UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Education

TWO HEADS ONE TALE

A study of the merger of two independent preparatory schools

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study sets out to investigate the impact of the merger of two
preparatory schools. Specifically it examines the management,
implementation and fallout through a case study of the merger of two
preparatory schools.

Its methodological approach is that of a single case study using one to one
interviews, participant observation and a thorough review of the
documentation surrounding it.

It begins by considering the characteristics which constitute a typical
independent preparatory school and the apparent lack of research in this
area. From this it undertakes an extensive literature review of previous
research into corporate mergers, and leadership and management issues in
organizations undergoing major change.

The main conclusions from the study are that while economic and political
factors impact on the future stability of independent schools, they do not
constitute the only reasons to merge. Competition for a share of the market
has never been keener and preparatory schools have become more business
orientated. School culture is shown to be less crucial as a consideration in
forward planning for merger, than critical appraisal of personnel who will
carry forward this change.

Finally, recommendations are made for future research in the independent
preparatory school, such as, communication and leadership skills,
governance and planning for change in the field of the management of
school mergers.

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Abbreviations

DfEE: Department for Education and Employment

DES: Department of Education and Science

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

GSA: Girls' Schools Association

HMC: Headmasters' Conference

IAPS: Independent Association of Preparatory Schools

ISI: Independent Schools' Inspectorate

ISIS: Independent Schools' Information Service

ISJC: Independent Schools' Joint Council

Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years independent education in this country has undergone many changes, not least because of the economic climate and government reforms. Examples of this can be traced, in part, to the recession of the early nineties, which caused many families to review the cost of private education, and government cuts in the armed forces, which also reduced the amount of financial assistance given for school fees. The knock-on effect has influenced market forces, and in some cases has forced the closure of many of the smaller independent schools that could not compete with increased competition. For some, such as: Alleyn Court and Eton House (1993), Forres and Sandle Manor (1993), Cheam and Hawtreys (1994) – and latterly Inhurst; Penrhos and Rydal (1995), in order to survive, amalgamation, or merger, has become the only answer. Figures published by ISIS (Independent Schools' Information Service) of closures and openings of independent schools, for the period 1988 to 1997 are shown in Figure 1, full details of which appear in Appendix 2.

	New Schools	Closures
1988	45	30
1989	65	33
1990	50	45
1991	60	59
1992	56	68
1993	63	51
1994	73	85
1995	66	62
1996	68	49
1997	64	92
Up to March 1998	18	13

Fig. 1

(Closures and Openings of Independent Schools 1988 to 1997)

The growth of mergers is also a reflection of a combination of other factors, such as an increased awareness by governing bodies of population growth and decline in their catchment areas, the optimal size of their schools and the utilization of their buildings, which, in turn, affect financial viability. These issues are common to schools in both the maintained and independent sectors, but as this study aims to show, not all schools manage mergers in the same way. Where groups of individuals are influential in the process of change, it is vital that machinations are seen to be clear, and that appropriate checks and balances are understood by all stakeholders, thus the main research question arises: is there a case for the implementation of a clear and universally acceptable framework for use in preparatory school mergers as there is in the maintained sector?

The following section sets out to look at why mergers are a worthwhile subject for research, and how this particular study will be managed.

1.1   The Research

The issue of school mergers is an interesting one as it is not solely the preserve of independent schools, and it appears to be part of a nationwide growing trend to improve education provision while at the same time maximising efficient use of existing school buildings and school funds.

This study looks at the merger of two preparatory schools. It examines the three main stages of planning, implementation and fallout. The management of change in the merger process forms the basis of this single case which unveils the political and micro-political issues of organizational change in the researcher's own school.

There are no guarantees that a merger is going to solve the problems that led to its initiation, therefore due consideration will be given to factors which may influence the process. As well as the main research question which explores a case for implementing a clear and universally acceptable framework for use in preparatory school mergers, the researcher will also consider the following questions:

- What factors influence the process of merger in preparatory schools?
- What ought to be the involvement of stakeholders, such as teachers and parents?
- How does governance of a preparatory school influence change in a merger?
- Do leadership styles influence the outcomes of a merger?

These are the most pertinent questions for several reasons: Firstly, no matter what the reasons are for a major change, such as merger, everyone who is concerned with its implementation will have concerns regarding the reasons for the change and the means of achieving it. Fullan (2001) states:

> *Clear statements at the outset may help, but do not eliminate the problem...The presence or absence of mechanisms to address the ongoing problems of meaning – at the beginning and as people try out new ideas – is crucial for success, because it is at the individual level that change does or does not occur. (p.47)*

He goes on to suggest that:

> *There are no hard and fast rules, but rather a set of suggestions or implications given the contingencies specific to local situations. (p.49)*

Secondly, these considerations, while acknowledging the individual level at which change occurs, do not address the question of who develops the change. In the case of school mergers this refers to the parents, teachers and governors ; how much, if any, involvement these groups should have, and how much influence they exert are essential factors to be weighed up at the initiation stage. However, it is necessary to point out here that it is for individual governing bodies to decide how much involvement is desirable, and that a single case study will not be sufficient to determine a 'right' or 'wrong' way of involving stakeholders. It is also at the initiation stage that emphasis should be placed on the fact that change is a process and not an event, and what happens at one stage will affect subsequent stages.

Furthermore, as change occurs at an individual level, the initiation and implementation stages in the merger process are likely to be influenced by their leadership. The question of whether leadership styles influence the outcomes of a merger is worth exploring and therefore forms an integral part in this research.

It is with these questions in mind that this chapter goes on to explain the reasons for its undertaking and at the background to the two schools involved in the case study.

1.2 Background

Competition between preparatory schools has increased over the last two decades. There are many reasons for this, some of which have been outlined in the introduction, others of which will be explained later in the study. The outcome of market forces on schools is that some expand and others contract. This study is about the *process* of amalgamation of two independent schools that chose to combine as a result of market forces. The wide range of factors that might be significant in understanding the merger are explored; these include economic, political and micro-political issues, staff involvement, governance of preparatory schools and accountability to the parents when undertaking major change.

Consideration has been given to the meaning which those involved in the amalgamation, gave to the various factors that impinged on their daily lives. This meant looking at managerial decisions and policies, not only the reasons given for such decisions, but also how these evolved and how they affected those involved. This was not a simple question of identifying the respective governors' values and their decision-making, as key players in the merger, but also parents, since they influenced managerial decisions.

Another objective of this study is to reflect the feelings and perceptions of decisions made by the schools' governors. These included those who were enthusiastic about the amalgamation as well as those who were either diffident or antagonistic towards the change. This will not be a matter of simply considering those who were the "winners" and "losers" in the amalgamation, but also those who, by their nature or personal history took a positive, negative, or couldn't-care-less approach. Decision making and participants' perspectives were not static but changed as the amalgamation evolved. Thus data were

collected throughout a two year period when key decisions and events took place. As in any case study, large amounts of data were collected whose significance became apparent later; this aided retrospective analysis and helped identify the relationship between sources and outcomes. This thesis asks what factors and processes shape the outcomes of institutional merger in the context of preparatory schools. It is essentially about two particular schools becoming one, and explores what happens when two institutional cultures are combined.

As this chapter has shown so far, there is a range of factors which affect the reasons for, and the process of merger. This study involves a single case which aims to show how mergers in the preparatory school could be managed, thereby stimulating further research and, eventually, the development of policy. The researcher will aim to show how the management of change in school involves a consideration of school culture, leadership, governance and the involvement of stakeholders. The nature of mergers is examined and a consideration of possible universally acceptable guidelines for preparatory school mergers is undertaken.

In order to protect confidentiality the names of schools, places and people have been anonymised.

1.3 Independent Schools Defined

Before any discussion into the state of independent schools in the United Kingdom can take place, it is necessary to explain what is meant by "independent", and to look at the numbers of pupils being educated in independent schools, thus exploring the implications for private education in today's economic climate.

The education system in Britain has, historically, been influenced by the social class structure. Before the nineteenth century, the traditionally held view was that education was the concern of the family and of the church, so private tutors were employed to teach the sons of the nobility and schools were set up by bishops to instruct prospective clergymen. After the nineteenth century it became the responsibility of the state to provide elementary schools, but these did not cater for older pupils. Secondary aged pupils were

educated in voluntary fee-paying grammar schools, some of which dated back to the sixteenth century, but many of which were established to meet the growing demand in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The website of Emetis.com, accessed in 2003, has a section entitled "UK Independent Education" which draws attention to the fact that:

> *The "public schools" were aristocratic, exclusive, formal and*
> *classical and only catered for a small proportion of the population.*
> *Their main goal was to develop the nation's future leaders for service*
> *in public life, and as such, were only open to the sons of the nobility*
> *or the prosperous new mercantile class. Boys who had previously*
> *been educated at home were now sent away to live at school in a*
> *community with boys of similar upbringing.*

The article in Emetis.com goes on to state that The Public Schools Act of 1864 named nine "public" schools – Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Charterhouse, St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors'. Today the term embraces many more, and can be applied to all those schools which are financed by bodies other than the state. They have widened their intake to embrace boys and girls from every sort of background. They are often Educational Charities, providing bursaries for children in need. All are independent of the Government, free to pursue their own curricula, make their own rules and be governed by Boards of Governors. Public Schools are therefore now known as Independent Schools and are made up of Preparatory and Senior schools. There are currently about 6-7% of children in the UK who attend independent schools, of which there are 2500.

There are several organisations which support the various types of private schools and their governing bodies: the umbrella organisation which supports and unifies all of the main associations serving governing bodies and head teachers in private schools is the Independent Schools Joint Council (ISJC). The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) is mainly concerned with the Heads of boys' and co-educational senior schools, while the Girls' Schools Association (GSA) embraces girls' senior schools. Heads of preparatory schools tend to be served by The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) whose schools take children up to fourteen years of age.

According to Walford (2003) these and other associations provided schooling for 500, 966 children in 2002, 51.4% of whom were boys. To put these figures into perspective Walford compares them with those of 1982:

> *1,282 schools provided for 404,542 students. This would appear to indicate an expansion of about 24 per cent by 2002, but it is worth noting that the expansion for children aged 2-4 was 350 per cent (to 43,037), and for those aged 5-10 was 45 per cent (to 162, 088). In contrast, in what has traditionally been seen as the core of the system, the number of students aged 11-15 increased by just 5 per cent (to 215, 715) over these twenty years, and those aged 16 and above actually declined by 1 per cent (to 77,372). Increases in numbers have mainly been for younger children through the expansion of nursery, infant and preparatory schools and through senior schools opening and developing their pre-secondary provision. In 2000, for example, there were a surprising 11 per cent of children in HMC schools who were aged 10 or under (all figures from ISC, 2002 and ISIS, 1982)*
> *(p. 2)*

Interestingly, only 13.9% of the students in independent schools in 2002 were boarders. This percentage was nearly 30% twenty years ago, and Walford (2003) maintains that the "heart of the system" is now the day schools or those with very few boarders. He goes on to state:

> *Not only were there less than 2 per cent of schools that had over 95 per cent boarders, but for those who did board, boarding has changed dramatically. There are now far more weekends at home for students, flexible boarding to cater for students' wishes, and greater contact between parents and the schools. Of the boarders 58 per cent were boys. (p.2)*

These figures alone send out a very great warning to all schools in the independent sector, particularly those which are trying to maintain a boarding ethos, and they emphasise the problems which have been, and still are, facing them today.

1.4   Background to the two schools

1.4.1. St. Finian's

St. Finian's was founded in 1926 as a boys' preparatory school. It was situated on a cliff overlooking the sea and commanded some fine views. In the beginning, according to school archives, there were only three classrooms in use, and the uniform was considerably more formal than in latter years: boys wore grey tweed jackets, collar and tie and brown corduroy knee breeches.

From 1928 a rolling programme of building began, with classrooms, dining room and a chapel. A school Hall was constructed in1931. As the years progressed, more teachers were appointed, and in 1938, the opportunity arose to purchase another three acres at the front of the school, which gave it its final appearance.

After the war the school returned from being evacuated, with the two sons of the founder becoming junior partners. They, with their respective wives, brought the school to the present day. It was inspected twice and on each occasion was praised for its academic standards, general outlook and range of activities. Building continued in memory of the founder, who died in 1963. The academic tradition was not lost and St. Finian's was among the trend-setters in the teaching of science, long before it became even an optional subject for Common Entrance.

In 1971 a Charitable Trust was formed and in 1972 a new Headmaster took up the post and then he, and the governors soon embarked on an ambitious building programme. A Pre-prep was founded in 1976 and during the seventies the school became co-educational, with numbers reaching 206 in the preparatory department. In 1994 the Head and his wife retired and the new incumbents brought St. Finian's to Lake House in 1997.

St. Finian's contained a mixture of architectural styles, from the original house to several modern additions, none of which appeared to be in keeping with another. The internal

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perspective, however, was cosy and welcoming. The new teaching block gave an impression of academic purposefulness, with its well laid-out classrooms and Art Room. While the site was not large, the panoramic sea views gave an impression of space and light.

In the year before the merger, the former Deputy Head informed the researcher that the staff roll had dwindled to less than thirty.

1.4.2. Lake House

Lake House became a boys' preparatory school in 1948, but it was not until 1954 that the founders bought it, and developed a school which embraced the Kurt Hahn philosophy of education. The basis of this was that every pupil should be given the opportunity of life-giving experiences and challenges as part of the curriculum, in order to bring out the best in them and to develop their natural talents. This point was emphasised by Adrian Smith, the Principal, soon after his appointment when outlining his vision for the school to parents. The school became known locally as the "holiday camp" because of its extensive activities programme and annual expeditions week, when the entire school would depart in groups to various parts of the country or abroad, in order to learn to live together while pursuing character-building activities. This tradition continued on the retirement of the founder, who turned it over to a charitable trust in 1983. Between 1983 and 1997, the school was run as a co-educational prep school of around 200 pupils. It is situated in 92 acres of lake and woodland.

The buildings are Grade 2 listed, and have retained their original style. New additions have been made in keeping with this, yet retain many original features such as the galleried Hall with its sweeping staircase. The wood panelling, carvings and décor reflect the age of the house and its former grandeur, in spite of its conversion for educational purposes. The only ill-fitting building is a "temporary" wooden structure housing two classrooms, which was erected over thirty years ago.

The staff roll consisted of thirty full-time teachers plus Houseparents, matrons and support staff.

St. Finian's and Lake House were within five miles of each other, and competition between them, for pupils, was fierce. In essence, both schools catered for the same wide ability range of pupils from surrounding areas and abroad. Their situation, within commuting distance of London, attracted a large proportion of boarders who live in London and have second homes locally. This was a factor highlighted by an independent marketing consultant to Lake House who, in 1991 had looked specifically at the existing "catchment area" with a view to promoting the school in the various local newspapers. Within their particular communities, they enjoyed good reputations which were loyally protected by local inhabitants; this became evident after the merger when local public opinion was broadcast in television news programmes and in the local press, as well as through reported conversations from parents.

St. Finian's always presented itself as the academic school in the area. Its uniform was formal – shirts ties and blazers, while the Lake House polo shirts, jumpers and skirts or cord trousers reflected its more relaxed style and emphasis on breadth of education. Perceptions of "outsiders" to the two schools were that St. Finian's was "academic" while Lake House was the holiday camp. These tended to be the main reasons given by parents who were changing from one school to the other.

The staff profiles in each school were similar, with the majority in their forties, a small group in their fifties and a minority of those under thirty – this was no secret since teachers from both schools knew each other through area subject meetings and sports fixtures. Both sets of staff were predominantly male, three of whom did not hold qualified teacher status. There had been no Senior Management Team at St. Finian's, or any Heads of Department. Before the merger the staff there had fallen behind the National Pay Scale, and indeed, due to a falling roll, earlier redundancies meant that the teachers were responsible for a wider ranging subject area than their specialist subjects. The merger proved financially advantageous to them as their salaries had to be brought into line with those at Lake House who were paid above the National Scale. This point will be examined more closely later in this study as it was a contributing factor in the amalgamation of the two sets of staff.

It has been shown that, the two schools were not essentially very different in terms of aims, pupil profiles and general ethos. However, behind the façade and public perception there were many traditions and deeply entrenched feelings of ownership by the respective stakeholders, which were to challenge the management of the merger and, to some degree are still in evidence three years later. In Chapter 6, the case study explains the reasons for the decision to merge these two schools, the way in which it was sold to those involved and the management of the merger from its announcement in November 1996 to its inauguration in September 1997.

1.4.3 New School

New School arose out of the merger of Lake House and St. Finian's. It started in September 1997 and for the first four months of its existence it was directed by a Principal and a Headmaster. This somewhat strange arrangement is going to be at the heart of this thesis and will be described more fully in Chapter 6.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study lie mainly in the fact that, because of the outcomes of the case, the conflict that arose overshadowed its initial purpose and made for a contentious, if not litigious event. The researcher was a participant, not merely observing, but latterly as one drawn into the ensuing chaos by trying to mediate between the two 'heads', each of whom was convinced that his 'opponent' would give up and be forced into resigning. At the time the researcher wanted only to mediate between the two to try to create a more harmonious management thereby lessening the mounting anxiety felt by all of the staff. It must be understood that at this time fear for the future of the school, and subsequently for jobs, was a major concern. Inevitably, staff members began to take sides and in spite of their trying to conceal underlying tensions parents too, fell into two camps. This made it difficult, if not impossible, to approach certain "gate-keepers" due to the animosity that was aroused. Also, since a large amount of relevant documentation was highly sensitive, access was given, but the search was carefully monitored, leaving the researcher little time to scrutinise and select particular papers, and the ability to follow up particular data was felt inadvisable. As a result, the pieces of the documentary jigsaw, in

terms of records of governors' meetings, were difficult to piece together and the danger of presenting only one view of the case, that is to say, the views of those who supported the outcomes, had to be closely monitored in order to present a balanced analysis. The interview data was gathered first-hand from a pro-merger and non-partisan sample, while as Yin (1994) states:

> "The exemplary case study is one that judiciously and effectively
> presents the most compelling evidence, so that a reader can reach an
> independent judgment regarding the merits of the analysis". (p. 150)

The most compelling evidence in this case may well be judged to be that which was conveyed through the newspapers - second-hand reports from, in the main, a biased paper whose editor had a well-known antipathy towards Lake House. (This fact was borne out in a conversation at a later date when the editor was invited to New School for the unveiling of a new statue.)

This is a unique case and the managers of this change have learnt many lessons. There are lessons here too, for other schools facing similar decisions, but there are intrinsic limitations in using this model as an example owing to its need for confidentiality.

1.6   The researcher as participant observer.

During this case study investigation the researcher assumed such roles as: staff member, interviewer, advisor and confidante. The danger of being so involved was always the major consideration, and the need to avoid bias, of paramount importance. The researcher had asked the permission of Headmaster and Governors to use the merger as a basis for doctoral research, and colleagues were also aware of this, therefore there was never any question of a covert investigation. Indeed, although anonymity and confidentiality were assured, colleagues seemed keen to add their opinions, and apart from the acquisition of some confidential records of Governors' meetings, co-operation was granted willingly, which facilitated cross-referencing.

