense that it meant something to the school and the way it operated. One of the reasons behind the measurement was to see how the students involved were benefiting from the additional support provided. The complexity arose when we actually examined the nature of special educational needs more closely. Students were either registered on the Code of Practice for learning difficulties or behaviour. Often the concern involved both areas of difficulty; one aspect influencing the other. Immediately the task grew into a debate between senior and middle managers concerning the nature of special education needs students. If numbers of students registered were increasing, as they were during the case study, it could be interpreted in different ways. The school could be seen as attracting greater numbers of SEN students because it had a reputation for helping them make good progress (OFSTED 1998). Or there could simply be more SEN students in the school's local area. It could also be interpreted that the school was not coping well with the demands of teaching and had almost created its own rise in SEN students by registering as many as possible prematurely. A rise in numbers was not automatically a good or bad thing. What the school did with the rise in numbers of SEN students, in terms of their access to the full curriculum and their progress, was far more important. Evidence from staff and attainment data within the school suggested that SEN students made good progress and accessed the full curriculum.

The SEN experience prompted the senior management team's move into the qualitative areas of measurement. We wanted to know what students thought about their school, how much they felt a part of it and what opportunities they felt it offered. We adapted a questionnaire from the Inclusion Index, which was published by the Department for

Education and Employment in April 2000. Questions ranged from their view of opportunities offered by the school to the recognition of achievement. The full questionnaire used in the case study is in Appendix 3 along with the results. Bearing in mind the 'enthusiasm tapering effect' in Years 10 and 11, 55% of students felt that their achievements were recognised and rewarded and 84% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school. The survey gave a general indication that the students enjoyed what they were doing but welcomed a chance to be even more involved in the life of the school. Students involved in extra-curricular activities did increase during the period of the case study. This included the work of the Sports Department, the school's music, drama and even students attending Saturday lessons, after school lessons and Easter revision courses provided by the local education authority. It seemed that the more that the school made available, the more the students became involved. The School Council, even in its infancy, generated tremendous enthusiasm from the student body and their representatives. It was the first time ever that such a council had existed and the students were very enthusiastic. They were keen to discuss the provision of better facilities and even ways of assisting staff to prevent bullying, litter and vandalism. A colleague suggested that the student questionnaire be repeated by way of another questionnaire with a smaller sample to test whether there was a change in view of the students. The senior management team, however, were satisfied with the survey and the student responses to additional opportunities being offered. It was interesting to note the ways in which enthusiasm for achievement and being involved in the life of the school had so easily been measured. What is disappointing is that these measurements do not feature as important nationally or locally when assessing school performance.

The assessment of the frequency and nature of repairs to the fabric of the school continued throughout the case study. It was difficult to find a balance between wear and tear and non-accidental damage. The amount of money spent each year on routine maintenance (servicing alarms, lifts, lights, cleaning, grounds maintenance and catering) by far outweighed replacing the occasional window or ceiling tile. The senior management team agreed that this was not a measurement, which was useful as the annual budget for repairs and maintenance was in excess of £40,000. This was not for vandalism but to service a large amount of plant in terms of its own electrical and engineering systems as well as the fabric of the building. What we did know was that vandalism was minimal in the school and we assumed that this reflected some student appreciation of the school and feelings of ownership.

Behaviour Management.

The staff view of general student behaviour over time was a complex indicator. It was found to be complex for several reasons. Firstly, it only took one or two examples of extreme behaviour from students for staff to decide that the entire school was in decline and that all students were rude and aggressive. To be fair, when staff are faced with very challenging behaviour which is offensive, they are affronted and upset. They feel that their commitment and hard work is not valued and without realising, group all students in this bracket. The converse is that, in the survey, 73% of all students supported the exclusion of all students who behaved badly and stopped others from working. Comments written on the back of the questionnaires included, *'Get rid of the trouble-makers'* and *'Expel the bullies'*. The difficult part for staff is that when their lessons are disrupted, everyone in the room is prevented from working and this has a lasting effect until the offender is removed. It is also my opinion that most teachers give everything to their job and care about their subject and the students they teach. From this perspective, lesson disruption by individuals or groups causes great disappointment and frustration on the teacher's part. The main outcomes that emerged from the performance indicator in terms of behaviour were a staff working party on student behaviour to formulate and implement strategies for behaviour management, and an evaluation of how students could be included more in the life of the school. The most consoling thing about the whole process was that staff were willing to give up even more of their own time to address a whole school problem. The situation created a bonding effect rather than the expected fragmentation effect where staff endeavoured to survive individually.

The staff working party examined behaviour management from two perspectives; the behaviour of students and the strategies employed by staff. The many examples and causes of disruptive behaviour amongst students were identified readily. There was no lack of understanding about the various causes and reasons behind disruptive behaviour. Solutions included a more streamlined disciplinary system whereby students were removed from situations and dealt with far more quickly than before. Staff were eager for severe offenders to be removed from the premises and excluded for break and lunchtime periods in order to preserve a more pleasant setting for the remaining students. There was a move for cohorts to be made aware of punishments given to offenders, both as a deterrent to would-be followers and a reassurance to the more law-abiding members of the school. In giving the staff working party ownership of the issue and a target to strive for (improved student behaviour around the school) there was also

a move to examine the positive influences that could be used. The staff quickly acknowledged that a regime of *'thou shalt not'* would be short-lived and ineffectual beyond the third day. They considered strategies that would involve the students in the life of the school in a positive way such as; a greater number of clubs and societies, the launch of the school council, greater opportunities for responsibility and competitions for achievement, attendance and maintaining allocated areas of the school litter-free.

The staff also became more conscious of the effect they had on the students. Students were often required to sit on a plastic chair for an hour and work in silence. A bell would then ring and they were required to go to another room and do it again for an hour. In this way it was argued that staff possibly made life difficult for each other. One teacher enforcing an hour of silent work from a teaching group meant that the same group in the next lesson would be less likely to settle to another hour of silent work. It was pointed out that all staff should be making more detailed lesson plans, varying the activities of a lesson and encouraging greater student participation. Some came up with the idea that once a punishment was issued the student should be able to work his way out of it through good behaviour and renewed effort for the rest of the lesson. Others talked of teacher-student relationships fostering improved behaviour and a mutual respect between teacher and student. To many staff the word *'relationships'* was a synonym for *'give in and tolerate anything'* rather than a crucial building block for co-operation and mutual respect. Attitudes such as *'I am the teacher therefore.....'* were dated and no longer had the currency they had ten years ago. It was also pointed out that once you had worked with a student on a personal matter or extra-curricular activity, a relationship was established which removed the likelihood of rude and offensive behaviour. The difficulty remained in asking colleagues to make the first move when they were already digging themselves in rather than managing the confrontation in the first place. Clearly, changes in behaviour across the school would take time to take effect. It was felt that senior students were more impervious to change and the incoming students were the ones to target in terms of influencing values, beliefs and a pride in their school community.

Although measurement of this indicator was more of a long-term issue, the application of this performance indicator had the effect of uniting staff and introducing additional strategies for behaviour management. The strategies had a wider effect of improving staff consistency in dealing with matters and students having more opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. Overall, staff and students were empowered to do

something about behaviour and attitudes. In the measurement of the above, success could only be determined by talking to staff and students. The exclusion statistics and the number of behaviour referrals had a limited use. They were quantitative but we did not know what lay behind them. Talking to the people involved with the system on a daily basis very quickly gave indications about student behaviour in the school. The trouble with this was that staff and student opinion changed by the day. It only needed one unfortunate disciplinary incident to influence feeling on the day and all the positive contributions that staff and students made were overshadowed. Teachers do hundreds of things each day and do them very well. The one bad experience is allowed to colour that person's day completely rather than being kept in perspective. A measurement chart or table cannot record or quantify this factor so it is difficult to discuss issues objectively.

Monitoring and Evaluation.

Evidence of a structured programme of Monitoring and Evaluation across the school, which includes the implementation of Performance Management.

The application of this performance indicator received a welcomed push in this school from statutory changes to teachers' pay and conditions (April 2000). It became statutory that all teachers were subject to performance management. This involved the agreement of performance objectives, which were reviewed annually, and conditional progression up a higher pay scale. The requirement greatly assisted the school move to implement monitoring and evaluation because teachers were subject to three classroom observations each year. The following success criteria were applied:

- adoption of a performance management policy;
- records of initial staff training and subsequent INSET in years to come;
- further governor training where appropriate;
- securing performance objectives for all staff;
- improved effectiveness of staff in the classroom and in their management roles;
- staff obtaining Threshold status and progressing up the higher pay scales.

A Performance Management policy was drafted and consulted upon with staff and governors. It contained all the statutory requirements and was ultimately adopted by governors in the autumn of 2000. This paved the way for an operational framework through which all staff agreed their own performance objectives with their immediate line manager. The operational framework structured the staff in such a way that each senior and middle manager was a team leader and responsible for a maximum of four people. Team leaders discussed performance objectives with the individuals in their

team and ultimately agreed them by the February 2001 deadline. Part of this agreement was three lesson observations each year and three objectives, which at least covered student progress and their continuing professional development (CPD). Where a member of staff had specific management responsibilities, this was required to feature as one of the three objectives. The application of this caused anxieties of what happened if they failed to achieve certain objectives, particularly if they worked with disaffected or special needs students. Professional associations were keen to scrutinise performance management policies and even produced their own models. Additional training time was bought-in and ultimately staff agreed objectives and started to adopt the changes as a way of working, rather than something they had to do in addition to their workload. The biggest encouragement was that the senior management team was only looking to record and evaluate the good things that most staff were already doing!

Logically, the agreement of performance objectives generated an expectation by the staff of further opportunities for professional development. Money for this was made available to all schools from the government's Standards Fund, which was allocated to schools via local education authorities. There was no shortage of money or available training, within or without the local education authority. The problem was finding supply staff to cover for regular teachers while they were out of school doing their training. During the period 2000/2001 there was a desperate shortage of teachers of any subject, supply or permanent. For several months during the above period staff training had to be cancelled or at least limited to one person rather than two or more. This limited staff access to in-service training at a time when it was most important. Maintenance of staff training records, individually or whole-school, did not present a problem and proved to be a very useful, quantitative data that could be used alongside all the other information.

School governors were involved in agreeing the performance objectives of headteachers. The DfES and local education authorities provided special training sessions for this. With the headteacher's performance objectives, there had to be three appointed governors who would ultimately set the objectives with the help of an external adviser. The external adviser's role was to advise and support the governors in setting the headteacher's performance objectives. The objectives had to cover the areas of Leadership and Management, Student Progress and one other such as Professional Development. To an extent this caused confusion amongst governors on the issue of pay and assessing the success of the objectives. The process was linked to assessing the

headteacher's pay each year and there was no comparative data available to guide governors on what was a reasonable pay increase for headteachers in similar schools. There was also the issue of the measurability of objectives. Governors needed specific guidance on the nature of objectives and how to use them to greatest effect. In essence, they needed to be simple and measurable. It was also quite feasible for them to be assessed over a two-year period, rather than one year.

As stated in the previous chapter, the biggest challenge was how to measure the influence of performance management on staff. Immediate feedback on the quality of teaching and learning was ascertained from classroom observations that were recorded on paper. Examination of lesson plans and students' work also gave first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning taking place. Evidence showed an improvement in the detail of planning and students' work. Planning included clear objectives and differentiated work for the range of ability in a single teaching group. Students' work was also more detailed and marked thoroughly with encouraging comments and explanations of errors made. Six months into the case study staff were already more confident about the whole process of monitoring and evaluation. They were slowly seeing it as supportive rather than as a stick to beat them with. Simple advantages for the staff were detailed lesson plans that could be used more than once and a structure where they could expect support from their immediate line manager. These two points alone made the whole monitoring and evaluation process more acceptable and sharpened professional performance. Quantitative measurements, in terms of student performance at Key Stages 3 and 4, had to be assessed over a longer period of time. Improvements in the management roles of appropriate staff would be assessed through the annual review of performance objectives. Data on the numbers of staff applying for and obtaining threshold status was simple enough. Numbers were limited because of the restrictions on qualifications and experience. In addition to this, staff were quite self-selecting and sometimes chose not to apply because of personal circumstances affecting their professional commitment. It is important to note that the time limit on the threshold application procedure was limited because of the fact that it preceded the performance management process. The DfEE expected the bulk of applications to be made in year one (2000/2001) and the remaining ones in year two (2001/2002). More informative in the longer term would be the number of staff in the school progressing the higher pay scale by virtue of performance management.