1.6.1 Bias

Before embarking on this study the researcher was well aware of the 'baggage' she was bringing with her and every attempt has been made to seek out alternative or neutral data. Asking if two researchers independently studying the same findings would come up with the same findings tested each step in the data collection process. Also, if someone else applying the same approach carried out the same observations on the same people on a different occasion would they come up with similar findings? It is with some confidence that she feels that this is the case. However, there is the question of data changing with a different sample of respondents. The researcher is acutely aware that being able to counter-balance it through interviews with members of the Concerned Parents' Group, a governor who resigned over the dismissal of the Principal, or, indeed, the Principal himself would enhance her data. This was not possible but it is hoped that the Headmaster, a transcript of whose interview will be found in Appendix 1, conveys his viewpoint, unwittingly.

Since the views of the Concerned Parents' Group and a former governor are well documented in the press cuttings it is believed that a balance has been achieved.

1.7 Synopses of subsequent chapters

1.7.1 Chapter 2: Management of Change

This chapter looks at the ways in which schools, in particular, have had to adapt to the pace of change. The question of management is discussed in relation to organizational culture which is explored in an attempt to clarify how change is managed.

1.7.2 Chapter 3: Management and Leadership in Schools

An exploration of the terms "management" and "leadership" is undertaken in order to clarify the roles played by managers and leaders. This leads on to an examination of the influence of leaders on the culture of schools, and their role in the management of change.

1.7.3 Chapter 4: Mergers and Acquisitions

A definition of mergers and acquisitions is sought in this chapter, in order to establish any differences and similarities between them, and subsequently takeovers. Links between schools and corporate businesses are explored to see if any analogies can be drawn when planning mergers. The notion of school mergers is discussed and their effect on teachers is examined with a view to including consultation and communication with them when managing this type of change. Also the importance of considering the core values, or culture, of organizations is discussed, as well as the reasons why mergers are undertaken.

1.7.4 Chapter 5: Design and Methodology

This chapter looks at the rationale for using case study as a research tool. The role of the researcher as a participant observer is explored, and the main methods of data collection – documentation, interviews - are described and discussed.

1.7.5 Chapter 6: Case Study

The case of the merger of two preparatory schools forms the basis of this chapter. It describes the case from early secret discussions in 1993 to the start of the first term at New School in 1997. The ensuing problems are also explored until their resolution in January 1998.

1.7.6 Chapter 7: Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter an evaluation of data collection techniques is presented and limitations of the study discussed. Evidence from data is explored in order to appraise its effectiveness in this case study. The case surrounding the merger and its planning and implementation are explored in order to tease out underlying themes and methods used to establish a successful school from the embers of two struggling competitors. From this suggestions for future practice are made.

Chapter 2: Management of Change

2.1   Introduction

Fullan, (2001) states that:

> *We have become so accustomed to the presence of change that we*
> *rarely stop to think what change really means as we are experiencing*
> *it at the personal level. More important, we almost never stop to think*
> *what it means for others around us who might be in change situations.*
> *The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality.*
> *(p.29)*

In the world at large, change has been rapid since the inventions of the nineteenth century, such as, the telephone, the motorcar and electricity. Indeed Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) quote William Ogburn (1922):

> *Never before in the history of mankind have so many and so frequent*
> *changes occurred...in modern times they have been occurring faster*
> *and faster until today mankind is almost bewildered in his effort to*
> *keep adjusted to these ever increasing social changes. (p.455)*

These observations have been central to industrialised economies throughout the twentieth century, but although we may have come to accept these rapid changes in our society, we may not consciously understand their consequences. Toffler (1970) believed that there is a limit to the amount of change we can tolerate, and he refers to the stress on individuals resulting from so much change as "future shock". He also labelled it, "the disease of change" – a topic which will be referred to in the next section and one which deals with the management of change.

Education has not only to keep pace with new technology, but to develop a system which is able to equip us with the necessary skills whereby we can surmount the economic and

social demands of the future. Indeed, Bailey (1984) draws attention to a DES (1982) discussion paper in which is stated:

> *It has in recent years become 'a truth universally acknowledged' that*
> *education should be more closely linked with the world of work and*
> *with the country's economic performance; and there has been*
> *increasing pressure on schools to assess the relevance of their*
> *curriculum to their pupils' future working lives. (p.144)*

Change is a fact of life. It may be imposed on us by natural events such as floods, earthquakes, bereavement etc., or it may come about from, for example, government reform or technological advances. Change can also come from within ourselves when we become dissatisfied with our personal circumstances. Whatever its origin, change brings with it a sense of uncertainty, or even anxiety and loss.

Kubler-Ross, (1969) deals with loss and impending loss as a consequence of change. She put forward a five stage response cycle in coming to terms with the experience of loss, which are:

Stage	*Response*
Denial:	*unwillingness to confront the reality: "This is not happening". "There is still hope that this will go away*
Anger:	*turn accusations on those apparently responsible: "Why is this happening to me?" "Why are you doing this to me?"*
Bargaining:	*attempts to negotiate, to mitigate loss: "What if I do it this way?"*
Depression:	*the reality of loss or transition is appreciated: "It's hopeless, there's nothing I can do now". "I don't know which way to turn".*
Acceptance:	*coming to terms with and accepting the situation and its full implications: "What are we going to do about this?" "How am I going to move forward?" (p. 457)*

Although this is a thirty-year-old model its intention is still pertinent today and underlines the human element in the change process. It is a generalisation and does not take into

account individual differences, yet, if used as a tool by organizations undergoing change, it could be used advantageously when putting in place appropriate mechanisms to support and guide individuals, as well as to give due consideration to potential and the avoidance of stress early on in the planning stages. It also adds to the point that change can be studied on many levels and timescales. In a period of rapid change organizations need to be able to adjust, and subsequently, to survive. Organizations need to be flexible, innovative and adaptable if they are to compete in the marketplace. Increased competition, changes in customers' requirements and tastes, new legislation and government policies and changes in social and cultural values are examples of what Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) term "triggers" of change – the disorganizing pressures arising outside or inside the organization. They maintain that the triggers will not always initiate strategic change, but that strategic changes are the most difficult to manage effectively. It could be argued that the type of change New School has undergone is "strategic", whereby a major shift in organizational design and function, that is to say, the merger, was a response largely to what was happening in the wider and political environment. These external triggers include:

- *changes in customers' requirements and tastes*
- *the activities and innovations of competitors*
- *changes in social and cultural values (p.461)*

These particular examples echo some of the reasons for the merger of Lake House and St. Finian's, and would seem to coincide with the proposition by Buchanan et al, that identifying triggers in this way makes organizational change appear to be a reactive process. However, this cannot always be the case, for in at least some circumstances, organizations need to be proactive in anticipating changes. Certainly, in the case of New School, the governors anticipated the future outcomes of political, social and financial changes by looking into their implications for boarding, competition within a small area and the rising costs of staffing and maintenance, as well as trying to establish a niche in the educational marketplace. Or, it could be argued, that had political and social trends not begun to have an effect on the decline in potential 'customers' buying into independent education, the governors may not have taken the initiative to look ahead, in which case the results may have been altogether different.

There is a risk in undertaking major change, and the future benefits need to be weighed against cost and possible failure. Resistance to change is a major consideration and stakeholders need to be committed to it. House (1974) states:

> *The personal costs of trying new innovations are often high....*
> *Innovations are acts of faith. They require that one believe that they*
> *will ultimately bear fruit and be worth the personal investment, often*
> *without the hope of an immediate return. Costs are also high. The*
> *amount of energy and time required to learn the new skills or roles*
> *associated with the new innovation is a useful index to the magnitude*
> *of resistance (p.73)*

Change, then, is costly, not just in monetary terms but also in the need for careful management of the human resources who have the ultimate responsibility for carrying through the planned changes. The following section examines these points and demonstrates the importance, stressed by commentators on the subject, of forward planning and consultation, with particular regard to managing change in schools.

2.2 Managing Change in Schools

Change has been taking place in schools since Victorian times. Many of these changes concern school improvement issues such as curriculum management and the role of teachers. However, this study focuses on two specific areas – the structural change of two schools becoming one, and cultural change, which requires long-term planning and monitoring.

Weindling (1989) describes the management of change outside the UK as school improvement in the technical sense, that is to say, in terms of raising standards in teaching and learning. While one of the objectives of New School's merger was to improve the 'product', that is to say, the quality of the facilities, teaching, and environment, the essential reason was to ensure the future viability of the school as an organization. The researcher has, therefore, concentrated her review of the

literature in the field of organizational change management, as opposed to the management of provision and policy change, although these themes will be linked where appropriate.

As far back as 1922 William Fielding Ogburn wrote of change as occurring faster and faster until mankind was almost bewildered in his effort to adjust to ever increasing social changes. Toffler (1970) agreed with these sentiments, by saying that the amount of change was out of control. Nevertheless, as Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) assert:

> *Change, of different types and on a number of different levels is a*
> *central feature of our lives. Organizational change has become a*
> *prerequisite for survival and development in a rapidly changing world.*
> *We are all likely to experience changes in our employing organizations,*
> *in their organization structures and in our job specifications, at various*
> *stages in our personal careers. The effective management of change*
> *and how we cope with change thus affect our experience of*
> *disorganization and frustration. (p.458)*

Gray (1988), while acknowledging that organizations change in many ways, asserts that we need to know why these changes are happening. He states that from a phenomenological point of view, the fabric of the organization is not the issue but that organizational change occurs only as a consequence of changes in the individual self-concept. It is the individual's view of himself that changes, not the organization:

> *...there are no tangible organizations to deal with. Even when dealing*
> *with small groups, the effective changes occur in individuals never in*
> *the group. (p.152)*

Dean (1995) follows this theme with reference to the implementation of change in the primary school. She maintains that any change in school involves some change of attitudes of those involved. In a school, those involved include governors, teachers, parents and pupils. Although parents and pupils may have no part in decision-making, their involvement in the discussion leading to change is more likely to result in gaining support

for the planned change. Indeed, The Department for Education and Science (DfES. 1999) states that when the intention is to close a school parents should be written to well in advance. (See Appendix 2)

Dean (1995) identifies four management tasks leading to effective change:

- *Identify the changes needed*
- *Assess the situation*
- *Plan and implement changes*
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of changes (p.91)*

Each of these tasks is designed to gain the trust of those involved and to avoid resistance to further change. Once people see that change is not being forced upon them it makes it possible to work together and plan ahead. Time spent on wooing those for whom change is going to affect most, is crucial, as this case study shows. Evaluation should be planned at the same time as the change itself so that information about its success can be gathered as it proceeds.

Fullan's (2001) point that change is a process, not an event, is crucial. As the previous examples have shown, from inception to outcome the road to success is not short or smooth, not least because of the considerations of overloading individuals who will inevitably have to carry forward the changes. It could be argued that this is a much overlooked subject by the orchestrators of change, that is to say, the stakeholders such as staff, pupils and parents, may not be the first or most important consideration in the process of change. Viability, income, profits and losses would appear to be of prime concern, yet, as Fullan (2001) adds, none of this can be made possible without the willingness and assistance of the people involved. It is important to consider, here, that the people involved are at the heart of the organization's culture, the vehicles through which culture is promulgated and through which it becomes manifest. Fullan (2001) is unequivocal in his belief that innovation must be successfully implemented, that is to say, both content and process of reform must be understood by those involved. He maintains that success depends on people. Sarason (1996) reiterates this by stating that change is not an engineering process:

The problem of change is the problem of power, and the problem of
power is how to wield it in ways that allow others to identify with, to
gain a sense of ownership of, the process and goals of change. That is
no easy task; it is a frustrating, patience-demanding, time-consuming
process. Change cannot be carried out by the calendar, a brute fact
that those with power cannot confront. (p.335)

Time, patience and consultation are recurring themes in the literature on change. Reflexivity should be added to this list. Where, perhaps, managers of change have the end product in sight, how often do they consider the here and now, the monitoring of the process as it happens? Once change has been effected, particularly in such a major way as a merger, there is no going back and apart from 'fine-tuning' little can be done to rectify mistakes without causing disruption and endangering future success.

Sarason (1996) makes the very valid point that:

You can never take your eyes off the quality of what you are
producing. You don't wait for the end of the process to judge quality.
You are always judging it from step one. (p.323)

Merger is a major change, and we can begin to see how important it is to plan carefully by involving stakeholders in decision-making. Monitoring the change process, understanding schools as unique organizations, recognising the high level of teacher stress during merger, are just a few of the salient points which need to be considered by managers who may be focusing on purely financial and capital gain.

Moreover, if the views of commentators on the subject are to be taken into account, managers need also to be aware of a less well-understood aspect of organizational change - that of culture. Senge et al (1999) make the point that:

The fundamental flaw in most innovators' strategies is that they focus
on their innovations, on what they are trying to do - rather than on

understanding how the larger culture, structures and norms will react

to their efforts. (p.26)

The management of change is fraught with difficulty if due consideration is given to understanding organizational culture, and subsequently, the human element. Schein's (1985) idea that culture determines and limits strategy would appear to support Senge's viewpoint. Schein (1985) maintains that if companies decide to merge, a cultural mismatch is as great a risk as aspects such as financial strength, market position and the general health of the other company. The notion that "cross-cultural" problems arise when organizations diversify into a different geographical area is highlighted in his point that:

After mergers, acquisitions, or diversifications have run into trouble,

managers frequently say that cultural incompatibilities were at the

root of it, but somehow these factors rarely get taken into account

during the initial decision-making process. (p.36)

This idea, from a leading exponent on culture, warns against ignoring the influence of culture in the process of change. At New School it was important to ensure a culture of collaboration as two groups of staff became one, as in Grumet's (1998) ideal that it is affiliation that binds us into an educational community. So it is with these ideas in mind that the case for managing culture is discussed here in the context of the management of change.

2.3   Managing Organizational Culture

Handy (1993) argues that within organizations cultures will differ, and that not all cultures suit all purposes or people. He states that people are often culturally blinkered, thinking that ways that worked well in one organization are bound to be successful everywhere. This, he says, is not the case. He suggests that:

Most organizations are not designed, they grow...But not all

organizations adapt equally well to the environment within which they

grow. Many, like the dinosaur of great size but little brain, remain

> *unchanged in a changing world...the law of survival of the fittest is as*
>
> *inexorable for organizations as it is in nature. (p. 253)*

So what is it that allows some organizations to survive while others go under? The answer could be: good management, teamwork, vision, or is it something less tangible? Is it Handy's (1993) interpretation of culture which:

> *....cannot be defined precisely, for it is something that is perceived,*
>
> *something felt (p.191)*

If this is the case people's emotional ties to the organization in which they work are liable to cloud their judgement when change is proposed. Emotive issues present huge challenges to managers where objectivity is sought, but they are difficult to change, and as Deal and Kennedy (1983) state:

> *When culture works against you, it's nearly always impossible to get*
>
> *anything done. (p. 80)*

So what is organizational culture, and why does it wield such a powerful influence? Some understanding is needed if we are to gain an insight into the impact of the merger on the management of change in New School.

Schein (1990) states that:

> *When one enters an organization one observes and feels its artefacts.*
>
> *This category includes everything from the physical layout, the dress*
>
> *code, the manner in which people address each other, the smell and*
>
> *feel of the place, its emotional intensity, and other phenomena...*

Organizational culture was an underestimated phenomenon in the planning for New School, and indeed, when appointing new staff at Lake House. So much emphasis was placed on the tangible and quantifiable, such as qualifications, experience and areas of expertise, but how much value was placed on how certain individuals would "fit in" or be

comfortable with the existing climate was, at best, of secondary importance, if considered at all. Yet Schein (1985) talks of the rules of the game, for getting on in an organization, "the ropes" that a newcomer must learn in order to become an accepted member. This feeling or climate, norms, philosophy, rules, are just a few of the words used to explain culture, and which by their very nature give credence to the importance of their consideration in forward planning for change.

As new pupils and staff enter the school, former identities will be diluted, but for the future success of the new school, the customs and culture of the former establishment must surely have their place? Schein and others believed that as members of an organisation learn to adapt to their environment they replace their values with new ones. This may well be true of people who form a new organisation voluntarily, but what of the people who have had a different culture forced upon them? Do they try to change that culture or do they adapt to it? This point was made by Gagliardi (1986) who argued with Schein's view. He believed that deep-rooted values remain intact while behavioural patterns may change in response to environmental pressures. Ogbonna and Wilkinson (1990) illustrate this in a study of major UK supermarkets where management tried to change organisational culture. In particular, the change was directed at staff such as checkout operators, who come into direct contact with customers. As a result, they smiled more and became more "customer friendly", but there was no evidence that they had adopted the values behind the desired culture. It emerged that these visible manifestations of the desired culture were delivered under the increasing surveillance and threat of sanctions.

Graves (1986) maintains that there are a number of levels at which culture can be changed and makes the distinction between changing behaviours and changing deeper level values, which by implication is changing culture. He therefore suggests that they are simply packages of behavioural change. Schein (1991) explains this phenomenon thus:

> *The emotional issues that individual members bring with them when*
> *they enter new groups lead to coping behaviour that ultimately results*
> *in predictable stages of group evolution. These stages are the result of*
> *a complex interplay between individuals attempting to exercise*

> *leadership and group members attempting to solve problems of*
> *authority, intimacy and identity for themselves. In resolving these*
> *issues, the group members also learn how to work and how to solve*
> *the problems of survival in the external environment. As solutions are*
> *worked out, they become shared assumptions that are passed on to*
> *new members and eventually become taken for granted and*
> *unconscious. (p.313)*

One example of a shared assumption is a large wooden box with a blue lid, at Lake House. Everyone within the school knows it as The Blue Box, into which goes all of the lost property. It is an accepted part of the internal language. New parents, however, when searching for lost items of clothing, and are sent to look in The Blue Box without further explanation and it is only when its existence is questioned that one's assumptions are challenged. Communication is vital, and as Marshall (1993) states:

> *Management of change should address the issue of culture as a*
> *"holistic-school approach". (p. 255)*

Beliefs and values, according to Schein (1985) give the reasons why people behave as they do. Ott (1989) suggests that beliefs and values are so important to organizational culture that they have come to be defined as *the* organizational culture.

Schools are no different from other organizations in that they have to manage change, achieve goals and be financially viable, or rather, successful. Every school, as every organization, is different from another due to its history, traditions and environment. This is a point worth elaborating on, as a crucial part of the success, or otherwise, of a merger, is a willingness to change and to adapt, whether it is to a new environment or simply to new management. However, as Prosser (1999) states:

> *...schools are not companies producing an objective product, where*
> *consensus on outcomes is agreed, or where there is acceptance that*
> *financial success is all important. Schools are not (yet) directly*
> *related to organizations operating an enterprise ideology... (p.10)*

In the maintained sector this may well hold true, but as this study shows, financial viability, or rather financial success through full rolls, within the independent sector is one of the overriding factors which drove the organizational change that took place in the case of Lake House and St. Finian's. But, are schools unique organizations?

To understand organizational culture is to begin to understand what happens in schools. Prosser (1999), states:

> *Schools do not exist in a vacuum and national and local cultures are*
> *impregnated into and are part of all schools.... (p.8)*

He adds that 'perceived culture' should be another consideration, and breaks this into two further terms – 'on-site perceived culture', and 'off-site' perceived culture. The former refers to the views of a school gained by visitors and staff. The latter describes an outsider's point of view gained through, for example, prospectuses, newsletters, gossip and pupils' behaviour outside school. These perceived notions may not reflect the true uniqueness of the school's culture, but certainly their effect on fee-paying schools in particular, can be a determining factor in their ability to sink or swim. Reputation has a strong bearing on the strength of an independent school's roll, as our marketing gurus and The Independent School's Inspectorate (ISI) keep telling those of us who work in them. However, according to Prosser (1999) because school participants possess some freedom of choice in interpreting the generic culture of schools they create their own particular and therefore 'unique culture' by virtue of the fact that they provide insiders with distinctive in-house rules for 'getting on and getting by' in that situationally unique setting.

It is also influenced by external factors such as political and economic changes, the pupils, social class and changes in society, all of which add up to a challenging force in the management of change. Sensitivity to the varying meanings which individuals hold must be fully understood, and this is now addressed, not as a separate aspect but as another cog in the wheel of the merger process.

The underlying assumptions of a school's culture can be interpreted in many different ways depending on one's personal ideology and position within the organization. For example, Fraser et al (1987) assert that:

> *Whereas classroom environment usually is measured in terms of*
> *student's perceptions, school environment often is assessed in terms of*
> *teachers' perceptions of their relationships with other teachers, their*
> *views of various aspects of their work milieu, and so on. (p.225)*

Although certain cultural patterns have been established through the architecture and layout of the school, others will have been learned, such as the ceremonies and rituals, dress codes and behaviour of its members. These are also more easily identifiable and, indeed, quantifiable. When visiting other schools one comes away with an impression of them from their visual impact and from the demeanour of staff and pupils, but in so doing are we merely giving our own meaning to the surface values of each establishment, and making assumptions from them? The deeper underlying meanings as described by Schein are surely what matter most to the members of each organization. Perhaps the bond which grows between a school and its staff is a result of a subscription to the unwritten philosophy which is shared by individuals, and which satisfies in them a need to belong and to play a part in the furtherance of that culture. It could be said, if that is the case, that culture is created over time by consensus, and fiercely guarded when change is threatened, for fear of losing the comfort factor.

Much has been written on corporate mergers, (e.g.,Smith and Brooks, 1963., Gilkey, 1991., Capron, 2003.,Denison, 1990) and each commentator has emphasised, as one of the outcomes of mergers and acquisitions, the sense of loss that employees feel when change is planned. Maybe the culture of an organization provides not only comfort, but safety too. The knowledge that the routines, beliefs, language and artefacts are constant provides members of an organization with a confidence that allows them to concentrate on their jobs without the worry of constant changes. However, change is necessary if schools and other organizations are to compete effectively and keep abreast of changes in society generally. If they are to play an effective role as professional communities, and be able to deal with an uncertain future, their culture must allow for the interaction of individuals as well as groups.

Schools, as any other organizations are subject to the demands and challenges of the increasing pace and complexity of modern life. Parents have certain expectations of schools, but the reality is less well-defined today. There is more pressure on schools to produce results, to be more accountable and to provide more opportunities for pupils to 'succeed'. This must, inevitably, mean that their individual ethos, or culture, has to develop and adapt to these challenges. Sarason (1996) maintains that this is a discouraging agenda because collaborative work cultures in schools take a long time to develop yet can disappear overnight when a few key people leave.

It would be foolhardy to ignore the different power relationships which lie beneath the surface of any organization. The micro-politics of a school become evident as one takes its lid off to reveal various sub-cultures. Morgan (1997) states:

> *Any school may be composed of different and competing value*
> *systems, based on gender, race, language, ethnicity, religion, socio-*
> *economic status, friendship, and professional affiliation, all of which*
> *have the power to create 'a mosaic of organisational realities'. (p.43)*

Teachers themselves do not always share the same beliefs; certainly, in the researcher's experience of preparatory schools there exists a distinct difference between the attitudes and status of 'junior' teachers from those who teach the senior pupils. Teachers at the top end of the school see themselves as responsible for the successes of pupils in passing Common Entrance examinations to their public schools, and can be dismissive of their colleagues who have prepared the ground for them. This can affect school planning where resources may be funnelled into subject specialist areas rather than to Early Years classes. Understanding and co-ordinating these subcultures are vital pre-requisites for future planning and change. If organizational culture is seen as the summation of all of the subcultures then, Ogbonna (1993) suggests that the organization should help to develop positive subcultures consistent with the wider organizational culture. The role of leadership is therefore critical to successful change in relation to school culture.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has considered ways in which organizations manage change and reasons why change is necessary. The management of change in schools requires an understanding of schools as organizations, and within this, the role of culture should not be underestimated. This leads back to the question, 'is culture manageable?' Martin and Seihl (1983) maintain that culture cannot be either created or managed as this would mean changing or managing the subconscious assumptions and values which guide people's behaviour. Since these assumptions are unconscious, attempts to manage such a culture are fraught with difficulty. Bates, (1984) argued that culture is capable of locking people into their own problems because necessary cultural change may be avoided on sentimental grounds, or may be made difficult by an existing strong culture.

This argument goes against Schein's view that culture is adaptive, and Ogbonna (1993) purports that where culture has reached a point whereby it no longer sustains people's behavioural pattern, alternative ways are learned which may in turn become a new set of beliefs and values. However, Gagliardi (1986) does not subscribe to this view. He maintains that anxiety caused by change leads to reluctance to try, as there is no guarantee that by changing an organization's culture its problems will be solved. Indeed, just because people's behaviour may change, as in the earlier example of UK supermarkets, it does not follow that their underlying beliefs and values have also changed. This was particularly so in New School after the merger. In spite of many doubts and internal conflicts the staff projected a positive and happy image to the parents and children otherwise a negative attitude could have jeopardised their jobs.

Fullan (2001) emphasises the need for a "reculturing" of schools if they are to achieve a deep and more lasting change. He adds that most strategies for reform are structure-based and therefore not struggling directly with existing cultures. He maintains that instead of restructuring, reculturing (how teachers come to question and change their beliefs and habits) is what is needed.

Morgan (1997) goes further, and his view on reculturing is very apt when looking at the merger of Lake House and St. Finian's. He sees it as:

29

A challenge of transforming mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images,

metaphors, beliefs, and shared meanings that sustain

existing....realities and of creating a detailed language and code of

behaviour through which the desired new reality can be lived on a

daily basis...It is about what amounts to a new way of life. (p.143)

These views encapsulate much of the work carried out by members of the Senior
Management at New School after the merger. Whether culture should have been taken into
account during the planning stage is arguable with the knowledge of hindsight, but certainly
without consideration of reculturing, the transition from two schools into one would have
been problematic.

Culture, then, wields an undeniable power in the process of organizational change, and
should be counted as one of the factors that influence the process of merger in preparatory
schools. This section has attempted to show how its influence should not be ignored when
planning for a major change such as a merger. Moreover, as culture would appear to form
an important influence in organizational change, it also contributes to part of the dilemma
of knowing what to do when managing change. Different situations or phases of the change
process require managers, or leaders, to act in different ways. The next chapter looks at
how leadership, in the context of change management, has a crucial influence, and it
explores the notion that leadership and management shape outcomes of change in differing
ways.

Chapter 3: Management and Leadership in Schools

3.1 Introduction

During the merger process at New School there were several facets of change, such as: school structure, curriculum planning, policy making and staff appointments. The major task of closing the two existing schools to form one was managed by governors and the schools' solicitors; staff appointments were managed by Roy Percival, the independent advisor, with a group of governors and the Principal and Headmaster, while school-based tasks were divided between groups such as Heads of Department, under the auspices of either the Principal or Headmaster. Each aspect of change was led by different people according to their new roles. However, as Chapter 6 shows, during the transition phase and, more evidently, during the first term at New School, issues of leadership were contributing to conflict between the Principal and Headmaster. Ultimately this led to uncertainty and difficulties in communication between the two Heads and the staff. The management, and indeed, the future of the school became precarious as parents' awareness of the situation grew.

These issues led the researcher to question the importance placed on the powerful impact that management and leadership skills can exert when planning for change, and subsequently whether those who implement change should possess an understanding of the similarities and differences between leaders and managers. As a result this chapter explores the role of leadership in the management of change.

First, however, the terms 'leader' and 'manager' should be understood. A manager's role may include that of leader, but managers do not necessarily lead and leaders do not necessarily manage. Adair (1993) suggests that the person who emerges as leader in a group does so because he possesses certain traits. Louis and Miles (1990) make the distinction between leadership and management but emphasize that both are essential:

> Leadership relates to mission, direction, inspiration. Management
> involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done,
> working effectively with people. (pp.157-158)

3.2 Defining the Concept

Leadership and management definitions are difficult to disentangle from each other but
the two words actually describe two different concepts. According to Gerard Blair (1997):

> *Leadership is just one of the many assets a successful manager must*
>
> *possess. (p.1)*

He presses his point by declaring that the main aim of a manager is to maximise an
organisation's output through the following functions:

- Organisation
- Planning
- Staffing
- Directing
- Controlling

Leadership, he maintains is just one important component of the directing function. He
goes on to suggest that:

> *A leader is someone who people naturally follow through their own*
>
> *choice, whereas a manager must be obeyed. A manager may only*
>
> *have obtained his position of authority through time and loyalty given*
>
> *to the company, not as a result of his leadership qualities. A leader*
>
> *may have no organisational skills, but his vision unites people behind*
>
> *him. (pp 3-4)*

This is a fascinating view in relation to the situation that arose during New School's
merger, where two "Heads" were appointed, and it will emerge again and again in different
guises through this study, as the question of merger management unfolds. In schools,
leadership arises in response to a need. However, its effectiveness will vary from situation
to situation – leadership in schools is likely to be different from that in, for example,
hospitals, the armed forces and manufacturing businesses. Wertheim (1997) purports that
the idea of leadership is elusive because:

It isn't a thing; it doesn't reside in a person. It exists only in

relationships and only in the imagination and perceptions of

"followers"...Leadership is something that goes on among people; it

isn't something within a person. (p. 2/7)

Hofstede (1984) also maintains that leadership is about followership, and that you can only be the sort of leader your followers are comfortable with. Wertheim (1997) backs up this idea by stating:

What really differentiates one leader from another centres more on

the nature of the followers and the goals, than the leader. How should

one become a leader? By finding the right followers and the right

goal. One of the two is no good without the other. And they must be

right for you and for the historical moment. One may have the

followers and the goal and still be unable to mobilize followers

towards the goal.... Circumstance is critical, if unpredictable. (pp 5-7)

Wertheim advises that it is necessary to establish the difference between leadership and management – we are all leaders and followers as, for example, parents and children, teachers and pupils, employers and employees and to search for a universal "truth" about leadership is not particularly helpful. Leadership at all of its various levels is relevant only to its circumstances and for the purposes of this study I will be referring to leadership in organizations rather than leadership in general.

Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) point out that the concepts of leadership and management are difficult to disentangle:

Most managers would probably claim to be able to exercise

leadership in some form or another. A manager can be regarded as

someone who, by definition, is assigned a position of leadership in an

organization. Most definitions of management incorporate some

notion of leadership in some respect. (p.593)

HMI (1977) produced a report after examining ten secondary schools of different types, which they held up as successful by a broad range of criteria:

> *What they all have in common is effective leadership and a climate*
> *conducive for growth...Emphasis is laid on consultation, teamwork*
> *and participation but, without exception, the most important single*
> *factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership of the*
> *head. Without exception, the heads have qualities of imagination and*
> *vision, tempered by realism, which have enabled them to sum up not*
> *only their present situation but also attainable future goals. They*
> *appreciate the need for specific educational aims, both social and*
> *intellectual, and have the capacity to communicate these to staff,*
> *pupils and parents, to win their assent and to put their own policies*
> *into practice. Their sympathetic understanding of staff and pupils,*
> *their accessibility, good humour and sense of proportion, and their*
> *dedication to their task has won them the respect of parents, teachers*
> *and taught. (p. 121)*

School Heads can fulfil both roles, and even though their personalities may differ, they can be equally effective in bringing about change. However, the change in these cases is more likely to involve school improvement rather than the major change concerned in mergers. Initial planning and management of the merger process tends to be conducted at a higher level, within an Educational Authority, or, in the case of an independent school, at governor level. Nevertheless, is it leadership or management that carries forward this process?

In reality, the leader and the manager may be the same person. As we will see in the course of this study, leadership and management were both vital to the successful implementation of the merger. The process was originated by a small group of school governors who then called upon an impartial outsider to 'manage' the details of, for example, the appointment of a Head, staff appointments, redundancies and a timetable of events. Yet, the follow-up to the merger, the ensuing years, must surely be the province of the Head with support from the Governing Body? If this is the case, are these people in the

role of leaders or managers? Also, can these individuals carry forward the process of change without the support, input and departmental management of the staff who are expected to fulfil the 'vision' of the leader?

Torrington and Weightman (1993) talk of 'staffroom credibility' as having the power to effect change through experience, persuasive personality and patience rather than from formal positions in the management hierarchy. (p.54)

Fiedler's (1967) research concludes that leadership performance depends as much on the organization as it does on the leader's attributes. Subsequently the leader's behaviour is limited by the organizational requirements, and just as school Heads have to shape the environment, so the environment shapes them.

In Chapter 2 the role of culture in the management of change was explored and, as Handy (1993) maintains, strong pervasive cultures turn organizations into cohesive tribes with distinctly clannish feelings. If we agree with this statement we must also consider how to deal with the possible outcomes of these tribal loyalties when planning for change such as a merger, if the local environment is to be accepting of the incoming organization's own traditions, culture and people.

Organizations do not necessarily comprise teams that are all aiming for the same goals. They can be undemocratic, with senior managers deciding on goals and coercing others to agree with them in the best interests of the organization – the consequences for individuals depend on how the organization is run. In schools, for example, the teaching staff may see their role as that of educators, while the Bursar in an independent school is more concerned with finance, recruitment and looking after the fabric of the building. While this departmentalization is inevitable, it does not, however, imply a lack of democracy, or that there is no ultimate common goal, it means simply that communication between departments becomes more crucial and that the different angles from which the organization is perceived, aids future planning and development.

The culture of a school, it can be argued, comes from its leader. Goleman, (1996) states that leadership is not domination, but the art of persuading people to work toward a common goal. He maintains that:

> *when people are emotionally upset they cannot attend, learn or make*
> *decisions clearly (p. 149)*

He goes on to quote a management consultant who said that "stress makes people stupid". Chapter 4 looks at the stress caused by impending merger and explores the role of the leader/manager and these ideas are analysed in Chapter 7, but it is equally important to include their relevance within this arena since a culture of domineering leadership leads to intimidation and stress in the workplace. The cost-effectiveness of emotional intelligence is to be found in collaborative and cohesive organizations where individuals feel valued and empowered. Where this is not taken into account there resides conflict as conveyed in Chapter 7, and, as quoted from HMI (1977) earlier in this section, successful schools are those with effective leadership and a climate conducive for growth.

3.3 Conclusion

The obstacle course that any organizational change creates is not insurmountable. Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose. Merger activity has gathered pace over the last half of the twentieth century, with organizations jostling for position in a dog eat dog society – and for what end? Certainly the evidence points to a need for stability in an unstable world. Financial security and a desire to be the best are the prerequisites of businesses today, but as the scramble for superiority reaches a zenith and organizations attain their targets in terms of size, strength and reputation, surely the whole thing will start again?

This chapter has explored the importance of leadership in the management of change. It cannot be emphasised enough that Heads of schools, and particularly of preparatory schools, are generally promoted from teaching positions. Their 'successes' in the classroom, coupled with their teaching qualifications, tend to be a route to Headship, rather than management and administrative qualifications and experience. Teachers are not trained to manage finance, create development plans or deal with legal matters, all of

which are part of a preparatory school's remit. On the other hand, it could be that many are born leaders with the charisma and natural ability to create a vision and carry it forward. Goleman, (1998) states:

> ..*leadership entails exciting people's imaginations and inspiring them*
> *to move in a desired direction. It takes more than simple power to*
> *motivate and lead. (p.188)*

As this chapter has suggested, Heads may be seen as leaders by virtue of their position, but leaders may also be departmental heads, project leaders, or teachers with responsibility for specific tasks such as pastoral matters, boarding, or Resources managers. Groups within the staff can also enforce or impede change through their collegiality, although this can be problematic. The ideal of collegiality is that it can engender a sense of unity by involving staff in decision-making. It is also believed that if staffs have a sense of ownership of decisions and policies they are more likely to be supportive and less resistant to change. Campbell and Southworth (1992) refer to this as a 'culture of collaboration'. However, Hargreaves (1992) questions this emphasis on consensus as he sees it as a means for the leader to bring about whatever he or she wants – a management tool rather than an organic concept. Whether we accept 'real' or 'contrived' collegiality, one thing is certain, and that is that change is a learning experience for everyone involved. It is about structure and process, each of which needs careful planning and management, or as Bennett et al (1992) purport, it is:

> *A rational task, connecting the new to the old so that what is required*
> *is done but the vision of the organization and its task held by those*
> *who lead it is somehow sustained (p.12)*

Communication is also vital in any proposed change and it reinforces the need to include human resources. Glaser et al. (1987) showed that lack of recognition makes employees feel oppressed and unimportant. If this sentiment is allowed to proliferate, the effect on a company or school will affect morale and commitment of the very people who are needed to carry forward the positive benefits of change.

Change then, is an inevitable facet of modern life and its effect on an organization's development need not be traumatic. Managers need to consider their priorities when planning major innovation and objectivity is a prerequisite. However, what may appear to be sound judgement on paper may not work in practice if consultation with key workers is neglected.

Chapter 6 takes an in-depth look at how two schools became one and what can happen when human resources play second fiddle to finance and marketing. Before this an exploration of mergers and acquisitions is visited in order to clarify definition and the implications for the two schools.

Chapter 4: Mergers and Acquisitions

4.1 Introduction

The specific aim of this research is to understand the process and effects of the merger of two preparatory schools, and to see what lessons may be learned about the handling of mergers in the field of independent education. In the absence of any published literature concerning mergers in the private sector of education, an exploration of common themes in the field of corporate mergers was undertaken in order to discover whether experiences there may hold some meaning and relevance in this study. Government regulations for amalgamating mainstream schools were also used as a starting point when comparing procedures for planning and implementation.