Information and Communications Technology.

Implementation of an ICT Development Plan which includes the development of staff and students in this area.

This performance indicator was simple in concept but had far-reaching effects on the staff and students of the school. It was compared to a *'Pandora's Box'* whereby the awe and wonder of its content hid a multitude of management issues. The success criteria included the following:

- a published ICT Development Plan;
- evidence of a suitable ICT infrastructure and staff training platform;
- evidence of a staff-training programme for ICT (personal and professional);
- evidence of ICT being in all subjects' schemes of work and taught across the curriculum;
- students achieving minimum levels of ICT capability each year across the curriculum.

Due to the various elements of the ICT Development Plan, both the construction of it and its implementation had a beneficial effect on the school as a whole. The plan required an ICT audit across the school. This revealed which subject areas were using ICT and which areas had effectively avoided it for the last three or four years. The audit was also combined with curriculum mapping. The subjects that were using ICT were noted for which elements of ICT they were delivering. The result of this was a clear picture of where ICT was being used across the curriculum and which aspects of ICT being taught. The completion of this section of the plan required that subject leaders agreed to submit where ICT would feature in their various schemes of work This caused consternation in some areas because there were still parts of the school's ICT infrastructure that did not function. This gave staff the opportunity to resist implementation a little longer until infrastructure issues were resolved. This became a priority and the decision was made by the senior management team and appropriate governors to lease hardware with maintenance levels included in the agreement. This resulted in the following: improved network capacity and server facility, tighter controls on access to files and printing, three computer rooms that all worked, ICT technician cover for immediate fault-finding and network management, a maintenance agreement with the leasing company, and internet access and e-mail accounts for staff and students. The above was a quantum leap from what staff and students were used to. It provided a morale boost for staff, prompting them to pursue their own ICT development

further and to use ICT in their subject delivery. The moves encouraged students to use ICT as an extension of their study skills and polish the presentation of work. Completion of the plan also released additional government finance via the Standards Fund, administered locally by education authorities. Part of the funding released was also used to improve Internet connections and to re-wire the school for more efficient networking. It was surprising the effect one document had!

The ICT infrastructure was born out of the need for improved staff and student access to the system as part of the school's teaching and learning programmes. There was also a need for a suitable training platform for the staff as well as a dedicated ICT administrative system, secure from student access. All changes to the ICT systems in the school were made with above requirements in mind. With this we were able to deploy staff on to personal ICT training programmes funded by the government's New Opportunities Fund (NOF). To monitor this, the Assistant Head - Curriculum regulated access to the training and kept a record of the take-up. On a professional level (delivery of a subject in the classroom) training was dictated by departmental plans derived from the School Development Plan and Action Plan. The plans identified the areas of ICT to be used and training was sought according to syllabus and the software recommended.

The measurement of whether or not ICT was being used in lessons, according to schemes of work was firstly the task of the subject leader or head of department. Lesson observations via performance management and regular departmental meetings were two immediate vehicles that were used to measure the progress of the performance indicator. Other methods employed were: monitoring visits by the senior management team, support visits by local education authority inspectors and examination of students' work that included the use of ICT. The speed at which this all took effect was surprising. Students' ICT capability accelerated because of improved access and increased opportunities to use ICT. Many of them were able to continue or reinforce the work on computers at home or stay beyond the official day and use the school facilities. What was easily measurable was the increased demand for computer time. An interesting observation by senior and middle managers was that teaching and learning was accelerated. This was substantiated by the amount of work being completed by students and the fact that staff were covering schemes of work quicker. This was exciting on the one hand but made staff to consider the adjustment of schemes of work to accommodate this phenomenon. Most marked were the discreet ICT courses and Graphic Design. Monitoring student ICT capability was easy in the lower school (years

7 - 9) as all students received discreet ICT lessons as part of the Technology provision. Progress was reported and recorded at regular interval anyway, so all the senior management team had to do was view the reports. In the upper school we had to rely either on the reports of students who were taking the discreet GCSE ICT course, or on the ICT section of other subject reports. Both sources were satisfactory for the monitoring we wanted to carry out.

The Use of Performance Indicators by the Senior Management Team.

The senior management team working to an agreed set of performance indicators, which are objectively monitored and evaluated.

The final performance indicator gave the senior management team a chance to step back and assess how closely we were working towards a set of indicators as well as reviewing our effectiveness. It enabled us to summarise the overall effect and we used the following success criteria:

- the adoption of an agreed set of performance indicators;
- evidence of progression towards each objective and indicator;
- evidence of monitoring and evaluation of the above process.

We clearly did agree a set of performance indicators to which we worked. These are well documented in the previous chapters. Evidence of progression towards each indicator was a deliberate and carefully chosen success criterion. The importance here was the concept of working towards. It was not about achieving x% because we believed that nothing in education was so black and white or finite. Certainly percentages are noted all the time in schools but they need a context within which to be meaningful. Most of the success criteria in the whole case study did not lend themselves to being *'done'*, as it were and crossed off because they were developments in progress that could be judged to be under way, progressing or having an effect. This even applied to the governors' monitoring of the senior management team. Our biggest challenge as a senior management team was the monitoring and evaluation of all the performance indicators. Much of this continued beyond the timescale of the case study because the effects of most were much more likely to manifest themselves later rather than instantly. The monitoring and evaluation was carried out by many of the existing mechanisms in school. These included the formal and informal systems used in performance management. Lesson observations, student progress and execution of management responsibilities all helped in the monitoring and evaluation process. In addition, each teacher was required to have their performance objectives reviewed each

year. When the first review cycles were completed, there would be further evidence of progress and an opportunity to evaluate matters further. There was also a built-in system of reporting progress to governors each term. This stemmed from the statutory requirement to report termly on the progress of the school's action plan. In effect, what seemed to be an unnecessary performance indicator in the first place proved to be a valuable checking instrument for the whole case study.