In spite of a long history of mergers in the industrial world, there appears to be some confusion over the definition of the term. As well as "merger" and "takeover" the process has been variously described as: "amalgamation", "fusion", absorption", consolidation", "incorporation", "acquisition" and "association". This lack of a clear definition is in some part due to the differing expectations and processes of individual cases. The layman's idea of the term 'merger', may include the notions of 'takeover', 'absorption' and 'acquisition' all of which are highly suspicious and lead us to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that perhaps 'merger' is the term adopted by managers to soften the blow of impending change, due to takeover, on their workforce. Roget's Thesaurus does not make these analogies, indeed 'merger' is described in terms of 'union', 'fusion', coalescence' and 'coalition', whereas 'takeover', for example is allied with words such as, 'handing over', 'expropriation' and 'ejection'. As someone who has undergone the merger process and played a great part in defusing the claims of 'takeover' by a dissolute parent body from each of the two schools the researcher needed to find alternative definitions. This small nuance carries with it a huge consequence for people involved in the merger process; the loss of one's school through merger is traumatic enough without the impression that one has been absorbed or swallowed up. It was therefore necessary to search the literature for more reassuring definitions.

Brander (1988) states:

> *A merger is the amalgamation of two firms, or parts of two firms into*
> *a single firm. Most mergers are 'takeovers'; one firm (the "bidder" or*
> *"acquiring firm") buys and absorbs another firm, or part of another*
> ~~f ... ("the target"). The differences between a merger and a simple~~

Cooke (1986) makes a similar claim:

> *...I use the terms 'merger' and 'acquisition' as though they are*
> *synonymous, since it is my contention that in reality there are only a*
> *handful of genuine mergers in any year. The majority of transactions*
> *are in fact, acquisitions. (p.1)*

And Newbould (1970) states:

> *...the true merger where A and B agree to form a new company, C, to*
> *take over each. The legal approach would regard this as two*
> *takeovers, each with a value equal to the value of A or B....In the few*
> *cases of outright take-over where an existing firm purchases two or*
> *more other existing firms simultaneously, this is counted as one*
> *merger. (P. 25)*

The claims made by these authors do little to differentiate between 'merger' and 'takeover', which is troublesome, although Brander's notion that a merger happens when a business is bought as a going concern, is helpful. Whether in the corporate world it matters not how the term is defined is another story. But for the purposes of this study definition is crucial because of the resulting arguments and the ultimate effect on the merged school.

Corporate mergers have come in waves since the 1920s. Why the need to merge has arisen, is another question with a multiplicity of answers. In education, budget challenges

have meant that managers need to maximise efficient use of existing buildings and school funds.

One of the main outcomes of a merger is in the greater financial strength, which is said to ensue. In the maintained sector of education this can be seen where First schools merge with Junior Schools to form Primary schools on one site. One such example can be seen in Kent, where, on June 21st 2004, as a result of falling numbers of primary pupils in the East Malling area, a poor Inspection Report and difficulty in finding a new Head, Kent County Council Liberal Democrat Group announced plans to join the separate St. James's Infant and Millstream Junior schools to form a single Primary school for 4 to 11 year olds, with a nursery class, which, if successful, will open in September 2005.

The optimal size for schools and neighbourhood growth and decline are also important considerations. Birmingham City Council, in its BGfL (Birmingham Grid for Learning) paper (2005) state that all of their Infant and Junior schools will amalgamate to form single site Primary schools by September 2008; they cite the following triggers for amalgamation in their Amalgamation Policy:

- Governors of schools ask for consultations to begin
- One of the Heads resigns or retires
- One or both schools experience significant and sustained falling roles
- One or both schools experience budget difficulties
- One of the schools is judged by OFSTED to have serious weaknesses, require special measures, or to be underachieving

The financial strength in these situations comes from the streamlining of administration and in the running costs of one site instead of two. The following section looks more closely at school mergers and, in particular those in independent schools.

4.2 School Mergers

Before embarking on an exploration of school mergers it is necessary to point out that there will be no comparisons between maintained and independent schools. The reason for

this is that while state schools have clear guidelines set out by the government, and indeed, are accountable to the government, independent schools are, as the name suggests, independent and are not, at present, obliged to follow the same statutory procedures.

There is nothing new in the fact that independent schools move in response to social and cultural demand, indeed preparatory schools took advantage of the death duties and impossibly high running costs of many Victorian and Edwardian homes following war and depression, and started up in these buildings which have contributed significantly to their success. If their survival is to be assured they must respond not only to the changing face of society, but also to changing markets. Changes in the pattern of demand have put some schools under serious pressure; in a few cases closure has been the result.

Moore, (1994) Headmaster of a merged preparatory school states:

> *Prep schools should be responding not only to the changing face of*
> *society but also to changing markets. Schools are businesses; they*
> *have no God-given right to survive. They must go on searching for*
> *ways to get better....It doesn't matter how big and successful a school*
> *is: in thirty years it will either be very different or it will have*
> *disappeared. One fairly radical way of moving forward is to merge....*
> *(p.11)*

While the majority of preparatory schools are aware of the need to keep pace with modern trends in education, and the world in general, mergers have not been as commonplace as one would expect if Moore's warning were taken on board. Although mergers have been commonplace in the business world since before the Second World War, they have not been such a common phenomenon in educational establishments until more recently. In the independent sector we have seen a growing rationalization of the preparatory school world in general, with boarding schools suffering from a decline in demand for places. The Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS) also provided information regarding closures and mergers since 1985, details of which will be found in Appendix 2. The marketing company employed by Lake House in 1994, reported from IAPS figures, a fall of 55% in boy boarders between 1975 and 1993. The average decline in the ten years up to

1994 saw an average decline of 4.5% of boys and 1.3% of girls, which translates to a total drop of 24% of girls in 1993 and 19% in 1985. The company predicted that the market would have fallen by 67% over 25 years at the current rate of decline. This could be due, in part, to the recession of the early nineties, as well as a change in public perceptions. However, Seekings (1993) compares the running of boarding schools to the work of the blacksmiths who believed their jobs were solely to shoe horses:

> *They think their business is running boarding schools: they are, in*
> *fact, in the business of independent education. And if social,*
> *economic, legal and political developments are changing the needs of*
> *the market for independent education, then schools – all schools –*
> *must alter their offerings to meet those changing needs.... For all*
> *independent schools are faced with a rapidly changing marketplace,*
> *one in which the needs of both parents and pupils are changing. The*
> *wiser schools are already alive to these changing needs and are*
> *working out what they need to do to ensure they do not follow the*
> *demise of the blacksmith.... (p.10)*

We hear many references to market forces from commentators on the state of independent schooling, but what exactly does this mean? Robin Peverett, (1997) former Director of Education in the Independent Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS), cites the following examples:

> *There has been a shift of public opinion, resulting in a move away*
> *from boarding towards greater emphasis on the home and family, and*
> *where both parents work, weekly boarding is more acceptable. Media*
> *comment, particularly in the press, has tended to criticise parents who*
> *"send their children away" to be educated. Also, a shrinking Empire*
> *resulting in fewer companies abroad has meant a reduction in need*
> *for children to be sent home to school. (From a speech made to*
> *parents at Lake House)*

From this we can see that preparatory schools, and in particular, those with a boarding ethos, are having to adapt to social and cultural changes. In the nineties there appeared to be too many preparatory schools for the number of pupils wanting places. In the area where the researcher was currently working Area Training Board meetings debated the trend among some senior schools to lower their age at entry, from thirteen to eleven, forcing those preparatory schools who went up to thirteen, to lower their starting ages from four to three, and in some cases to two year olds, in order to compensate for the potential loss of pupils at 11+.

Kiggell (1993) takes this a step further and reports that:

> *The eighties were good years for the economy and good years for prep*
> *schools....Different strategies are needed in harder times, and we are*
> *seeing some tough and very realistic approaches. Mergers and*
> *partnerships are inevitably going to proliferate, and the message here*
> *is to make no plans and do deals from as strong a position as may be:*
> *not to wait too long, but to have real assets to bring to the*
> *marketplace. (p.3)*

In preparatory schools, there is obviously a certain sense of concern over future survival. As the economic climate changes, school fees continue to rise with, and sometimes above the rate of inflation, which is a great consideration to potential 'customers' in an insecure job market. Boards of governors must look to the future ability of people to cope with ever-rising costs of private education and make plans to accommodate the increasing competition between schools for a decreasing share of the market. Since private schools are, strictly speaking, businesses, mergers are becoming more commonplace along with other corporate practices.

Timing is an overriding factor in the future success of a merger and this was highlighted in a paper circulated to independent schools by the Independent Schools Joint Council (ISJC). This paper drew attention to the importance of *(i) heeding in good time any signs that demand for independent education in a particular locality might not be sufficient to support all the existing schools and (ii) considering the scope for mergers. (ISJC Bulletin 24 Oct. 13th 1991.* It was one of the main arguments of the Governors of Lake House and

St. Finian's to start merger proceedings when they did. Financial strength is one of the prerequisites, and if schools wait too long their financial resources may be insufficient to resolve their situation.

Since preparatory school mergers are usually undertaken in order to eliminate competition and to create capital through the sale of the site of one of the schools the increased capital can then be used to add new facilities, perhaps, as in industry, by borrowing, thereby potentially increasing numbers on roll and contributing to the "value-added" aspect which may give a particular school an edge over its rivals. As with the various industrial competitors, preparatory schools are continually striving to find their own niche in the market, and, unless they are in city areas where demand for places is high, this can rarely be achieved without a secure financial background.

One of the dangers of discussing mergers is in definition. It is very difficult to divorce the notion of 'takeover' from that of 'merger' in the available literature. Indeed, the terms 'mergers' and 'acquisitions' seem to go hand in hand and it is small wonder, therefore, that public perception, is so cynical. This emphasises the point that mergers are important for their economic effects, but the repercussions on the individuals affected is equally significant. Fear is said to be the initial reaction to news of a merger, but Mace and Montgomery (1962) purport that fear is also the chief reason for selling:

> *The board may have fears of one kind or another and decide to put the*
> *company on the market; their employees have fears about the prospect*
> *of being taken over. These two can feed on each other and lead to a*
> *situation of considerable distrust and a change in the character and*
> *atmosphere of the company. (p.33)*

So far this chapter has explored the reasons for merger, but what are the advantages and do they outweigh the disadvantages?

There is little comparison between the advantages of a merger in business and of those for a preparatory school, inasmuch as production companies have to be aware of, for example,

stock levels, transport charges and shareholder investment. Also, many firms can spread their risks by branching out into other unrelated industries and trades. For example, "Guinness", the famous brewing company, entered the confectionary trade in the fifties when it took over "Callard and Bowser"; "Cable and Wireless" is now a successful investment trust etc. These options are not open to preparatory schools, which, if they want to merge, must find other educational organizations. This is what Smith and Brooks (1963) refer to as "horizontal integration" whereby firms at the same stage in the productive process, in the same industry or trade, join forces. The one thing that both types of organization have in common, as Moon (1959) asserted, is the financial strength that may be gained from such a venture.

Where there are advantages there tend, also, to be disadvantages that may include:

- Loss of the personal touch
- Loss of trade name
- Inconvenience and expense
- Personality problems

These disadvantages are particularly evident in corporate concerns but they can, in some measure, be applied to preparatory schools. For example, there is always an element of suspicion when a new Head takes over in a school, and prospective parents like to wait and see how he or she affects the general atmosphere before committing themselves to it. Loss of a trade name has not proved to be a disadvantage since there is generally some preservation of the original name in business as well as in preparatory schools. Inconvenience and expense are inevitable and they have to be weighed against the proposed benefits. Mergers are expensive. The legal costs, redundancies and the expense of establishing a new corporate image are just part of the equation. Personality problems can and do affect the future success of a merger

Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) also refer to the much-underestimated costs of school merger in terms of teacher stress. They reported that studies undertaken in the 1970s, (Dunham, 1975, 1976; Isaac, 1981) revealed the anxiety and stress caused to teachers who had to reapply for their jobs during secondary school reorganisation. Even a year after

reorganisation, many teachers felt they had not identified with their new school. Dunham and Isaac also drew attention to the effects of the management of reorganisation. They maintain that poor communication stating the reasons for the initial decision to reorganise, and the management of the interviews for new posts added to this stress.

In the 1980s Kyriacou and Harriman highlighted the closure of small 'unviable' primary schools. They echo old arguments such as Moon's (1959) point regarding the sometimes-protracted investigations and negotiations during which time anxiety could be heightened by 'planning blight'. This refers to the consideration by parents as to whether to send their children to a school which may close, and the concern of teachers for their futures – whether or not to apply for other jobs. After the decision to reorganise is taken, staff and pupils then have the extra anxiety of moving to new schools. Being involved in the process causes much of this stress.

McHugh and Kyle (1992), in their study of stress levels in 76 teachers from five Northern Ireland secondary schools, found that teacher stress was significantly highest for the teachers in the 'threat-of-merger' schools, due to worries about possible redundancy. This worry was not so great for teachers in the two merged schools, although the level of worry was not as low as it had been before talk of merger. Teachers in the 'not-merged schools were least affected by stress. McHugh and Kyle (1993) emphasised the importance of minimising unnecessary stress when managing this type of reorganisation. They recommended the provision of more information and counselling, and to allow sufficient time before the merger for adequate forward planning.

It would also seem, from the above study, that the greatest amount of uncertainty is found in schools that are under threat of merger. McHugh and Kyle (1993) assert that head teachers in threatened schools are unable to encourage their staff and as a consequence teachers are concerned by the apparent disinterest of their Heads. They conclude that:

> *The amalgamation of schools constitutes traumatic organisation*
> *change, which carries with it threats of redundancy and skill*
> *obsolescence, changes in authority and responsibility, a new*
> *organisation culture and general upheaval. (p.24)*

Human resource management has been shown to be under-considered. A letter to the "Guardian" on February 6th 1962 highlighted this aspect of mergers:

> *...the average shareholder invests only a proportion of his money in a company, while the employee invests all – his livelihood, his skills and his loyalty. Does not this make him a shareholder too? Has he not an equal moral right to vote on the fate of his company? The one who invests himself is not even consulted. He is sold to the highest bidder like a slave!*

So, from looking at the reasons why organizations such as schools decide to merge, advantages and disadvantages and in particular the potential stress on teachers caused by the very thought of merger, it appears that there needs to be a method of achieving this end in a way which will accommodate the concerns of all those involved – staff, parents and children. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 introduced new arrangements for making changes in the organization of mainstream schools in DfEE Circular 9/99. The next section looks at this guidance to see if there are any proposals that could be applied in the independent sector.

4.3. Statutory Guidance and Independent Schools

Preparatory schools are in a similar situation to mainstream schools in that the books have to balance and their viability must be monitored, the only main differences being in governance and funding. New arrangements for statutory proposals for changes to mainstream schools recommended that decision making be taken locally in partnership with all interested parties rather than centrally and School Organisation Committees have therefore been set up to decide proposals to make significant changes to schools, although Local Education Authorities will continue to make decisions on proposals if there are no objections.

There are two types of guidance given in the document: statutory guidance sets out the legal requirements and must be heeded by all those concerned; and non-statutory

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guidance, which is designed to inform people about the legislative requirements to help them carry out their roles as effectively as possible and to advise on good practice. While guidelines have been laid down it is up to those locally involved to assess the relative importance to be given to each factor in reaching decisions on proposals put before them. When the LEA, governors or promoters decide to proceed with statutory proposals they are required to publish them in the form of a notice, for example:

> The Local Education Authority hereby gives notice in accordance with section 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that it intends to discontinue X school on...

The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 specify the following information which must be included in all notices:

- The name of the persons or body publishing the proposals
- The time or date of implementation
- A statement explaining the procedure for making statutory objections, including the date by which objections should be sent to the relevant Local Education Authority or School Organisation Committee, and
- The Address of the Local Education Authority or School Organisation Committee to which objections should be sent.

Where the proposal is to establish a new school the following additional information should be included in notices:

- The location of the site of the new school (including, where appropriate, the postal address)
- The category into which the proposed school will fall
- Information on whether the new school will admit pupils of both sexes or whether it will admit pupils of one sex only
- The proposed arrangement for transport of pupils to the new school
- The number of pupils to be admitted to the new school in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented or, where it is intended that the proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the new school in the first school year in which each stage has been implemented. This will establish the standard number for admission of pupils of that age

> - *Where the proposed school is to be established on the site which is occupied by a school which has been identified as failing and which it is intended to discontinue, a statement as to how the curriculum, staffing and (if relevant) the buildings of the proposed school will differ from those of the school proposed to be discontinued. It will also be helpful if the statement is able to set out clearly:*
> - *The rationale behind the decision to establish a new school on the site of a school identified as failing and intended to be discontinued*
> - *The individual proposals designed to ensure that the new school will provide a significantly higher standard of education to its pupils than the school proposed to be discontinued*
> - *The full details of the necessary expenditure related to the establishment of the new school, including capital, management and administration, salaries and other staffing costs, and how the costs will be met; and*
> - *That where the school to be formally discontinued has surplus places, consideration has been given to whether such places are rally needed*
> - *A statement as to whether the governing body of the proposed school or Local Education Authority will be the admission authority (pp52-53)*

Where a school is being closed details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school places available in consequence of the proposed closure should be given.

The Act also states that if the full effect of the proposals is not apparent to the general public from the published notices it may be supplemented by an explanatory note or public statement, but which should be clearly distinguishable from the formal proposals. It is also made clear in the The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999, that notices have to be published:

> *- By being posted in a conspicuous place in the area served by the school and the area*
> *proposed to be served by the school*
> *- In at least one newspaper circulating in the areas referred to above; and*
> *- By being posted at or near the main entrance to the school, or, if there is more than one*
> *main entrance, all of them. (p.55)*

The law requires that a period of two months is allowed after the date of publication of notices for objections to be made, and where a published notice has not been properly formulated in accordance with the statutory requirements, the notice is invalid, in which case the proposers must publish a revised notice.

Private schools have no legal obligations to follow government guidelines yet the guidance set in place by the 1999 Act is there to ensure fair play for all concerned and to ensure that formal measures for planning and implementing change leave no opportunity for subterfuge and lack of clarity of purpose. Although there are no such hard and fast guidelines for independent schools the Independent Schools' Joint Council's (ISJC) advice is to contact the Charities Commission for its consent to the transfer except in rare cases where both schools are privately owned. The Commission is in a position to help by identifying and overcoming obstacles. This can be a lengthy process and ISJC recommend the services of a good charity lawyer as well as the acquisition of consent from the Charities Commission before the merger is made public.

There are also legal considerations which will depend on the constitutions of each of the merging schools. Assuming that two charities are involved, a Transfer Agreement needs to be drawn up by a solicitor experienced in company law and this should be approved and countersigned by the Charities Commission. This Agreement includes relatively standard clauses dealing with assets, debtors and creditors, and employment of staff. The transfer of title to school sites is another consideration, and, according to The Guide to Good School Management (ISJC Bulletin13, Oct. 1991) there should be a clause preventing either party from making any public statement without the prior agreement of the other.

A merger of independent schools is likely to be subject to the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations. These provide for all the staff of both schools automatically to become

employees of the new combined school, with their previous service counting for employment continuity purposes.