The above performance indicator and its related success criteria certainly affected the senior management team's self evaluation of their role. It also developed the governors' evaluation of the senior management team from a very superficial one to careful analysis of performance objectives and the school development plan. Both of these effects will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

All actions taken resulted in reactions, either in the same area, or elsewhere in the school. This professional tension was the effect of two worlds colliding which gave the case study a double edge. One was the world of the school as a human organisation with all its strengths and weaknesses operating on a daily basis to facilitate teaching and learning. The other world was that of measurement and performance which actually influence people's judgements and perceptions, and the levels of achievement required by government. This tension was managed in terms of management strategies to overcome problems and frustrations. Some of it, however, created further ways of increasing the quality of teaching and learning. The effects of the study will be summarised in the next and final chapter and it will examine the total effect that indicators can have on an organisation.

In Search of Strategic Performance
Chapter 7
The Trojan Horse

This case study demonstrates that it is possible for performance indicator systems to have many positive and indeed unintended effects on an organisation in addition to those that are intended. Firstly, the chapter summarises the total effect of the agreed performance indicator system, particularly from the human perspective and how it became a Trojan Horse for far more positive effects than anticipated. Areas explored here include the main findings from the implementation of each performance indicator, how the quantitative and qualitative data worked together and the lessons learned from the study and links to recent Government initiatives in education. Secondly, the significant long-term changes for the management of the school arising from the performance indicator system are explored, focusing on the senior management team's self-evaluation of their role and the Governors' evaluation of the senior management team. Thirdly, the chapter explores the wider implications of performance indicator systems in schools, such as performance-related pay, staff development and inspection versus school self-evaluation.

Findings from the Implementation of the Performance Indicator System.

The first performance indicator concerned the efficient use of attainment data by the senior management team to raise attainment. Initially thought to be a straightforward proposition, in reality it proved to be more complex. Difficulties arose because staff perceived the development of a central database to be additional work rather than a more efficient way of working. It also required staff to develop ICT skills, which some (at least 50%) did not have before. Although this was more work in the long-term it led to increased efficiency and the saving of time, though all staff did not see it this way. The challenges presented with this performance indicator centred around two particular success criteria; changes in teaching styles and changes in the styles of students' learning. As the case study progressed the senior management team agreed that these were changes that would take more time to detect and analyse. Although for many, change brings a feeling of threat and insecurity, the success criteria were important milestones in school improvement and in my opinion there was a security in the very fact that we were facilitating these changes and encouraging them to happen. There was similar satisfaction from within the senior management team in knowing that the use of targets at different levels was also being developed.

The second performance indicator concerned further use of quantitative and qualitative data by the senior management team to enhance the school's effectiveness. Working closely with this performance indicator, the senior management team valued the opportunity to integrate the two types of data. The success criteria primarily involved quantitative data but in order to make these more meaningful, it was important to consider the reasons why the data was as it was. The issue, for example, was not the actual attendance rate but why it was that particular rate and why it had increased or decreased. Similarly, more important than the actual number of students involved in extra-curricular activities were the reasons for the numbers and what could be done to increase the interest. The best example of quantitative and qualitative data working hand in hand was that of behaviour management. Percentages of exclusions were one thing but the reasons why were another. Knowing what students thought about the school and the fact that they wanted a greater say in the running of it was more valuable as data than the identification of the figure itself. This particular performance indicator helped the senior management team to establish a very important foothold for qualitative data in performance indicator systems. Without qualitative data the more immediate quantitative data remained inert, only useful as a statistical chart and misleading to those who did not know the school well.

Implementation of the mechanical functions of the third performance indicator was relatively simple. The implications for the senior management team were more complex and required careful handling within the school's strategic planning. Some of the more complex issues included long-term continuing professional development for staff. Performance Management immediately raised staff expectations about further training. There was often a tension between staff needs as determined by the school development plan and staff desires as determined by their own wishes which were not necessarily linked to improving their current performance. Staff expectations for training overwhelmed the budget as well as the immediate availability of professional development courses.

The measurement of staff performance management included immediate feedback on the quality of teaching and learning from classroom observations, lesson plans and students' work. Six months into the case study, staff were already more confident about the whole process of monitoring and evaluation. Staff commented that the monitoring and evaluation process sharpened professional performance with comments such as,

'Well it certainly makes you ask yourself exactly what are the learning objectives for each lesson' and *'When you know that somebody else is looking at you closely, it definitely focuses your planning and classroom teaching'*. However, student performance had to be assessed over a longer period of time and it was the possible link between staff performance and student performance which was a more interesting aspect of the case study. It was impossible to say within the timescale of the case study whether or not this particular performance indicator would influence staff to be more effective professionals, continually reflecting on their performance and that of their students. The findings, however, suggested that there was a correlation between highly structured lessons and student performance at all ability levels. These more deep-rooted effects, assessing student progress from their prior attainment, would take much longer to measure. This leads on to the question of performance-related pay for teachers. In my view, it would be a dangerous move to simply pay teachers by results. Those staff charged with the teaching of top ability students could be seen to be at an advantage over those who work on a daily basis with students who have learning difficulties or who are less motivated. Unless proposals for performance-related pay take these factors into account and focus on the concept of progress then it will be a blunt instrument which will do more harm than good in the teaching profession. There must be joined-up thinking on this issue so that connections are made between students' prior attainment and the progress they make over time. The only remaining problem is that of what I call *the social and emotional baggage* that children bring into schools every day of the week. These are the variables that cannot be legislated for at national or school level. The highest quality planning and resourcing is still subject to the complexities of any human organisation. Both of these issues are examined later in the chapter.

Similarly, improvements in the management roles of staff with additional responsibilities had to be assessed through the annual review of performance objectives and the senior management team felt that the 12 month timescale did not assist the implementation of such performance indicator systems. However, the senior management team did acknowledge improvements in the more immediate aspects of the staff's work such as improved planning, clearer delivery of lessons and better use of data to inform planning.

Implementation of an ICT development plan, the fourth performance indicator, had far more effect on staff and students than the others. The ICT infrastructure helped to accelerate the school development plan, staff CPD and student performance. Due to the

improvements in the ICT infrastructure there was an immediate opportunity for staff to use the training platforms to further their own ICT capability and use this to assist with the demand for reviewed schemes of work, lessons plans and resources. Staff were more positive about the plan and even the most negatively positive comment was, *'about time too'*. Students accelerated their own use of ICT, which was often already ahead of many staff. All staff and students were provided with e-mail accounts and given access to Internet facilities. The senior management team found an increase in staff use of ICT and an increased enthusiasm amongst the students not only for ICT but also for their studies generally. The ICT performance indicator had become a wooden horse for far more development than anticipated. Interestingly, this did not easily translate into a table of data. The effects had to be carefully recorded in longhand for governors to read and later explore for themselves when they visited the school.