Chapter 7 discusses these two sets of guidelines and looks at how the outcomes of the merger might have been different if a more clearly defined structure, such as the Statutory Guidance had been in place.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has explored the concept of corporate merger from which common links with preparatory school mergers have been made, particularly in the planning stages where the success or failure of both types of organization can rest, to a large degree, with the orchestrators, as preparatory schools have had to become more business orientated in their bid to gain a share of their market.

It is interesting to note Kyriacou and Harriman's (1980) suggestion that being involved in the merger process causes much of teacher stress. There are commentators, such as Marris (1975) who maintains that change cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared. He states that while reformers have already assimilated change and made sense of it, if they do not give the same opportunity to others to do the same they:

> "*treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions". (p166)*

McHugh and Kyle (1993) also state:

> *Managing large-scale traumatic change requires all of those effecting change and those affected by change to engage in adequate communication through 'dialogue' in order to clarify pertinent issues. Such communication is an essential component in the change process, which permits both parties to exchange views and thus, alleviate any areas of uncertainty. (p.25)*

As rationalisation in educational provision is likely to increase in the future, it is vital to take account of the teacher stress caused by the powerlessness of having such major change enforced with no prior consultation. Since teachers are the very people who have the job of ensuring that change is smooth and does not adversely affect pupils, time would be well spent in involving them in the process, thereby empowering them and making sense of the rationale behind the proposed change. Again, by perhaps following the government's model for change in schools this might be reduced considerably.

Finally, as McHugh and Kyle (1992) conclude at the end of their study:

> *The amalgamation of schools constitutes traumatic organisation*
> *change which carries with it threats of redundancy and skill*
> *obsolescence, changes in authority and responsibility, a new*
> *organisation culture and general upheaval. (P.24)*

Merger management is a team effort. Once the reasons for the process have been established and agreement from both schools has been negotiated, a clear timetable of targets should be set out which involve all those who will be expected to implement it. This should include not simply financial considerations and a physical move, but the impact on teachers, parents, pupils and support staff.

In spite of the many worries that are associated with mergers there are distinct advantages, the most desirable being the greater financial security that is expected to ensue from eliminating a competitor. However, the disadvantages lie in the expense of such ventures, and the potential risk of failure due to loss of personality, changes in management and staffing. There cannot be a panacea for every problem but by taking into consideration these concerns the chances of success are greatly enhanced.

As the researcher has aimed to show, mergers, whether in corporate institutions or in preparatory schools, are stressful. Threat of merger has been proved to cause high levels of anxiety among staff and it would appear to be caused by management expectations that they should carry on without the benefit of inclusion in decision making. If, as Francis

Bacon maintained, knowledge itself is power, this could be one reason for not involving them.

In the next chapter the design and methodology of one particular case is described and discussed in terms of the theoretical and the researcher's position.

Chapter 5: Design and Methodology

This chapter critiques the methodology of the study in both theoretical and practical terms. Following a general introduction to the design of a research project the data collection methods used are outlined and the rationale for employing a single case study is explored. Semi-structured interviews and documentation are discussed in depth. Finally this chapter evaluates the problems and ethical considerations associated with undertaking such a study in the researcher's own school.

5.1   Introduction

This study involves the case of the merger of two preparatory schools and examines what factors and processes shape the outcomes of institutional merger in the context of preparatory schools. The main unit of analysis is the new school, but before this could be studied it was necessary to look at the pre-merger planning and circumstances which led to the decision to merge. In view of the huge impact on the people involved and the highly emotive issues which were likely to ensue, a large part of the data collection had to be undertaken with great sensitivity and a guarantee of confidentiality and, as stated in Chapter 1, the study is anonymised throughout, using pseudonyms for people, places and schools.

5.2   Research Design

A broad methodological approach is used with an emphasis more on a hermeneutic interpretive approach rather than a positivist one, as the principal concern is to understand the way in which individuals have interpreted, created and modified the situation in New School. Because this study concerns experience and insight into a unique and intensely personal event, it relies heavily on personal accounts and participant observation, rather than on a scientific positivist approach in a quest for hard, objective and tangible knowledge from a situation which is external to individuals. From the researcher's participatory observation, interviews and documentation, it is intended to construct an explanatory account of events leading up to, implementation and fallout of a relatively

new phenomenon in the preparatory school world, that of merger, from which a model for future practice may be created.

The strengths of using this kind of approach are, firstly, in the richness and colour that can be generated from the human experiences of the merger process. The interpretations of these experiences play an important part in outcomes, and subsequently, from these experiences and understandings theories for future practice can be built. By interviewing stakeholders and through observation it is possible to examine the realities of the situation which provide useful insights and balanced views from a cross-section of participants. Secondly, an interpretive approach allows the researcher to hypothesise, an especially useful tool where cause and effect are being investigated, enabling the 'what if' and 'how' questions to put into perspective the views of those involved.

Interpretive research lends itself to small-scale studies where non-statistical data and micro-concepts are being examined. The small-scale study reflects the involvement of the researcher, her interpretation of events and the generation of a model for future consideration.

A single case was chosen as the basis for this study for two main reasons. Firstly, because this unusual, indeed, unique case is, simply that, a single case and would not be as revelatory as part of a multiple-case. Secondly, although a multiple-case study would enhance and offer a 'comparative' aspect to this study, the resources, time and space available would preclude it for a single researcher at this level of research.

The limitations of using an interpretive approach lie in the fact that it is subjective, and while subjectivity is inevitable in any investigation concerning the experiences of a group of people in a specific context, objectivity is needed if the reality of the situation is to be presented as different people see it. It is also problematic to generalise from a non-positivist approach since we are dealing with interpretations of events rather more than scientific analysis of facts. Nevertheless, the aim of this methodology is to understand a process, not to produce a scientific enquiry, upon which to base a model for future practice.

The key issues to be addressed are: the management of change, organizational culture, the implications of changing school culture and an understanding of mergers in general.

Data has been collected through a review of the relevant literature, presentations by governors to staff and parents, and through semi-structured interviews with other concerned stakeholders such as parents, pupils, teachers and support staff.
Case study was chosen as the most appropriate strategy for this study as it combines a number of important features: it reveals, in-depth, a relatively new, but interesting phenomenon – that of the amalgamation of private schools, and, as Schramm (1971) explains, it:

> *...tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were*
> *taken, how they were implemented, and with what result (p. 12)*

In this case it allows a unique situation to be understood by taking account of forces acting on participants, as well as how they reacted to such forces. Nonetheless, it is envisaged that the themes arising from this single study will be transferable to other similar contexts, and be of use to policy makers and managers working in similar contexts.

One of the strengths of case study research is that the results have a three-dimensional reality which makes them more easily understood, particularly to interested parties such as governors as policy makers and staff. As Adelman et al (1980) point out:

> *Case studies are "a step to action". They begin in a world of action*
> *and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put*
> *to use; for staff or individual self-development, for within institutional*
> *feedback; for formative evaluation; and in educational policy*
> *making.....At its best they allow readers to judge the implications of a*
> *study for themselves. (p. 123)*

Case study is just one way of carrying out research, but in this particular study, which appears to be a new phenomenon as far as research is concerned, Yin's (1994) belief that

case studies generally answer the 'how' and 'why' questions and suit the researcher who has little or no control over events, seemed to be appropriate in this instance. He also maintained that:

Case studies are the preferred strategy when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. (p.1)

5.3   Role of the researcher

The reasons for undertaking this study are two-fold: as a member of the teaching staff of one of the schools, and therefore personally involved in the process, the researcher was fascinated by the way in which the school moved from the embryonic stage of theoretical planning, through the transitional phase of change into an entirely new organization. These events were considered fascinating enough for the researcher to record them for personal interest, but on a less subjective front they formed the basis of an understanding of the micro-political and the political issues surrounding this merger. As a generalization the researcher aims to see if there are any recommendations which can be drawn from it for any schools contemplating a similar venture.

The researcher's interest in the study arose out of her close involvement in one of the amalgamated schools, and the merger itself. It was considered to be a worthwhile topic since there was ease of access to sources of data, and a close involvement in many aspects of the process. Initial enthusiasm for the project was enhanced by the involvement and the excitement of change. However, as this thesis will explain, this enthusiasm lessened considerably as the merger progressed.

As a member of the Senior Management Team in both Lake House and New School, it was imperative to clarify the researcher's position from the outset, and decisions had to be made as to the research methods. As a participant observer it was necessary to be aware and to take account of bias, subjectivity and loss of perspective, but as Bailey (1978) writes, there are some inherent advantages in the participant observation approach:

1. Observation studies are superior to experiments and surveys when
data are being collected on non-verbal data.

2. In observation studies, investigators are able to discern on going
behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about
its salient features.

3. Because case study observations take place over an extended
period of time, researchers can develop more intimate and informal
relationships with those they are observing, generally in more natural
environments than those in which experiments and surveys are
conducted.

4. Case study observations are less reactive than other types of data-
gathering methods. For example, in laboratory-based experiments
and in surveys that depend upon verbal responses to structured
questions, bias can be introduced in the very data that researchers are
attempting to study. (p.110)

The role of participant observer has, indeed, all of the afore-mentioned features, although there are inherent disadvantages which will be addressed later. This role allowed the researcher to develop an understanding of work colleagues' feelings, to have their trust, to be a recipient of all written documentation given to staff and to communicate directly with key players. Hirschhorn (1988) talks of the participant researcher as being free from the trappings of the research encounter, seeing the workers as they really are, not as they pose to the researcher. However, there is the intrinsic inevitability that their curiosity will be aroused and requests made to see examples of the work in progress.

Emotional involvement is a by-product which has to be kept in check and closely monitored, for, as Denscombe (1998) points out, there is a psychological risk in participant observation, as well as legal and social hazards. The researcher, particularly during the latter part of the study, found the reviewing of press cuttings and letters very poignant and stressful.

Anderson et al. (1994) aver that "participatory research tends to focus on a broader societal analysis" than traditional action research and that it also:

...operates out of a more sophisticated perspective and is viewed as

taking place within a field of power relations, in which conflicts of

interest often create resistance to the research. Participatory

researchers assume that they will be resisted from above i.e., by

powerful vested interests, whereas traditional action researchers are

often consultants who are hired by the powerful. (pp. 17-18)

In this case, there was indeed a fear of resistance from above, initially, but by being completely open about motives and confidentiality, the researcher was granted access to documents and to key players, that is to say, the governors who were involved in the merger, although the Headmaster did request permission to read it when completed.

5.4. Data Collection Strategy and Methods

The starting point for data collection was to decide which strategies to use. The researcher's role as participant observer facilitated access to staff and governors, but time and ease of access to a wide range of individuals and the more sensitive documentation had to be accounted for. Another concern was also to ensure that the data collection strategy would provide valid argument, for, as Sapsford and Jupp (1996) purport:

The major concern is with validity, by which we mean the design of

research to provide credible conclusions: whether the evidence which

the research offers can bear the weight of the interpretation that is put

on it. (p.1)

It was also necessary to take into account the way in which the documentary sources would be collected and analysed. Sapsford and Jupp (ibid.) make a distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. They maintain that:

Historians and others conventionally regard as primary sources those

that were written (or otherwise came into being) by people directly

involved and at a time contemporary or near contemporary with the
period being investigated....Secondary sources, by contrast, are those
that discuss the period studied but are brought into being at some time
after it, or otherwise somewhat removed from the actual events.
(p.141)

In this case the documentary evidence can be easily separated into pre- and post merger sources. The planning stage generated a collection of financial forecasts, minutes of meetings and reports to governors. Additionally, the fallout created a number of concerns among the parent body which are recorded as minutes of meetings and as articles in the press. These latter data arose after the period studied, but as a direct result of the former. In the context of Sapsford and Jupp's (1996) proposal that secondary sources interpret or judge material found in primary sources, it could be argued that events and reports on them, which came at the end of the first term in the new school, could be classed as secondary data. However, since the issues are so closely linked it is with some confidence that data from the fallout is presented as a primary source.

This case addresses a range of issues - historical, political, managerial, cultural and financial. They impact on each other and no single source has an advantage over the other, but the use of multiple sources of evidence will enable the researcher to triangulate the data, and in so doing, check for validity from converging lines of inquiry. For these reasons, three techniques were selected: interviews; a review of historical and current documentation; and a survey of the staff using an adaptation of Hargreaves' (1995) model from "Mapping Change in Schools – The Cambridge Manual of Research Techniques".

In addition, data collection was generated through participant observation, conversations with and chance observations from parents and colleagues. The process of waiting was frustrating as agreement to interview key players was not easily put into action, appointments were made and then postponed and great tact had to be used when in discussion with parents as feelings were running high following the dismissal of the Principal. Access to certain key information was agreed early on in the research, but gained only after two to three years, and then monitored closely. Nevertheless, given the sensitive nature of some of the documentation and background information, participants

were helpful in allowing the researcher to tape interviews and colleagues were only too eager to be asked their opinions through the survey and in conversation.

5.5. Sampling

The question of who to gather data from had to be considered carefully. With regard to the teaching staff it was decided to sample 100%, (43 including part-time assistants) as the school is relatively small – 350 pupils - and to select any less than this could lead to bias and to non-representative results. All available documentation was used so as to give a wide range of information from archives to newspaper reports, which were as a consequence of the fall-out from the merger. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their role in the merger process and their ability to provide a balanced view to the researcher. One governor from each of the former schools, an independent advisor who subsequently became Chairman of Governors in the new school, plus the Union representative, were deemed to be the most likely candidates - in other words, a critical case sample, those that can make a point dramatically or are, for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things. Others - former governors and colleagues were interviewed in a less structured way, on the telephone and during casual meetings. The advantage of this was that participants were able to speak their minds, and, as Denscombe (1999) points out:

> *They lend themselves to in-depth investigations, particularly those*
> *which explore personal accounts and feelings. (p.113)*

5.6. Surveys

This study has, so far, concentrated on the process of planning and implementation of a merger, taking into account the financial and managerial aspects. Human resources have been considered with regard to appointments and numbers on roll. One major consideration - that of school culture - was not evident in any of the documentation but was raised in an interview with the Headmaster of New School. In this case, the researcher was keen to find out from the staff, their perceptions of the school culture and its future direction.

Having undergone a major change, the perceptions of the staff were deemed critical to the overall picture, but to conduct one-to-one interviews with each of them would be time consuming. A survey of the entire teaching staff was undertaken, based on its straightforwardness, and in consideration of the fact that the researcher was a participant observer. However, the survey, taken from Hargreaves (1995) "Mapping Change in Schools"- The Cambridge Manual of Research Techniques was found to be inappropriate to the study due to its emphasis on four general school types. Another disadvantage of this survey was that the quadrant descriptors were for either Primary or Secondary schools. This made the choice problematic in that New School pupils range from two to thirteen years in age.

The only real value in carrying out the survey was in the comparison and contrasting of views of different sections of the staff. For example, the Senior Management Team included the Headmaster who tended to have a unique view of the school and this is one of the underlying themes of the case. Indeed, had this been understood at the outset of the research more emphasis would have been given to the neurophysiology of managers and the effect of emotional intelligence on management. This is a case of agnoagnosia – I don't know I don't know - which can be applied to both researcher and the governance of the merger.

5.7.   Documentation

The value of using documents in this case is in the relative ease of access to the facts as they arose over the period of the study. The documents in question include minutes of meetings between school governors, including their sub-committees, presentations of financial histories and forecasts, letters, agendas and other written reports of events. Pre-merger documents include a formal evaluation of Lake House and post merger newspaper clippings are also reviewed.

While these forms of evidence are useful it was necessary to bear in mind that much of it may have been edited before distribution to the interested parties, therefore some caution has to be exercised concerning the validity of such data. Also, as Jupp (1996) maintains:

> *Critical analysis in social science involves an examination of the assumptions that underpin any account (say, in a document) and a consideration of what other possible aspects are concealed or ruled out. (p. 298)*

It is also important to bear in mind when examining documentary evidence that it was not written for the purpose of this research, records of meetings in particular were for those with different objectives. Similarly, letters and newspaper articles represented differing points of view and must be interpreted critically. Past and present school prospectuses provided background and historical information, but again it must be borne in mind that these were produced as marketing tools for prospective "customers".

Documents related to this case have a number of features; some existed prior to the research, such as archives from both schools which reveal their historical backgrounds, but those which were produced for purposes other than this research and which nonetheless are of interest in this case, are of the type referred to by Webb et al (1966) as 'unobtrusive measures.' An example of these are the memoranda produced as a normal part of the school's bureaucratic functioning but which were accessible to the researcher to study the institutional processes. From an epistemological position the documents and written records form part of the evidence necessary to the case, but they also reflect evidence – newspaper articles in particular – thus as Mason (1996) purports:

> *a high degree of sophistication and scepticism is needed in their interpretation. (p. 73)*

Nevertheless, since access to certain key players has not been possible, documentary evidence has been used to verify and contextualise personal recollections, and, combined with personal knowledge and the corroboration of colleagues they present a reasonably accurate portrayal of the backgrounds to each of the two schools in this case.

5.8. Interviews

The decision to use interviews, as a means of data collection, was taken in the knowledge that there would be a relatively small number of possible respondents. As the case study reveals, the likelihood of gaining access to certain significant sources was minimal, owing to the animosity generated as a result of the removal of the Principal of New School. However, the certainty of gaining more of an in-depth insight into the merger from a small sample of respondents, was deemed by the researcher to be more fruitful than gathering more superficial information from a large number of sources; even though some of those sources would have provided a variety of personal recollections and observations. The researcher used Denscombe's (1998) three justifications for going for depth rather than breadth:

> *Data based on emotions, experiences and feelings*
>
> *Data based on sensitive issues*
>
> *Data based on privileged information (p. 111)*

This case relies as much on facts as it does on the experiences and feelings of a wide group of participants. The events that followed the merger generated a range of emotions, from frustration and anxiety to enormous sadness, mainly as a result of the human cost involved; therefore careful handling and sensitivity were required. The researcher was granted access to hitherto unpublicised accounts of meetings and conversations; this insider knowledge was invaluable. The fact, too, that respondents were able to come to the researcher also made interviewing feasible, and costs in terms of time and money were minimal.

The most difficult decision was in selecting the interview method. On the one hand it was important to let respondents speak freely, but at the same time it was necessary to ensure that key points were covered and relevant questions answered. From the researcher's experience of her respondents she knew that unstructured interviews would generate too much anecdotal and irrelevant data, while structured interviews, which exercise too much control over questioning, could obviate the flow of certain personalities. Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were judged to be the most suited to the type of information gathering needed in this case. The researcher was able to exercise enough control over the

issues being addressed while, at the same time being flexible enough to allow respondents to consider and develop their responses. Group interviews were not an option in this case as some of the issues were too sensitive to be shared; the privacy of one-to-one interviews was vital.

The choice of informants was limited owing to the researcher's role in the merger, but consent was given freely, and at the end of each interview the tape was played back to check that respondents were happy with their contribution. The choice of venue was made by mutual consent, as was the timing, and each respondent was keen to participate.

Evidence collected through the interviewing process was used to support other data rather than to prove their significance. This is because extracts of interviews in this study use quotes taken out of context, and the researcher's choice of transcripts, in the body of the text, are acknowledged to be illustrative rather than proof of a point.

This chapter has looked at the data collection methods used in a single case-study. The case itself is presented in the following chapter which includes examples of this data. The facts, as they happened, over a three year period are presented with some of the documentary evidence. Names and other identifiable subjects have been changed to aid confidentiality.

Chapter 6: Case Study

The previous chapter laid out the reasons for choosing case study as a means of exploring the merger of Lake House and St. Finian's. This chapter looks at the reasons why the two schools merged, the planning process, the early days of change and adaptation and the fallout which ensued.

6.1. Introduction

Earlier chapters have shown how the economic climate has impacted on the preparatory school market, and in particular, the decline in boarding numbers was well publicised. For schools such as Lake House, this meant ensuring that there were at least two day pupils for every boarder in order to maintain income. Marketing the school became more necessary and every opportunity was taken to promote the school in the local press and to attend Schools' Exhibitions in towns and cities in the region.

6.1.1. Chronology of events

Three years after the initial enquiry by the Lake House governors into the future prospects for the school, Roy Percival, in his role as Director of Education of IAPS was invited to speak to the governors of Lake House, about the future of preparatory schools in general. He looked at the macro issues concerning the ability of small schools to survive in a changing market, the national decline in demand for boarding places and the fact that too many small schools in one area would not be effective enough in the future. He advised the governors of all the preparatory schools in the area to start talking to each other sooner rather than later, as a merger from a position of financial strength would be advantageous. In November 1994 a marketing firm was called in to review the school's marketing strategy and subsequently to make a presentation to the staff.

The objectives of the survey were:

Requirements of parents:

- Academic and pastoral

- Boarding and day.

-The performance of Lake House against these requirements, in relation to competitors and as perceived.

Current positioning of Lake House

Scope of potential market

Range and effectiveness of marketing methods

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

Recommendations

The results of this survey indicated that within the national market, demand for boarding places was declining, and that prep schools in particular were experiencing the sharpest fall at 29% between 1989 and 1993, with the researcher's school experiencing an 18% drop. At the time of the survey there were no plans for a merger, but one of the suggested options for the future was to gain the market share from other boarding schools by reducing through closure or merger.

The figures show that, nationally, in 1993 there were:

10,422 Full boarding boys

3,141   Full boarding girls

62,200 Day boys

30,900 Day Girls

The survey also pointed to a decline in boarders from Service families and in company subsidies, although when the researcher asked the Director of Education for IAPS (Independent Association of Preparatory Schools), whether he thought that this had any bearing on the present climate in prep schools he said that he could find no evidence for it. The market forecast, commissioned by Lake House governors, for the following five years, 1993-1998 showed:

◆   Static overall market

◆   Continuing day place growth, especially in prep schools

◆   Slowing of boarding fee increases/boarding decline

- Closing the gap in fee structure:
- "Day boarder" day fees
- Day school day fees
- Continuing parental obsession with results
- More HMC schools going co-ed (11+ entry)
- Parental flexibility re- the independent option
- Fees
- Learning difficulties
- Changing circumstances

In order to gain a clearer understanding of these bullet points, they are set out under seven main headings:

Static overall market: No major changes in overall demand for preparatory school places were forecast, but the balance between boarding and day places was likely to change in favour of day provision. As boarding numbers declined, it was felt that the annual fee increases would decrease thereby closing the gap in fee structure between day and boarding fees. There could also be an addition of "day boarder" fees where pupils would arrive at school for breakfast and stay to do prep after supper; in fact they would do everything that a boarder would do apart from sleeping at school.

Continuing parental obsession with results: There is a growing trend amongst parents, particularly those new to private education, that if they are paying for their children's education, good academic results will automatically be achieved. In the researcher's school, and in those with whom we meet regularly, we are seeing that accountability is increasing as parents seek value for money and want to play a more active role in a partnership between home and school. Teachers are beginning to feel like sitting targets as they have to justify their marks and teaching methods to parents who feel that they have the right to come into school whenever they choose to question the inner workings of the system.

More HMC schools going co-ed: There is a growing trend for senior schools, particularly boys' schools who are members of the Headmasters' Conference, to take in girls. Since the traditional girls' schools start at 11+ some of the new co-ed schools have followed suit which means that prep schools which go up to 13+ are losing children in

their top two years. This has a significantly detrimental effect on boarding numbers in particular, and consequently, the financial implications are very worrying.

Parental flexibility re – the independent option: Traditionally, children who are educated in the independent sector have started boarding at seven or eight years old and have continued to public schools until they were eighteen. Children were often registered at birth in order to guarantee places. Today, in all but the well-known "top" private schools, the tables have turned and preparatory schools, in particular, are in competition with each other to fill their places. Parents can now leave the decision to take up places until the very last minute. There is also a growing trend to use the Nursery and Pre-prep part of preparatory schools in order to "gain a good grounding" before sending children to local schools in the maintained sector. We are seeing too, more children arriving at 11+ from primary schools, to have two years preparation for public schools. Some parents value the solid academic framework of the preparatory school as a good base from which to send their children to maintained secondary schools, while others prefer to delay the expenditure until 11 or 13+. There is much more fluidity within the education system as parents opt in and out of the maintained and independent sectors to suit their financial and educational ideals.

Learning difficulties: Independent schools, particularly preparatory schools, are seeing a growing number of children with learning difficulties of one kind or another as smaller classes and more individual attention are deemed to be advantageous.

Changing circumstances: Boarding schools fill the needs of families who move around regularly, such as Forces families. There are also now more families where both parents work. This has led to an increase in demand for weekly and flexi-boarding, where parents have to spend odd nights away children can stay overnight when necessary, on a bed and breakfast basis. Boarding can sometimes be an answer for divorced and separated parents who want to give their children some stability. For these reasons, independent schools are fulfilling a social service, and in an increasingly mobile and changing society their role must adapt accordingly.

The marketing company also forecast that there would be a crystallisation of market segmentation into:

♦ Boys only Division 1 Boarding (Eton, Harrow, Radley, Winchester etc.)

♦ Girls only Division 1 Boarding (Cheltenham Ladies, Wycombe Abbey, Sherborne etc.)

♦ Co-ed HMC schools (Bryanston, Canford, Clifton, Dauntseys, Marlborough, Malvern, Repton, Rugby etc.)

♦ Closure of small boarding "generalists"

♦ Small "core-boarding" preparatory schools in regional niches

♦ Successful urban day schools (£4K p.a. fees)

♦ Day schools with flexi-boarding (convenience store)

In November 1994, the following facts and figures were presented to the staff by one of the governors, although there was still no indication at this stage of a possible future merger. Indeed, the proposed challenges stated that the school did not face disaster, rather some serious challenges, one of which was to be the Regional boarding-based preparatory school.

This survey laid the foundations for talks between the Chairman of governors of Lake House and two others from schools within a five mile radius. The idea of a merger between all three schools was proposed, and the management responses to this policy form part of the focus of this study.

In 1996 an eleven month period of planning for merger followed three years of on-off discussions between interested parties, concerning the future of independent preparatory schools in the area.

This case examines the reasons for the Governors taking the decision to merge two preparatory schools and the ways in which they approached the task. It also explores the unplanned results, the losses and gains, and it attempts to demonstrate how the considerations of school culture and the management of change affect future outcomes. Data was gathered through a review of relevant documentation – minutes of meetings, consultation documents, letters and newspaper articles. Semi- and unstructured interviews and a survey of teaching staff were also undertaken.

We can see, from the data in this section that preparatory schools are subject to increasing demands from parents. A decline in the boarding market has led these schools to look more closely at ways to ensure their future viability and success, merger being one of their options.

6.2. Planning

Unbeknown to staff and parents conversations between a small group of governors from each of three local preparatory schools, including Lake House, had been taking place for several years, in various Governors' homes and hotels around the country. The topic under discussion was a possible merger. In June 1993, a secret meeting had been called by the Chairman of one of these schools. Each member of the group was given a code name, as secrecy had to be preserved. Any leaks would seriously jeopardize the future of the schools. At that meeting the discussion involved merging the three schools into two, on two sites. One site would become a senior school, taking pupils up to eighteen, the other would continue as a preparatory school. This was rejected as no decision could be made as to which school would have to be eliminated, also one of the three schools was in no financial position to undertake such a move, nor did it own its own site.

In June 1994, the Chairman of governors of Lake House wanted to resurrect talks with the Chairman of St. Finian's and discussions between an 'inner circle' continued over the following two years. In an interview with Rupert Clark, Headmaster of St. Finian's, he told the researcher that a merger had been called off because Lake House's Chairman wanted their site, headmaster and everything they had before.

The marketing company had, by this time, carried out and presented its findings to governors and staff. The idea of a merger was never dropped, instead, according to Rupert Clark, discussions continued to take place, with Stuart Andrews, headmaster of Lake House, very much a part of it. Topics of conversation would include "which staffs were going to be a, b and c, but it was always St. Finian's staff that was going to get the sack, the Lake House staff would remain intact". After this discussions ground to a halt until Stuart Andrews was due to retire and Rupert Clark says he was asked to apply for the headship at Lake House. He maintains that he got through to the second round with two

other people, not Andrew Smith, who was subsequently appointed. He then withdrew as it became clear that this was going to be a takeover, not a merger, and negotiations ceased.

A meeting of the Board of Governors of Lake House was held on 1st March 1996, in which the Chairman summarised the background. He described the reopening of contact with St. Finian's and the events of the Meeting of the New Headmaster Selection Committee with the Headmaster of St. Finian's on 18th January 1996. Subsequently, a Governor of Lake House had met with St. Finian's on 6th February, the result of which was an exchange of letters between the Chairman and St. Finian's. A further meeting of the Chairman and one other Governor with St. Finian's took place on the weekend before their Board of Governors convened on 25th February, at which St. Finian's gave unanimous agreement to the principle of Merger.

Prior to this, Rupert Clark says that he received a telephone call from one of the Lake House governors, asking him if, in theory, he would be in favour of a merger. He was then asked how long he saw himself staying at St. Finian's, to which he replied: " first headship, five years perhaps, small school, move on to something bigger, and I suspect from that they surmised that I'd be amenable to....a Principal coming in and taking over".

At the following meeting which was intended to restart merger discussions, the Chairman explained how the position of the St. Finian's Headmaster, Rupert Clark, was a key issue. With a merged school at Lake House, this connected with the selection of a successor to Stuart Andrews, the retiring Head of Lake House. St. Finian's had pushed for their Head but had apparently compromised on his absorption into the Long List with a guaranteed Short List place.

St. Finian's were keen for an announcement on the merger in March, linked with a chosen Headmaster, and, accordingly, had pressed for advancement on the current selection timetable of 1st May 1996.

It was acknowledged that numbers were crucial and that there had to be a drive for a maximum return from St. Finian's, but an exact transfer definition was difficult to quantify. It was agreed that the merger needed a strong focal leader, and ideally, should be

the Headmaster elect – but, practically, they decided that this was not a likely starter. Rather, the Chairman envisaged an Executive Committee from both schools with relevant sub-committees as appropriate.

The appointment of a new Bursar was judged best, by the Chairman, delayed until the start of the Autumn Term, in the face of other pressing concerns. Although there was a current Bursar at St. Finian's it was felt that his continuing could cause complications, and Investigations with the Ministry of Defence (Navy) for a possible successor had been taken up and a candidate had already been proposed.

At this same meeting, one of the governors suggested that, with no merger, Lake House would survive with a good Headmaster and that St. Finian's faced going down. With a merger on the Lake House site, there was no promise of a significant short term direct gain in funds. The gain, if ephemeral, would be in whatever children came over. In the longer term, there would be the sale of St. Finian's. The merits of merger were considered again, and at the end of the meeting there was a unanimous vote in favour of merger, to take effect from September 1996. This was to be subject to a full financial appraisal to the satisfaction of Lake House's financial advisors and Employment Lawyers.

A further condition was that the Headmaster of St. Finian's join the Senior Management Team and, in co-operation with the Headmaster of Lake House would give "his very best endeavour" to ensuring that the maximum number of pupils transferred to New School. In pursuance of this he was to be guaranteed the post of Deputy Headmaster to succeed Stuart Andrews on his retirement.

The appointment of Headmaster of New School would be made by the Board of Governors of Lake House with "appropriate representation" from the Board of St. Finian's.

In May 1996 Andrew Smith was appointed Head of Lake House, and although the possibility of a merger was mentioned, he later told the Lake House staff that no firm intentions had been made clear to him.

While the Lake House staff was aware of changing trends in the market place the full force of their effects did not hit home until a meeting was called where the Deputy

Chairman of Governors presented a breakdown of pupil numbers and the ensuing financial situation. This showed that by the academic year 1996/97 the school would see a deficit for the year of £110,000. (Fig. 2)

Term	Net Deficit/Surplus
Autumn '91	-35794
Spring '92	23085
Summer '92	9240
Autumn '92	-10507
Spring '93	24067
Summer '93	23132
Autumn '93	-3358
Spring '94	34984
Summer '94	28949
Autumn '94	- 7490
Spring '95	27459
Summer '95	20067
Autumn '95	-12496
Spring '96	12473
Summer '96	-39930
Autumn '96	-36199
Spring '97	-30526
Summer '97	-45162

(Fig. 2)

Lake House: Net Deficit/Surplus for past years

The staff was told that the school's future was uncertain and that it was likely to run into difficulties one year after St. Finian's. The best course for both schools was to merge while there was still the financial strength to carry it off. This was corroborated by Rupert Clark, but felt to be the worst case scenario, as both schools had made some drastic cutbacks through making some teachers redundant – twice in the case of St. Finian's.

On 28 December 1996 the Governors of both schools signed a merger agreement creating one school called New School with effect from 6 January 1997. In view of the fact that both schools before the merger had been running at a loss, it was decided, for economic reasons, that nine months after the merger the two school sites should be replaced by one. A Consultative Document for Staff was circulated to each member of staff and a Consultation Meeting was planned for all teaching, care and administrative staff of Lake House at 1700hrs on Monday, 20th January 1997, at which the Principal and the independent adviser would attend. The Consultative Document included an outline of the Appointments Timetable, a proposed class structure and details of posts for which teachers could apply.

For economic and organisational reasons, the Governors of New School concluded that a new staffing structure would be required to take effect from September 1997 in order to ensure the efficient management of a single site school. The reasons given were:

♦   If all the teachers currently employed on the two sites were to transfer to the single site, there would be a complement of 36 full time members.

♦   These projections would result in a staff ratio of only 9:1 which would be lower than the single site school would require, and would be uneconomic. A single site ratio of 11:1 was considered to provide the best balance between the educational needs of an independent school and its economic viability.

If the majority of pupils transferred to the new single site, the estimated numbers on roll would be 324 – (109 pre-prep, 215 prep) divided into 22 Forms. The proposed staffing structure was as follows:

Teaching Staff

♦ One Principal with responsibility for the whole of the one site school.

♦ One Headmaster with day to day responsibility for the school routine, and, as Director of Studies, for curriculum and examinations.

♦ Twenty-eight and one sixteenth full-time equivalent teaching posts.

♦ Up to five full or part-time teacher assistants in the pre-prep department, depending on the confirmed pupil numbers nearer the time of the pre-prep move to a single site. (These were not included in the staff: pupil ratio.)

♦ Appropriate staffing for the pre-nursery (2+ to 3+)

Administrative staff

♦ One full time Bursar responsible to the Governors for the financial management of the school, and to the Principal for the day to day administration of the school.

♦ A full-time Registrar, a full-time (or two part-time) Bursar's Assistant(s), a full-time School Secretary, and a full or part-time Assistant Secretary to undertake general secretarial duties.

Care Staff

♦ Three sets of married couples to act as Houseparents in each of the boarding Houses.

♦ Two resident assistant Houseparents for each of the senior boarding Houses.

♦ One full-time resident Senior Matron and two resident full-time Assistant Matrons.

The Principal and Headmaster had already been appointed by the Governors at this stage, so also had the Principal's wife who was to take on the dual role of part-time Assistant to the Principal and part-time Head of Pastoral Care (Girls).

The Proposed Method of Selection was as follows:

The Governors stated that they wanted to appoint the most suitable people possible from among the staff currently employed. They therefore decided to select via competitive

interviews, that is to say, teachers were invited to apply for their own jobs under the following rules:

In the event of an interview panel failing to reach a clear conclusion, the principle of "last in", "first out" was used as the deciding factor. Out of the twenty-eight and one sixteenth full-time teachers, everyone would be paid in line with the Government Scale up to point 9. Until this proposal, St. Finian's staff had been paid less than the Government Scale, while staff at Lake House had received a salary averaging 2% above it. At the Consultation Document meeting on 17 January 1997, it was pointed out that in order to achieve the proposed salaries, teachers from St. Finian's would receive large pay rises, while those from Lake House would incur reductions. The inclusion of a Finian Lake Additional Points Scale (APS) was designed to ensure that no existing member of staff who was appointed from September 1997, would have any reduction in his or her basic salary. The APS offered points worth £700 pensionable income, for responsibility, excellence or for discretionary reasons.

Nineteen posts were eligible for responsibility points, however, all posts were "ring-fenced" to allow only candidates of the equivalent grade or higher to apply. This was the primary rule. Teachers were all provided with Job Specifications and Person Specifications for specific posts – the posts for which they were deemed eligible to apply – and told that if there was only one candidate who satisfied the primary rule, and the *essential* criteria (there were also desirable criteria), he or she would be appointed immediately following the closing date for applications without undergoing an interview. In the event of there not being any candidates who satisfied the primary rule, it was to be relaxed to allow candidates of the next lower grade to apply. All full-time teachers in the preparatory school were to be awarded two responsibility points for working alternate Saturdays, and added to this the following nineteen posts, some of which could be combined, were eligible for responsibility points:

Head of Pre-prep	4 points
Head of Common Room	3 points
Director of Activities	3 points
Head of PE and Games	2 points
Head of Junior Department	1 point
Heads of Core Subjects	2 points
(English, Maths, Science,)	
Heads of Subject	1 point
(Geography, History, Art, IT, DT, Latin, Music, RS)	
Head of Resources	1 point
Deputy Head of Pre-Prep	1 point
Organiser of Expeditions	1 point

Teachers from St. Finian's were immediately disadvantaged since falling rolls had meant that not only did salaries fall behind, but also there were no official Heads of Department. Some did not fulfil the desirable criteria of having qualified teacher status either. Nevertheless, members of staff from each of the schools were sent Job Descriptions and Person Specifications which most closely matched their current positions, and a list of all posts was placed on Staffroom noticeboards. The cynics among them soon matched these details with specific people and confidence in the management became rather jaundiced. Rumours started to fly around as to who would be appointed, who would not, and rivalry between the two schools became more evident, to the extent that some Lake House teachers sought interview practice and help in making presentations from a parent whose business was marketing and training. An atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion and general indignation prevailed within the Common Room, yet teachers and administrative staff were obliged to promote a positive and enthusiastic front to the parents and children. Naturally the concern from parents was considerable. It seemed to lurch from sympathy for teachers' job uncertainty to worry about their children's future. Whispering campaigns began as parents wrote letters of support for certain members of staff in both schools to

Governors and Heads. Parents who had chosen St. Finian's rather than Lake House or vice versa started to give voice to their feelings and this slowly filtered through to the children.