Finally, the senior management team needed to be assessed that they were working to an agreed set of performance indicators, which were objectively monitored and evaluated. The value of this was that it gave the senior management team a chance to step back and assess how closely we were working to a set of agreed performance indicators. This was a further check on our progress as a team and it ensured a built-in self-evaluation process. The actual conscious move by the senior management team to create time to stand back and evaluate their role was another very helpful outcome of the case study. By trying to be as helpful and efficient as possible, the senior management team was often overwhelmed with demands from within the school. When external demands were added it became clear that the senior management team could not continue in its present format and be an effective operational, strategic team. This realisation brought about further restructuring of the team's responsibilities, further reductions in their teaching load and the long-term consideration of appointing a deputy headteacher. In my view, all these changes are likely to improve the operational and strategic function of the senior management team as well as the quality of support and leadership available to the rest of the staff.

Not only did this performance indicator affect the senior management team's self-evaluation of their role, it also affected the governors' evaluation of the SMT. Senior governors (chairs of the standing committees) began to meet more often and were supplied with report papers written by members of the senior management team. An example of this was the termly progress report of the post OFSTED Action Plan whereby each member of the SMT provided a detailed written report on the key issue

he or she had lead responsibility for. Although the papers were vital to governors' evaluation of aspects of the schools work, they were also used to evaluate SMT effectiveness. For the first time governors came into school and spoke directly with middle managers about their work and how the SMT were supporting them. This, combined with performance management of the SMT, was used by governors to gain a full picture of what was being achieved in the school and the role that various staff played in this. It is important to record the fact that governors were eager to evaluate the school and SMT performance by looking behind the quantitative data presented to them. Their evaluations became far more comprehensive than before and required much more than verbal reassurances from the headteacher.

Lessons Learned for Long-Term Change.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the case study highlighted significant changes in the management of the school There were several important factors regarding the effect of performance indicators for the long term strategic planning of the school which arose from the research:

- it is important that the people who are going to use the performance indicator system have a say in its design and agree the final system. Indicators must be relevant, realistic, measurable, achievable and challenging;
- the indicators and associated success criteria are more effective if they are directly linked into the work or developments already being pursued. The indicators should not detract from the existing development work and those who have to implement them should be able to identify relevance and benefits;
- constraints involved with the additional work involved with the indicators should be acknowledged and accommodated. This will involve setting-up the indicators and monitoring them. Staff should not feel that they are being expected to perform and achieve without support. Time and support may have to be created as a priority. This confirms that the developments and achievements expected are recognised as important and vital to the success of the organisation. (Fitzgibbon, 1996:160);
- it is important to provide feedback on the progress of the implementation and to update personnel on what has been achieved. This is crucial to maintain motivation and morale;
- quantitative and qualitative data were viewed in this study as mutually important. Certainly in the case of this school one kind of data helped to give meaning to the other. Quantitative data alone proved to be merely statistical. We found that qualitative data on its own needed further evidence to set it in context. Together,

quantitative and qualitative data helped to ensure understanding and gave meaning and contextual credibility to the case study;

- performance indicators have to be designed into the managerial structures of the organisation as well as into the thinking of those who work as part of the same system. In this way they are not seen as additions to people's workloads but more efficient and effective ways of working.

From the above points for long term change there were implications for the management of the school. The case study findings noted above came at a time of significant developments in education emanating from central government such as performance management (including Threshold status) and monitoring and evaluation. As indicated earlier in the study, performance indicators are central to a school's developmental processes. Performance management requires the agreement of objectives and those concerned need to know how and when the objectives are achieved. The performance management process is cyclical and involves other staff and the students taught. There are many success criteria and ways of measuring performance involved in the process. The case study has highlighted the important principles above that need to be adopted if these new practices are to be seen as fair and helpful in the organisation of a school. The same argument can be applied to monitoring and evaluation. It is important that the staff structures in a school are suitable for this and facilitate effective management at all levels. At middle and senior management levels this includes the strategic role as well as the operational.

The Wider Implications of Performance Management in Schools

From the case study it is possible to identify further implications of performance indicator systems in schools which arose during the research. These may be divided into three main areas, performance-related pay, staff development and school self-evaluation.

i) Performance-Related Pay

A performance indicator system in a school can easily produce data on the effectiveness of departments and individuals and schools may attempt to use this as the basis for performance-related pay. However, the fairest measures of the value added or effectiveness of a department that can be produced are only *residuals*, what is left over after some important factors have been taken into account. Fitz-Gibbon (1996:189)

states that, *'A large proportion of the variation in outcomes remains unexplained in a system as complex as education'*. Whereas the residual may be the best available indicator, not all the variation from year to year in the residuals can be attributable to those teaching the subject. There are many variables at play, not the least of which is that subject teachers overlap in certain aspects of their teaching and the notion that teachers are individually responsible for students' achievements in certain areas would be a difficult one to sustain. It is also important to bear in mind the points made earlier in the chapter regarding other variables such as *emotional and social baggage*. The same principles are applicable to those with management responsibilities. Even the most successful and strategic of managers are reliant on the co-operation and success of others.

Fitz-Gibbon (1996) argues that if performance-related pay was ever going to be a reality, there would have to be a complete monitoring system to introduce it. There are very few examples of performance-related pay systems at work in any strict sense of the term. With regard to the United States of America, Jacobsen concluded that *'Examining Performance Related Pay in practice revealed that it has been more of a subject of debate than a reality in the USA'* (Jacobsen, 1992:50). Jacobsen stated that over 99% of teachers were employed in school districts that utilised uniform salary scales rather than performance-related pay. The few exceptions appeared to be wealthy districts giving discreet, inconspicuous pay awards to almost all of their teachers, and it was commented that these plans did not appear to have an effect on the way in which teachers teach. One of the concerns arising from the case study in my school is that even with an agreed performance indicator system, it would be invidious to reward teachers simply for student attainment because of the range of ability and motivation found within a single teaching group. As stated earlier, there must be joined-up thinking that connects students' prior attainment and the progress they make over time. Taking this into account along with other variables such as the social and emotional baggage, it would still be difficult to make a fair assessment, whatever the ability or motivation of the students. Teachers need to be rewarded for management tasks and progress made with particular students rather than simply being paid for high grades.

ii) Staff Development.