One other anomaly arose regarding job applications. One member of the Maths department at Lake House found himself without a post to apply for. Every member of the teaching staff had received a letter inviting him or her to apply, except this particular colleague, who also happened to oversee the upkeep of the 92 acre estate. This resulted in all of the Lake House staff writing to governors in support of the teacher. The Union was also called upon to represent him. It was felt that even if this teacher did not ultimately succeed in his application, he should at least be given the same opportunity as everyone else. After a fierce battle, he was invited to apply and was successful in keeping both his maths and grounds posts.

This was not the only contentious issue arising from the document. A hastily arranged meeting of the Lake House teaching staff was arranged on 17th January 1997, in order that the Union Representative on the staff could gain clarification, through the Union, of the intentions of the Principal and Governors and to ask for a reconsideration of certain points before the Consultation Meeting on 20th January.

As a result of the 29 questions, adjustments were made to, for example:

Points structure – the Head of Modern Languages and Head of Junior School each receiving 2 points, and the Head of Pre-prep became a 'Governors' Discretionary Award'.

Prep versus Pre-prep Pay – Prep school teachers working 17 hours 40 minutes longer than the Pre-prep teachers were awarded two points more rather than one.

Saturdays: Teachers were to work alternate Saturdays as opposed to every Saturday.

Notice: Teachers gaining employment elsewhere would be given until the end of April to hand in their notice, as opposed to giving a full term.

Redundancy: This was increased to 2 full weeks' pay for every year worked.

Having resolved these issues the staff felt able to move on to the application process itself.

The method of job application took the form of a letter in two to three sections. Firstly, an up-to-date CV was requested. Secondly, a hand-written letter of application required numbered paragraphs, relating to each of the numbered paragraphs in the Person Specification, explaining how candidates considered that they satisfied the criteria, or if not, why they felt that it did not matter. Thirdly, an optional section invited them to provide any further information of staff choice.

Interviews took place at Lake House, with the panels comprising the current Heads of each school, the Principal elect, one Governor from each school and the independent consultant. Teachers were invited to make a ten-minute presentation, which most Lake House teachers did, but this was optional. Teachers from St. Finian's did not all make presentations but were not happy that many of the Lake House staff had taken "professional" advice seemingly giving themselves a distinct advantage. The ring-fencing of jobs also caused some ill-feeling between the two schools since there had been no official Heads of Department at St. Finian's, which meant that they could not apply for the Heads of Department posts at New School.

The final outcome of the appointment of staff left each school with a small number of redundancies – four from St. Finian's and four from Lake House. Double the Statutory Redundancy Pay was to be paid to those who qualified for such payments, conditional upon entry into a compromise agreement under the Employment Rights Act 1996. Any legal fees incurred would be paid by New School Trust Ltd. up to a limit of £500 per person.

Rupert Clark claims that he and Andrew Smith were misguided, in hindsight, by being generous to the teaching staff. Existing, more expensive teachers were kept on when they had an opportunity to cut back.

During the Summer Term, 1997, several governors' meetings took place; one in particular was to discuss the option of maintaining the two Pre-prep schools which would feed New School. A letter, dated Monday May 27th, from the Head of St. Finian's Pre-prep was

considered. In it, she pointed out that the viability of continuing on the St. Finian's site would be compromised as the transfer of pupils to three other schools in the area had already weakened its position. A total of 55 pupils had confirmed their move to New School, to go back on these plans would not only disrupt them, but the goodwill which had been engendered among parents and staff would also be lost. She also maintained that if parents opted to send their children to preparatory schools other than New School staff salaries would have to be subsidised, the site would then be sold and St. Finian's staff would have to be made redundant. The suggestion that five mini-buses would ferry these small children was considered dangerous and a waste of time. She urged the governors to go ahead with the option to build on the Lake House site thereby reassuring parents of the ambition to be one of the top schools in the area.

The Headmaster set about his role as Director of Studies by calling together the Heads of Department of the new school. Each week meetings were held at St. Finian's in order to ensure that pupils at both schools were following the same curriculum with a view to their sitting the same exam at the end of term. The results of the exams were to form the basis for placing pupils in the right sets.

The Principal was responsible for putting together the policies and for recruitment. In a letter to the governors on May 6th 1997, he outlined a projection of numbers for the academic year 1997-98, these were:

	Girls	Boys	Boarders	Day	Total
Prep	75	125	71	129	200
Pre-prep	56	66		122	122
Total	191	131	71	251	322

Target recruitment June-August 1997: Ten more for the Pre-prep.

On July 5th 1997 the Principal presented a numbers movement to the governors which showed an increased projection of a total of 333 pupils, including an increase in the boarding figure from 71 to 75.

In Annex 1 of the Final Document for Staff, a proposed Form Structure was detailed:

Pre-Prep Department			
Nursery	3+	2 classes	2 x 12
Reception	4+	2 classes	2 x 14
Year 1	5+	2 classes	2 x 14
Year 2	6+	2 classes	2 x 15
			110

Preparatory Department			
Year 3	7+	2 classes	2 x 13
Year 4	8+	2 classes	2 x 19
Year 5	9+	2 classes	2 x 20
Year 6	10+	3 classes	2 x 17, 1 x 10 (e)
Year 7	11+	2 classes	2 x 16
Year 8	12 +	3 classes	2 x 13 1 x 10(s)

			216

(e) Group working for special examinations

(s) Group working for scholarships

In a letter dated 6th May 1997, the Principal, Andrew Smith wrote to the Governors concerning the future of the New School Preparatory Department. In it he expressed his concern about spending £450,000 on the Pre-prep at this stage when other projects, such as a Sports Hall, Junior Science Laboratory., 3D workshops and a Junior Department would help New School keep abreast of, if not ahead of its competitors. He felt that when the merger was announced in the previous November, the educational planning had forged ahead without a detailed picture of the financial structure of the school. His view was that the market would not support a single pre-prep of 116 children on the New School site, while he was convinced that there was a demand for two pre-preps of about 55 pupils on either side of Exton, the town that separated them. The loss of support from St. Finian's existing pre-prep parents, if this "Plan C" was followed, would, he felt, be a risk worth taking in order to ensure the long-term security of the school.

At the Steering Group meeting, 23rd May 1997, the Principal reported that numbers currently totalled 322, including 71 boarders and 122 in the Pre-prep, this included 60% of current parents registering their children.

The financial implications of the merger were outlined, it was estimated that the merger costs to be absorbed would be £184K for the Summer Term 1997, with some costs such as the uniform subsidy still being negotiated. This would mean that the amalgamated school would just remain in credit at the end of the School Year. These calculations were being based on fee increases in September '98 and September '99 and it was doubted by some members that the market would sustain such increases without defections. A sensitivity survey was to be organised before announcing fee increases as local competitors had similar or lower fees; depending on the results of the survey, the Governors would consider extending their loan beyond the envisaged period.

A second area of concern was the high staff costs, although the Governors accepted that it was impossible to cut staff at that time. They agreed it was vital to create confidence by providing a high level of staffing and facilities which would give the school credibility, so that, as it merged it would have adequate numbers to balance Income and Expenditure.

An extension to the Pre-prep building would require finance from borrowings, and a firm go-ahead was required by 28th May if the tight timetable were to be adhered to. As an important feeder to the School it should form part of the marketing effort.

The Bursar reported that the computer financial model was an essential tool to project the finances to the turn of the century. This model included an assumed list of developments – not yet approved by the Governors – constant pupil numbers and large fee increases in '98 and '99. The required reductions in the cost of the Pre-prep and the recent increases in the anticipated pupil list currently pointed to:

- A maximum debt of £509,000 in spring '98 for which a loan and an overdraft facility would be required.
- An operating deficit of £121,000 in the academic year '97/'98.
- Operating profit thereafter.
- Elimination of debt by summer '2000.

At the same meeting, the Governors agreed that Development was much more than improving the built environment of the school and that, in order to solicit the full involvement of teachers, all the work could not be done until everyone was working on a single site. The educational objectives would drive the Development Plan which would, in turn, drive the building, marketing and other aspects of the development of the School. The Chairman requested that the Principal and Headmaster prepare a 'skeleton plan' with headings to indicate the scope of the ground to be covered.

The Governors gave due consideration to the new Prospectus at this meeting, where agreement on its style caused some disagreement. A New School folder containing the prospectus and the environment was supported by some but thought to indicate a take-over rather than a merger by others. Both Prospectuses together was agreed to be too confusing for parents, but the use of a Lake House Prospectus with a redesigned New School cover offered a possible economic way forward in the short term as there was a large stock of Lake House Prospectuses. It was agreed that the marketing committee

should serve more as an ideas group rather than as an executive body, and a 'pilot' group was to be set up to produce an outline strategy.

Following comment at the Parents' Meeting on 17th May 1997, where parents demanded the reasons for non-publication of a business plan, the following was essentially what the Bursar told the Governors:

"There clearly remains a need to convince parents of the long-term financial viability of the School and Governors are asked to approve the following draft for publication in the next newsletter":

Parents may recall that Governors spoke of providing a business plan for wide circulation so that they could see the sense of the merger and be satisfied that the long term financial stability of the School, and hence the continuity of education for their children, would be secure. Such a plan has not been forthcoming to parents. That is to say that no business plan has existed; on the contrary, there is a very detailed plan that projects a financial model of the School, on a termly basis, to the academic year 2000. Schedules associated with this plan detail the costs of salaries, development, St. Finian's closing costs, redundancies, fee projections, running costs, catering, maintenance, staff housing, music and riding, transport and so on. The Plan is constantly kept up to date with the latest and most accurate figures available. It necessarily changes daily.

There are three reasons why these figures have not been fully shared with the parents. Firstly there are several large imponderables: it is not yet clear, though it is now rapidly becoming so, how many pupils we will have in September; the sale price of the St. Finian's site has been impossible to predict; the cost of the major developments is still a matter of negotiation. Hence any Business Plan produced in February would have been superseded before it was distributed, a plan produced in March would have been quite inaccurate by now, and therefore, misleading to parents. Secondly, it was, and is, necessary for the team that runs the school, both Governors and senior staff, to make the appropriate decisions without being a slave to a document that was based on the situation pertaining at the time of publication but was inaccurate by the time the decision was required. Thirdly, some of the information is quite correctly confidential and other data is

best treated as business in confidence. We are, after all, in competition with other schools in the area and in the process of negotiating large building contracts.

Once the figures gel and the policy towards development of all of the many projects on the desirable and essential lists become more certain, a Business Plan for the School will become a meaningful asset in the medium to long term. It will then be published.

At the Steering Committee Meeting (23rd May) the idea of sending out a narrow business plan to parents was deemed inappropriate as parents are customers of the school not shareholders. It was agreed that a version of the text supplied by the Bursar in the next newsletter should explain why a business plan had not been distributed.

So far the researcher has detailed the planning phase of the merger from the point of view of the Governors. During the year preceding the coming together on one site meetings between teachers from both schools had been taking place in a bid to ease the transition for pupils and parents. These meetings were largely chaired by New School's Headmaster, but departmental business was discussed under the auspices of Heads of Department. The main focus of these meetings was to ensure that by September 1997, pupils would have covered the same curriculum and thereby be prepared for exams which would decide on streams and sets.

Plans for the sale and removal of furniture and equipment were put in place, and the Summer Term followed a pattern of collaboration among teachers, pupils and parents, while Governors continued to monitor finance, hold meetings with parents and make decisions about streamlining the New School Board.

From this section we can see some emerging hypotheses and theories. The first question which arises is whether or not the groups involved in mergers always have conflicting agendas. In this case, the multi-dimensional planning, which included financial implications, staffing and class structures, as well as a consideration of the involvement of

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the parent body were but a few of the diverse facets of the merger which were not generally given adequate individual consideration, partly as a consequence of the limited time available, and it opened up areas of potential conflict.

It also becomes evident from this, that mergers are handicapped by the diversity of and lack of clarity of the aims of different stakeholders - indecision and conflict as to the future of the two pre-prep departments being a case in point.

In the next section we will see how events took an unexpected turn as the move to New School bedded in.

6.3. Fallout

The end of the Summer Term proved an emotional one for the staff, parents and pupils of St. Finian's as they bid farewell to their school. Nevertheless, the business of moving books and equipment had to get underway immediately with just eight weeks to go before the start of the new term, and no sooner had the pupils left than Lake House staff drove in to load vans and minibuses.

After eight weeks of preparation the first term of New School began. Staff made every effort to cooperate with each other and together sorted out the "fire-fights" that occasionally broke out among the children. Two main problems emerged, the first being the territorial rights exercised by Lake House children over the Adventure Centre. While happy to break the rules at Lake House, they were not at all happy that St. Finian's children were doing likewise, albeit more through ignorance than intention. The second, and more problematic situation which arose, concerned positions of responsibility for the Year 8 pupils. The Lake House system of Patrol Leaders and Prefects was part of a long history of the school, and one which was felt should be continued at New School. Towards the end of the previous term the Year 7s had been looking forward to gaining these positions, however, with the new influx of pupils from St. Finian's there were far more pupils than positions to be filled. In spite of the best efforts of the Senior Management Team in creating other roles, such as Librarians and House Captains the

pupils were not going to be assuaged, and throughout the first year the unrest at the top of the school was tangible.

Another problem which refused to go away was the relationship between the Principal and the Headmaster concerning their individual roles, and how they performed them, within the school. Both men had complementary skills, yet there was a growing tension between them. There was also confusion among the staff as they were unclear as to whom they should go to with a particular question or problem; to make the wrong choice was to incur the wrath of the Headmaster and the frustration of the Principal. It was also a stressful time as this situation had to be kept from parents and pupils. At the end of each day the entire staff, Principal and Headmaster would stand in the Front Hall to talk to parents and to answer any questions that arose during the settling in period, and would try to convey a positive feeling about the Merger.

The term lurched on until the Headmaster threatened to resign. He had made no secret of his disapproval of the Principal and had been highlighting, what he saw as, the Principal's failings to members of staff and Governors. He told members of the Senior Management Team of the deadlines set by the Governors, for the Principal to produce certain documents and answers to questions, which had been unforthcoming. On the occasions, such as at the end of the school day, when teachers were gathered to meet parents, he would draw attention to the Principal's absence. This, and other comments, had the effect of sowing the seeds of doubt about the Principal's ability to run the school.

The Principal maintained a dignified silence, and much as staff liked him as a person, they tended to refer queries and problems to the Headmaster, which, inevitably, gave him a feeling of greater authority and support.

It is not for the researcher to offer an argument for or against either of the two "Heads" but to convey the facts as they stand, and which can be corroborated. During this period the Principal was performing his duties but he kept such a low profile that it would be too easy to assume he was doing very little in comparison with the Headmaster, who was very

visible and voluble. What happened next made it impossible for the researcher to interview the Principal, and, in all probability, to balance the facts, and subsequently any bias which may be interpreted from this case.

During half-term, the researcher received a telephone call from one of the Governors previously unknown to her, apart from by reputation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current situation in school. The Governors had decided that having two Heads was not working and one of them had to go; they wanted our opinion as to which one it should be. In truth, they had already made up their minds following the threatened resignation of the Head, and his catalogue of complaints about the Principal. It also transpired that the Principal had not responded to targets set by the Governors since his appointment in the previous March.

Our suggestion was that both should go and the post be advertised to find someone completely new and uninvolved with either school. This was immediately rejected on the grounds that "it would rock the boat" and New School would be in danger of losing too many pupils. Therefore, after a long discussion about the merits, or otherwise, of the two Heads, we agreed to support the Governors in their decision making.

Over the following week teachers were aware of comings and goings of the Principal and his wife, and an ominous air of something about to happen. This culminated in a hastily called staff meeting one morning. Every member of staff was asked to attend. The Chairman of Governors, the Deputy Chairman and the Headmaster entered the staff room and the Chairman proceeded to explain the situation. The Governors, having realised that the Principal/Headmaster structure was not working, and recognising the complementary skills they both possessed, had suggested that the two men work together as joint Heads. This proposal had been put to the Principal on two occasions and rejected on each one. The Headmaster, recognising that the failure of the current structure was affecting staff morale - and in the interests of the school - had tendered his resignation from the end of term. In light of these responses, the Governors had accepted, unanimously, that a single Head should be appointed. Having looked carefully at the strengths and weaknesses of the

two men, they had decided to ask Rupert Clark, the Headmaster, to take over as Head of New School, Andrew Smith having agreed to step down from his post at the end of term.

Following this announcement the three men left the room, and the staff all left to relieve the senior pupils who had been looking after classes. Five minutes after arriving back in class the researcher was visited by Rupert Clark who wanted to know whether she would be willing to become his Deputy Head. On asking for time to think about it she was told that he had to know immediately, as the Governors wanted to put the new structure in place when an announcement was made to the parents. She agreed to accept what was to become a poisoned chalice.

A letter, dated 14th November 1997, was sent to the parents, stating the same details, but adding that David Grace, who had recently retired after twenty two years as a Headmaster, would be providing his expertise for the Headmaster and his team one day a week "to help in their task of managing the school".

Two days later a letter from the ex Head of Lake House, Stuart Andrews and his wife, arrived at the home of each of the parents, deploring *"the disgraceful decision by some of the Governors to ask Andrew Smith to leave New School after only 8 weeks.....We were worried last term that Jonathan Stokes (Chairman) did not seem to be offering Andrew Smith the sort of support a new Headmaster needs, and we have been very concerned to hear reports that Rupert Clark was questioning Andrew's authority in the staffroom at every turn....we believe that it is, in fact, nothing to do with Andrew Smith, but seems to be part of a pre-determined plan....Surely such a momentous decision should have been a unanimous one, but this was clearly not the case. We understand that a group of Governors disagreed so strongly that they felt they had no option but to resign, and others are considering their positions...even they (the Governors) do not appear to have complete confidence in Rupert Clark's ability to run the school, as they are having to provide him with support from a retired Headmaster." (Letter of 14th November 1997)*

On hearing the news, and fuelled by this letter, a section of the parent body set up what came to be known as the "Concerned Parents' Group" who lobbied support from other parents and organised a vote of no confidence in the Governors. During this period staff, Governors, Head and Principal continued to be in attendance in the Front Hall at collection time. Andrew Smith, the Principal, having agreed to maintain a silence in return for a substantial redundancy package, attracted much sympathy from parents, and his continued presence in the school made for an uncomfortable last few weeks, in which no one felt able to approach the Principal with any school related matters.

The situation was reported in The Daily Telegraph on Saturday 29th November, but again, the main thrust of the argument concerned the short length of time Andrew Smith had been in post:

> The removal of a preparatory school principal only two months into
> his first term in the post has divided parents and led to five of the
> fifteen governors resigning.