The case study also highlighted the positive effects of performance indicators on staff development. The main effect was to focus staff development to meet the needs of the school. The days of staff selecting courses because they appealed to their personal

preferences have been rapidly overtaken due to the public expectations of school performance and the move towards greater accountability regarding schools' budgets. With the introduction of performance management, staff are focussing their needs more sharply on courses that will enable them to meet their targets and increase student performance. Early observations within my own school show that the senior management team is focussing the allocation of staff development money on the progression of the schools' development plans. This was certainly the effect on staff development in this case study. The tension was not with staff agreeing the professional development required but with not having sufficient resources and the freedom to facilitate the development opportunities quickly enough.

iii) Inspection versus School Self-Evaluation.

The findings from the case study further indicate that the performance indicator system was enhanced when both quantitative and qualitative data were used. Earlier in the case study I drew attention to the fact that a lot of effort was wasted in in the collection of data by several different agencies simultaneously. Schools collect the same data as local education authorities and OFSTED. Fitz-Gibbon (1996:201) suggests that schools could capitalise on this by keeping their data to themselves until after an inspection and then provide a validity check on inspectors' judgements. Under the current arrangements OFSTED make judgements about a school's performance data prior to the inspection and also use it to identify areas for closer scrutiny. This case study has helped to show that a more effective system uses a more holistic approach to data-gathering and its interpretation. The large amounts of data generated by schools could be used more effectively for purposes of self-evaluation. A process of school self-evaluation also helps managers to identify key issues for development and strategies can be generated to ensure that the necessary developments become reality. As long as the school development plan is secure and the school has the strategic capability, there is no reason why OFSTED as we know it should not be replaced with occasional validation visits from a regional office. In this way schools would have full responsibility for their own development and the burden of monitoring is reduced to validation visits on a national or regional basis. This approach would drastically reduce the operating costs of the current inspection system and would be more likely to secure accurate judgements on schools' performance within school and local contexts. The reliability and validity of data would then be much more secure than it currently is in OFSTED inspections, Gray (1999).

Final Word

In studying student achievement, Thomas and Goldstein (1995) stress the importance of relating such progress to background factors and those over which schools can have some control. Agreed performance indicator systems in schools would ensure that this happened if they were built into the system's design. They even suggest a need for long-term research into the processes which shape the achievements of different kinds of students in different types and organisation of school. This links in with Myers and Goldstein (1996) who argue the case for contextualising other school outcomes in addition to examination results. If used with care and in conjunction with other information, this kind of performance indicator system can be a valuable way for individual schools to evaluate their performance. Such information may also be of help to those concerned with supporting and improving schools in order to direct appropriate resources to match needs. Myers and Goldstein also argue that this type of analysis may also be useful to identify the factors that are associated with student progress because this is a prerequisite of attempts to help all schools improve.

At the beginning of this chapter I described the performance indicator system adopted in my school as a Trojan Horse whereby there were far more positive effects on the school than anticipated. The senior management team agreed that the system, although living on beyond the period of research, has already helped the school to identify its strengths far more extensively than before. Current systems of inspection and monitoring at national and local level seem very much to be based on a deficiency model. Schools are judged with the quantitative data to hand and a token piece of information about the area the school serves. Decisions are then made about schools *'causing concern'*, not having *'robust systems'* or not having *'the capability to improve'*. I consider this to be the very deficiency model which holds schools back from realising their potential. At certain times schools do not have the opportunity to carry out all the necessary data processing and strategic review. Schools have to cope with families, problematic social situations, bereavement, conflict, and insufficient resources. Teachers are excellent practitioners in the art of the possible but they are currently subject to systems which only recognise a small and visible part of their work. Most of the external evaluation of schools is couched in terms of what has not been achieved; it is the language of deficit rather than achievement. There is another way of using performance indicator systems in schools such as the one adopted in this study. They can give external and self-evaluators a way forward in measuring a school's achievement, within context, and against a framework of local and national standards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
Pilot Questionnaire

This questionnaire is concerned with the understanding and potential use of Performance Indicator Systems (PIS) as a means of improving performance at senior or middle management level. Fitz-Gibbon (1990) describes a performance indicator as, "*an item of information collected at regular intervals to track the performance of a system*". Performance indicators are collected in many complex organisations and systems which deliver a service. Please read the questions carefully and circle one of the numbers underneath each question to indicate your feelings.
The numbers stand for the following:

1	Strongly agree	4	Not convinced
2	Agree	5	Disagree
3	Agree to a certain extent	6	Strongly disagree

1.
I understand a Performance Indicator System to be a collection of measurements used by senior managers to check on other employees.

1 2 3 4 5 6

2.
I understand a Performance Indicator System to be a method of reviewing performance to aid development.

1 2 3 4 5 6

3.
A Performance Indicator System would help me with my particular tasks as a senior manager in the school.

1 2 3 4 5 6

4.
A Performance Indicator System would help me focus more strategically and provide valuable feedback in terms of development and success.

1 2 3 4 5 6

5.
Performance Indicators are normally used as identifiers of performance deficit rather than measurements of achievement.

1 2 3 4 5 6

6.
A Performance Indicator System would help to strengthen the SMT's ability to manage the school more effectively.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7.
A Performance Indicator System would serve as a tool to inform decisions and actions regarding management.

1 2 3 4 5 6

8.
Quantitative data provides the best feedback in terms of how successful I am in my specific management responsibilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

9.
Qualitative data provides the best feedback in terms of how successful I am in my specific management responsibilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6

10.
The best Performance Indicator Systems comprise a careful combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

1 2 3 4 5 6

11.
Please complete the following:

Your main management role:

Performance Indicators which I think would be useful in evaluating the above role:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2

Performance Indicator Questionnaire

This questionnaire designed to determine common perceptions of Performance Indicators as a means of improving performance at senior and middle management levels in schools. Fitz-Gibbon (1990) describes a performance indicator as, "*an item of information collected at regular intervals to track the performance of a system*". Performance indicators are collected in many complex organisations and systems which deliver a service. **Consider the indicators simply as pieces of information.**

Please read the questions carefully and circle one of the numbers underneath each question to indicate your feelings. The numbers stand for the following:

1	Agree	3	Disagree
2	Not convinced	4.	Strongly disagree

1.
I understand a Performance Indicator System to be a collection of measurements used by senior managers to check on other employees.

1 2 3 4

2.
I understand a Performance Indicator System to be a method of reviewing performance to aid development.

1 2 3 4

3.
A Performance Indicator System would help me with my particular tasks as a manager in the school.

1 2 3 4

4.
A Performance Indicator System would help me focus more strategically and provide valuable feedback in terms of development and success.

1 2 3 4

5.
Performance Indicators are normally used as identifiers of performance deficit rather than measurements of achievement.

1 2 3 4

6.
A Performance Indicator System would serve as a tool to inform decisions and actions regarding management.

1 2 3 4

7.
Quantitative data provides the best feedback in terms of how successful I am in my specific management responsibilities.

1 2 3 4

8.
Qualitative data provides the best feedback in terms of how successful I am in my specific management responsibilities.

1 2 3 4

9.
Please complete the following:

Your main management role:.....

Give 2 Performance Indicators which you think would be useful in evaluating the above role:

•

•

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 3
Student Questionnaire

As a staff we are currently looking at ways in which the school could be improved. Please help us by completing this questionnaire. At the end of each question circle one of the 4 responses.

1 = I agree
2 = I agree to some extent
3 = I am not totally convinced
4 = I disagree

Do not write your name or any teacher's name on this paper, simply your year group.

I am in Year 7 8 9 10 11 (Please circle your year group)

1. I enjoy being a student at this school	1	2	3	4
2. I am proud of my school	1	2	3	4
3. The school offers many opportunities	1	2	3	4
4. I enjoy most of my lessons	1	2	3	4
5. I am learning a lot in this school	1	2	3	4
6. Teachers don't mind if I make a lot of mistakes in my work as long as I try my best	1	2	3	4
7. Most of my lessons are interesting	1	2	3	4
8. My work is displayed on walls around the school	1	2	3	4
9. My teachers are interested in the work I produce	1	2	3	4
10. My teachers set homework regularly	1	2	3	4
11. I usually do the homework I am given	1	2	3	4
12. This school was the one I wanted when I left my primary school	1	2	3	4
13. When I have a problem with my work I ask my teacher for help	1	2	3	4
14. I think that the school expects our behaviour to be good at all times	1	2	3	4
15. I think the teachers are fair when they punish a student	1	2	3	4
16. I think the teachers are fair when they reward or praise a student	1	2	3	4
17. I think the school could be more strict	1	2	3	4
18. I think the school could reward students more for good work or behaviour	1	2	3	4
19. If you really misbehave at school something is done about it	1	2	3	4
20. The school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning	1	2	3	4
21. I worry about being bullied at school	1	2	3	4
22. The school deals quickly with bullies	1	2	3	4
23. I would like to have more responsibility in school	1	2	3	4
24. The staff keep a close eye on attendance	1	2	3	4
25. The teachers are good at detecting truancy	1	2	3	4
26. There are plenty of opportunities for students to be involved in the life of the school (clubs, societies, fixtures etc.)	1	2	3	4
27. At lunchtimes there are places I can go in the school to be comfortable	1	2	3	4
28. I feel that all my achievements are recognised and rewarded	1	2	3	4
29. Students should be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school	1	2	3	4

If I could change 3 things about the school I would:

1.

2.

3.

Thank you for your help!
April 2000.

Out of a survey of 694 students across Years 7-11 the following responses were noted:

68% of students enjoy being at the school

58% of students are proud of their school

47% of students find their lessons uninteresting

70% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

79% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

55% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

86% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 45% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

65% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

78% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 51% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

43% of students think that the school could be more strict

31% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

71% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

42% of students worry about being bullied at school

54% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

62% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

84% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

YEAR 7

Out of a survey of 166 students in Year 7 the following responses were noted:

76% of students enjoy being at the school

71% of students are proud of their school

48% of students find their lessons uninteresting

72% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

86% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

65% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

88% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 58% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

78% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

89% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 62% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

35% of students think that the school could be more strict

23% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

73% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

53% of students worry about being bullied at school

39% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

69% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

88% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

YEAR 8

Out of a survey of 154 students in Year 8 the following responses were noted:

72% of students enjoy being at the school

65% of students are proud of their school

47% of students find their lessons uninteresting

62% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

84% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

61% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

85% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 54% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

69% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

86% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 59% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

45% of students think that the school could be more strict

36% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

75% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

47% of students worry about being bullied at school

46% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

67% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

84% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

YEAR 9

Out of a survey of 152 students in Year 9 the following responses were noted:

71% of students enjoy being at the school

66% of students are proud of their school

48% of students find their lessons uninteresting

66% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

80% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

54% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

88% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 41% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

58% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

79% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 40% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

40% of students think that the school could be more strict

30% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

68% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

42% of students worry about being bullied at school

61% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

66% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

81% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

YEAR 10

Out of a survey of 117 students in Year 10 the following responses were noted:

55% of students enjoy being at the school

44% of students are proud of their school

64% of students find their lessons uninteresting

70% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

70% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

49% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

83% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 47% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

54% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

79% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 40% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

37% of students think that the school could be more strict

33% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

67% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

34% of students worry about being bullied at school

65% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

57% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

83% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

YEAR 11

Out of a survey of 105 students in Year 11 the following responses were noted:

58% of students enjoy being at the school

31% of students are proud of their school

74% of students find their lessons uninteresting

83% of students say that their work is not displayed around the school

67% of students feel that teachers set homework regularly

40% of students feel that teachers are interested in the work they produce

82% of students think that the school should reward them more for good work or behaviour

Only 33% of students feel that their achievements are recognised and rewarded

63% of students feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to be more involved in the life of the school

81% of students feel that the school expects behaviour to be good at all times

Only 50% of students think that teachers are fair when they punish students

63% of students think that the school could be more strict

40% of students think that if you really misbehave not enough is done about it

73% of students believe that the school should exclude students who behave badly and stop others from learning

24% of students worry about being bullied at school

70% of students feel that the school does not deal quickly enough with bullies

42% of students would like to have more responsibilities in school

80% of students wanted to be given the chance to influence decisions made about the running of the school

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

WINTON SCHOOL FOR BOYS
Bournemouth

Mr I Johnson

Date of inspection: 7-11 December 1998
Previous inspection: September 1993

The school was inspected by 12 inspectors, led by Mrs Gillian C Barnes. **This document summarises the full inspection report, which is available from the school.**

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	810
Pupils with English as an additional language:	0.37%
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	11%
Pupils on register of special educational needs:	258
Average number of pupils per teacher:	21

Winton school was established in 1877 and is a single-sex modern (non-selective) school for boys aged 11-16 years. It serves the town of Bournemouth where at least 18% of pupils are educated in grammar schools. The prior attainments at key stage 2 of pupils entering Winton school are very varied. The intake includes some very able pupils and a significant number with difficulties which impede learning.

In 1995 the school was rebuilt outside its traditional catchment area as a school for 750 pupils. The popularity of the school attracts pupils from a wide area and leads to a demand for places far in excess of the number available. The school is respected for its standards and has strong roots in the wider community established through the generations it has educated.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- secures good overall standards of attainment in relation to modern schools nationally
- facilitates a high level of enjoyment in learning
- instils confidence in all pupils and promotes high moral standards
- provides good opportunities for sport and other extra-curricular activities
- teachers know and support their pupils well and provide good careers guidance
- there is a lot of good teaching which enables many pupils to make good progress
- good use is made of the high quality accommodation and facilities particularly the library

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- procedures to ensure optimum performance for individual pupils are not established
- some managers spend too much time on routine administration and too little on strategic management
- agreed policies, practices and expectations are applied inconsistently
- there are very few effective strategies in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school
- arrangements to ensure the appropriate development of information technology skills are inadequate
- standards of pupil behaviour are inconsistent

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school responded promptly to some of the issues identified for improvement in 1993 but pre-occupation with the relocation of the school led to others being addressed only recently. An appropriate range of teaching strategies is now used throughout the school but regular monitoring of teaching remains inconsistent across departments. Assessment arrangements have improved but plans to record and track pupil progress over time are not yet in place. A structured programme for personal development now operates successfully. Standards have improved in modern foreign languages but staffing difficulties in music and insufficient teaching time in religious education impede the pace of progress in these subjects. Implementation of the recently introduced plan for senior staff to support the work of middle-management colleagues has been slowed by the excessive workloads experienced by all members of the senior team.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The following table shows standards achieved by 14 and 16 year olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1998.

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Key Stage 3 tests	B	A*
GCSE 5+ A*-C grades	D	B
GCSE overall points score	C	A

Key	
very high in comparison	*A**
well above average	*A*
above average	*B*
average	*C*
below average	*D*
well below average	*E*

In 1998, results in the key stage 3 national tests, for the combined performance in the three core subjects (English, mathematics and science), were very high in comparison with the average for modern schools and above the average for all schools. Individual subject performance in each of these three subjects was also above the national average for all schools particularly the proportion attaining the higher levels in mathematics. Performance at the higher levels in science fell that year. Performance at the nationally expected level had also been above the national average in all three subjects in 1997 but that year it was below average for the higher levels in English.

Performance in GCSE across the full grade range A*-G in 1998 was well above the average for modern schools and in line with the average for all schools nationally. In 1998, although the percentage securing five or more passes in the grade range A*-C fell from 46% in 1997 to 33%, this standard is still well above the average for modern schools. It is below the average for all schools. The best results in GCSE in 1998 were obtained in science, history and information technology. In 1997 the strongest subjects were English, mathematics, art, information technology, geography, history and German. Some aspects of design and technology and French show consistently the weakest performance in examinations. For several years prior to 1998 the proportion securing five or more passes in the grade range A*-C had been in line with the national average for all maintained schools.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	satisfactory	art, mathematics, science, physical education	design and technology, English, modern foreign languages, music
Years 10-11	satisfactory	mathematics, science, art	design and technology
English	satisfactory		
Mathematics	excellent		

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 85% of lessons; in 32% it was good and in a further 17% it was very good. In the 15% of lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory, the majority were in key stage 3 but a few unsatisfactory lessons were observed in both key stages

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very variable. Many pupils are polite, courteous and well-behaved but a significant strand of poor behaviour lowers the overall standard.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Similar to the national average.
Ethos*	Positive relationships, equality of opportunity, a high level of enjoyment and effective pastoral care support learning. Expectations are insufficiently challenging for some pupils.
Leadership and management	Positive leadership by the headteacher and strong governor support. Conscientious leadership at other levels. Inconsistent implementation of policies. Inexperienced monitoring and evaluation. The school is poised for the next stage of development.
Curriculum	Satisfactory framework. Some weaknesses in the provision for information technology, the content in music and religious education and in overall monitoring. Good range of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good for those with learning or physical difficulties. There is no structured programme for higher attaining pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral and social development are strong features. Cultural awareness is promoted. Some aspects of spiritual development are unsatisfactory.
Staffing, accommodation and resources	Staffing is adequate with strong support from non-teaching staff. The high quality accommodation is already threatened by group sizes and overcrowding in communal areas. Resources are good and usually used well.
Value for money	Good. The school operates efficiently and is working to erase a past deficit. Strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of spending are under-developed.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
• standards of care, concern and security • attempts to secure good discipline and morals • insistence on high standards of appearance • extra-curricular activities especially sport • recognition of pupils' talents • good exam results • welcoming and listening attitude	• insufficient demands on 'more able' pupils • size of classes • disruptive behaviour in some classes • insufficient explanation about grouping • information about the curriculum • homework arrangements

The positive views of parents are supported by inspectors' observations and judgements. In the welcoming and supportive environment pupils feel valued and are usually aware of the high standards set by the headteacher. Teachers are hardworking, know their pupils well and encourage them to succeed.

A reduction in teaching staff has resulted in some large classes often housed in poorly ventilated rooms. Permitted noise levels are too high in some lessons and a minority of pupils are rude and disruptive in class or too boisterous when unsupervised. Higher attaining (more able) pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work with which they are presented. Homework is set, but the policy and use of the diary for recording work, are in need of review. Explanations of grouping and curriculum content are available for parents.

OTHER INFORMATION

The contractor appointed by OFSTED for this inspection was ***Learntech Ltd*** *(incorporating the Wessex Inspection Unit). Woodriding, Hale Purlieu, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 2QZ*

Any comments, concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made to the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to The Registrar, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6SE

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