The reasons for this were reported thus:

> "We closely monitored the effectiveness of this arrangement and made
> every effort to support this structure and encourage them to work as a
> team. However, it became increasingly evident that the partnership
> wasn't working as well as we would have liked."

The response was swift, and another letter, signed by all of the remaining Governors, was sent to the parents in reply to the Telegraph's article, and to counter the attempted vote of no confidence in them from the "Concerned Parents Group"

The explanation for the resignation of some Governors was given, as was the impression from some quarters that this had been a take-over not a merger:

...With Mr. Smith declining the joint headship sought by the Governors, and Mr. Clark tendering his resignation, the board finally accepted unanimously that a single head should be appointed. We had to decide who had the necessary skills for the Headship of New School by looking at the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two men. It was on this decision that the Governors were unable to agree. ...There has been a suggestion that this is a St. Finian's takeover. This is incorrect....the remaining governors do not regard themselves as representatives of the late St. Finian's, but of New School.....It should be noted that, most unusually, the Principal had a say in the selection of the merged governing body...The governors have no personal financial stake in the school, which is a Charitable Company...The "Concerned" Parents Group seems intent on undermining the authority of the Board and is unnecessarily whipping up parents' concerns........We have been seeking a settlement with Mr. Smith to allow him to stand down with considerable dignity and some financial security. We believe that it is in the best interests of the school for his position to be made clear as soon as possible. We are encouraging him to come to an early decision on this, although we are being flexible with regard to timing..... (Letter of 1st December 1997)

This letter addressed some of the concerns of all parents but suggestions of a conspiracy grew, particularly with the continued presence of Andrew Smith, who had made it clear to any parents who asked, that he would be willing to continue in his post if the Governors were to change their minds. The Concerned Parents Group also intended asking MORI to take a poll of all parents asking whether they had confidence in the Governors, a point acknowledged in the above letter.

On December 5th 1997, Andrew Smith wrote to the parents informing them of his decision to stand down and asking them to continue to support the school.

Owing to continuing pressure from the Concerned Parents Group, and their conspiracy theory, the ex-Chairman of Lake House invited an independent person to assess the situation. David Grace, an ex-headmaster and ex-Chairman of the Society of Headmasters of Independent Schools, agreed to try to mediate after listening to the former Chairman and reading certain letters. Although he had been involved with both schools,

professionally and socially, for over thirty years, and knew most of the principal people involved, in a letter dated 6th December 1997, he stated that he had heard nothing of the matter before his meeting.

After talking to a "large number" of people on both sides of the controversy, and to Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Clark, he wrote the following:

I can understand and sympathise with all the misgivings, amounting in some cases to anguish and anger, of those who challenge the Governors' decision. Nonetheless I have been wholly persuaded that the Governors' decision was properly arrived at by democratic vote, that they acted on sufficient evidence, that there was no hidden agenda to bring about the domination of ex-Lake House interests by those with ex-St. Finian's loyalties; that over a period of six months (April to October) they offered Mr. Smith all the advice and support he deserved, that they frequently made him aware of his perceived shortcomings, that they paid full attention to the weaknesses as well as the strengths of Mr. Clark; and that finally a fair, not to say generous, settlement has been offered to Mr. Smith. Mr. and Mrs. Smith dispute many of these points and my conclusion takes account of this. It is my conviction that the best interests of the School lie in accepting the Governors' decision, which was unanimously endorsed very recently by a specially convened Governors' meeting. (Letter 6th December 1997)

He also stated that he had been asked to join the Board and accepted. This action did little to appease the Concerned Parents' Group who asked the parents to express their opinions in a ballot on issues which were to be raised at the forthcoming Extraordinary General Meeting. In a letter dated 7th December 1997, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Governors wrote to the parents informing them of the wording of the EGM resolutions. The first resolution was to call for the removal from the Board, ten members, which if passed, would lead to the second resolution calling for six members to form the Governing Body of the Company. The Governors, being well aware of the harm being done to the school of the continuing dispute, sought an early resolution of the concerns of all parents, hoping that the resolutions would be defeated and stability restored.

During this unsettled and unpleasant period, members of staff carried on trying to protect the children from the press articles, verbal attacks from parents and so on, but inevitably, Day Children were hearing conversations and opinions at home which led to arguments and unrest among the pupils, most of which centred on which side was "best"- Lake House or St. Finian's. Discipline within the school, particularly among the Year 8 Leavers and the Boarders, was challenging. The researcher received abusive telephone calls, and was snubbed by parents who had previously been on good terms. Concern among staff members escalated as fear for their jobs and for the future of the school became more and more precarious.

The ballot of the Concerned Parents' Action Group went ahead, the results of which were communicated to staff and parents in two separate letters on 12th December 1997. The letter to staff members was short and written by the Chairman of Governors, the letter to parents was sent from the Concerned Parents Group.

Staff members were informed that the school solicitor had attended the count of the Concerned Parents' Action Group ballot. Of the 257 forms issued, 200 were returned: 98 expressed a vote of no confidence, 89 expressed a vote of full confidence, 8 did not know and there were 5 spoilt papers. A number of parents had contacted the Governors to say they would not take part in a survey which they regarded as divisive and for which the Concerned Parents' Action Group did not have a mandate. Subsequently, the Governors felt that 38% of the parents expressing a vote of no confidence did not constitute a mandate for the Board to resign, and informed the staff that David Grace would continue to mediate and find a way forward.

On the other side of the fence, the Concerned Parents Group's letter claimed that the result of the ballot plainly demonstrated that the majority of parents did not support the Governors in their action. They maintained that by a majority of about 3 to 1 parents supported Mr. Andrew Smith as Principal through the ballot, and out of 140 questionnaires which they had received, over 80 stated a preference for Mr. Smith, with 'only' 30 indicating a preference for Mr. Clark.

In the same letter they said that they had tried to negotiate a "reasonable compromise" with the Governors, but had been called a "small partisan group". They stated that a vote of no confidence indicated only 42% of parents had full confidence in the Governors and that the remaining Governors had a moral responsibility to resign. Attached to the letter was a list of Governors and their addresses, so that parents could contact them and urge them to resign.

Term ended on 15th December with the School's future hanging in the balance. A vociferous element of the Concerned Parents Group removed their children and told the researcher that their main aim was to destroy the School no matter what it took.

After threatening a mass exodus, only eight families decided to leave, most decided that their children were happy and that they were not prepared to upset their stability even though they did not approve of the regime.

On December 19th another letter from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman was sent to every parent in an attempt to achieve reconciliation between all concerned. They told of their decision to resign following the loss of five Governors and some parents. David Grace was to become Chairman in his independent capacity, while they were to remain on the Board. David Grace would soon set about adding to the Board members with the skills to take the School forward.

A local paper reported the Concerned Parents Group response to the resignations of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in which these actions were termed "far too little and far too late" The Group made several other points:

- the current Board structure comprised seven headmasters which has not worked in favour of the school as visiting headmasters usually vote with the chairman of the board to safeguard their relationship with the school

- David Grace has lost all credibility as an "independent" chairman as he has totally backed the present board's handling of the sacking of Andrew Smith in two letters.

- As David Grace is now 75 and may not be able to hold the position of chairman for very long a younger person should occupy this very demanding post.

- The hobbies programme ceasing without any consultation has further outraged many parents.

This last point had been relayed to parents by Andrew Smith in his end of term letter. While this was a collective decision with the full acquiescence of the Principal, Rupert Clark quickly wrote to parents apologising for the "misunderstanding" and assuring them that activities would continue.

While the researcher was away attending a conference in the New Year, she was telephoned repeatedly by representatives from a newly formed group who called themselves the "Equally Concerned Parents Group". They claimed they had had enough of hearing the views of the Concerned Parents Group as it created an impression that they represented the entire parent body, when, in fact, there was another group who felt equally incensed on behalf of the Governors and staff. They asked the researcher to enlist the help of colleagues in showing support for the governing body of the New School Trust before the Extraordinary General Meeting. This support was to be conveyed in a letter as a "plea for stability", in which members would be asked to vote against the resolution to call for the resignation of all of the current Governors. It must be clarified here that 'members' are those who, although no longer governors, still have voting rights at Annual and Extraordinary Meetings.

After many telephone calls to colleagues to gauge opinion, and in consultation with an eminent ex-Headmaster, the researcher contacted the School's solicitor for advice. He said that if the staff felt the desire to write in this vein it would certainly not do any harm, but that it would have to be a unanimous decision. From this the researcher drafted a letter, which was approved by the solicitor following discussion with the Chairman of the Board. This was then circulated to all staff members for comment at a meeting at the

beginning of term. A ballot box was placed in the staffroom in which staff could either agree or disagree with the sending of this letter:

Dear Sirs,

A plea for stability

We are writing to all of the members of the New School Trust Ltd. to express our collective opinion prior to the holding of the E.G.M. The views contained in this letter are our own, but in view of our position as employees we have obtained the governors' consent to its being sent.

Over the last year we have all worked hard to make the merger of Lake House and St. Finian's succeed and we are saddened to see the school threatened by destructive differences. We firmly believe that the school can become a strong, happy environment in which the education of the children can flourish.

We believe that the school urgently needs stability and certainty so that we can look forward to a successful future. We think that the wholesale removal of the current governors, as called for in the First Resolution, to be considered by the E.G.M., would increase and prolong the disruption which the school is currently enduring.

We ask you to vote against this Resolution and we urge the governors to agree to a formula which will move the school forward in a spirit of reconciliation.

This letter was never sent. There was a heated meeting in the staffroom, where a supporter of Andrew Smith was vitriolic in his disgust at the ousting of the Principal, and fully supported the governors who had resigned. He had been away on holiday when the meeting of senior colleagues had been convened, and was aggrieved that his opinion had not been heard. Much of his anger was directed at the researcher, who, he felt, had stood to gain a lot by supporting the Headmaster. The meeting ended with the ballot box being thrown into the fire.

The bad feeling that had arisen due to the Principal's "eight weeks in the job" was answered by the ex-Deputy Chairman, in a letter to members prior to the E.G.M. In it he also commented on the large settlement figure, rumoured to be £100,000 plus new car, indeed, he raised all of the issues that this study attempts to explore. The letter is presented in its entirety in the Appendix but issues pertinent to the case are presented here as extracts. Changes to names and places have been made to guard anonymity.

The letter began by emphasising that contrary to parents' opinions Andrew Smith had been employed by the school for over seven months and that although his severance pay might appear extravagant, the cost of paying two Heads would be halved and the time taken to recoup the settlement would be relatively short. It was explained that due to the inability of the two Heads to work together measures had to be taken to stop the rift becoming public and a single Head was deemed necessary. Having made that decision it remained for the governors to decide which of the two men it should be, and after due consideration, in spite of the apparent weaknesses of Rupert Clark, he was felt to be the best man to take the school forward. In answer to the suggestion made by several parents, that a completely new Head be appointed the letter stated:

> *In an ideal world that might have been appropriate, but we have to*
> *accept that recruiting such people would lead to prolonged*
> *uncertainty.*

The ex-Deputy Chairman also referred to the request to reinstate Andrew Smith and the demand from some parents that the governing body resign:

> *The decision to change the school's head at an early stage has*
> *unsettled many, although there is another body of parents and staff*
> *who are very supportive.....whilst those governors who voted for the*
> *decision remain certain that we had to take action, we have to accept*
> *that it has proved divisive...it was for this reason that...we*
> *consequently stepped down as chairman and vice-chairman.*

The result of the E.G.M., on Tuesday 5th January, went in favour of the Board by a narrow margin – 15 votes to 13 to retain the status quo. This was a turning point in the life of New School. Staff believed that their job security was promising and that they could plan ahead. It allowed the Chairman to reconstitute the Board by bringing in new governors.

He wrote to parents inviting those with the necessary skills – lawyer, accountant, clergy, architect, with a balance of men and women – to apply. The aim of producing a Board of about 15 members was desirable, and would not exclude any of the five recently resigned governors, or anyone with antecedent loyalties.

The Board placed full confidence in Rupert Clark and his wife, but would continue to apply "continuous assessment" of his performance against an agreed set of criteria. If he were to fail to meet the Board's requirements, after being given an opportunity to rectify matters, he would be dismissed. After three terms he would be assessed by "fully qualified educationists".

In his letter to the parents, David Grace informed them that The Independent Schools Joint Council would automatically conduct a full inspection of the school after two years, but that the Board would ask for one after eighteen months. He went on to admit that in the past, the governors had made mistakes and apologised for them, and he urged parents to unite and take the school forward. Jonathan Stokes had agreed to step down from the Board in order to lessen the Concerned Parents' Group's opposition to the governing body.

The "Equally Concerned Parents Group" accepted the proposals, while the "Concerned Parents Group" was still considering them. However, on Friday 1st January, there had taken place an "angry meeting" of fifty parents in Exton, at which David Grace and Jonathan Stokes attended:

Parents at that meeting were adamant that the governors most identified with the sacking of Mr. Smith must resign if the deep divisions in the parent body are ever to be healed. Mr. Grace was also informed by the parents present that Mr. Rupert Clark was not acceptable as the headmaster, and that the only way forward would be for a new head to be sought as soon as possible. Mr. Grace stated that in his opinion Mr. Clark should be allowed to apply for the post if readvertised. (Exton Times 10th January 1998)

The local paper picked up on the outcome of the EGM and announced a forthcoming meeting of the Concerned Parents group at Exton Recreation Centre at which they intended to discuss packages of changes to the board of governors and the school. Once again there was anxiety among staff members who feared that another term was to start with more conflict and a seemingly irreconcilable situation. However, on Sunday 11th January 1998, the day of the meeting, and the day that the boarders were due to arrive for the start of term, the staff was told that the Concerned Parents Group had disbanded and there was to be no meeting. There is no substantive reason for this, only a rumour that the group's leader was becoming ill with the stress of it all, and the Group's feeling that they were making no headway. For whatever reason, the storm that threatened to destroy the School was suddenly over, at least locally, and the term began with a positive outlook.

We can see that this catalogue of events was, for the most part, due to ineffective planning and an insufficient time-scale. This may not be a universal problem, but one at least, which should be given a high priority when planning a merger. Even given the fact that there was a 'manager' overseeing the merger, he was presented with deadlines by a group of governors with little or no experience of school mergers. Had there been clearer guidelines for the conducting of mergers, the need for parents' action groups may well have been obviated. This fundamental lack of a regulatory framework for merging schools leaves them vulnerable during merger; and if merger activity is to become more commonplace this situation must be corrected.

6.4. Conclusion

Since the merger New School has gone from strength to strength in terms of popularity, numbers, new buildings and developments. There have been several changes to the governing body, and Rupert Clark is still the Headmaster.

Under the surface is a different tale, but one which is kept well-hidden and which, it is hoped, will fade with the passage of time.

When the researcher asked Rupert Clark what he would have done had he been in a position to act during the planning stage of the merger, his response was; "I'd have said be brutal now....don't have two Heads....go for what you believe to be the best."

The merger results were tabulated in brief at the end of August 1997:

The Merger results in Brief

Lake House Bank Balance

At 31 Aug '97 without Merger: £281, 362

Merger Costs:

Redundancy: -£109,526

Termination of Copier contract: -£25,000

St. Finian's Site Survey contract: -£10,000

Uniform Conversion: -£10,000

Termination of St. Finian's Pension: -£5,000

St. Finian's Bank Balance at 31 Aug. without Merger: -£162,752

Joint New School Bank Balance at 31 Aug: - £40,916

Benefit from the sale of the St. Finian's Property estimated to be £700, 000

(Fig. 3)

Merger results in brief

These results show that, financially, New School would benefit from the merger even though Lake House staff was not convinced about the necessity of it, based on the fact that the school was in a stronger financial position than St. Finian's. Colleagues of the researcher were of the opinion, at the time that St. Finian's should simply go out of business, thus echoing the hypothesis that individuals and groups have conflicting agendas when merging.

During the three year period of this study it has become clear to those who lived through the merger, that not only were mistakes made in the planning stages, but that the rectification of one major mistake – the appointment of two Heads – was handled unwisely thereby causing unnecessary stress to many of the staff and parents. The adage that hindsight is one hundred per cent correct could well be applied to this situation. However, at the time, mergers were rather like uncharted waters in that there was no 'manual' or legislation to aid those in managerial positions, and what happened here was unfortunate. Today there is Government legislation in the form of The School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The Charities Commission, which had been informed of the 'inordinately large settlement' awarded to Andrew Smith on his agreement to step down, has continued to investigate and monitor claims that the Governors had behaved unconstitutionally. They believed that in order for that amount of money to be awarded, there must have been a loss of charitable funds. Indeed, the researcher was informed by one parent that, as directors of the company, the Governors received an income from it. This of course was refuted, and the charitable status of the school was explained. Nevertheless, it appeared at the time, that a large segment of the parent body was under the illusion that Governors had shares in the school. In truth, Governors of independent schools receive no payment; they are trustees of the Charity, answerable to the Charities Commission where there are grounds for investigation.

This anomaly should not have arisen at this stage. It would appear that parents of pupils in preparatory schools are uninformed about the governance of these schools. Also, as in the merger process, there does not appear to be parity of governance in preparatory schools,

as there is in the maintained sector, where governors have a government framework from which to fulfil their roles.

In Chapter 7 conclusions are drawn and suggestions made for future practice, but the next section takes the key ideas which were important in shaping this case and the findings are explored. Analysis and interpretation of the case are undertaken and the research questions revisited in order to make sense of events and to investigate whether data collection methods have been appropriate in providing all of the relevant information possible to gain an understanding of the merger of two preparatory schools.

6.5. Summary of Findings

This case is not unusual in its intentions but what sets it apart and gives it uniqueness are its management and outcomes. With the benefit of hindsight the key players may well have chosen to adopt different strategies in the implementation of this merger and the events described here would, in all probability, be quite different; however, they have not been afforded such advantage and, as this chapter has revealed, several key issues have been raised.

In order to understand fully the issues which have shaped this case they are presented here under four broad headings: Rationale, Planning, Implementation and Outcomes.

6.5.1. Rationale

Several main economic and political criteria led to the decision to merge, not least of which was a decline in boarding numbers nationally. This questioned the ability of small prep schools to survive in a changing market and led to a greater emphasis on marketing. As a result, Lake House's market survey (1993/4) raised the following issues which were likely to arise as a direct result of an increasingly mobile and changing society:
- a decline in full boarding numbers in preference for greater flexible, casual boarding provision
- more HMC schools becoming co-educational, thereby attracting more pupils at 11+ rather than 13+

- greater fluidity of parents opting in and out of the private sector to suit their financial and educational needs
- movement of Forces' families and the increasing numbers of both parents working or splitting up, leading to a need for weekly or flexible boarding to create stability for children
- greater use of Nursery and pre-prep provision before going to maintained schools
- increased day provision combined with a decrease in boarding thereby leading to greater parity of day/boarding fees
- less need to register children at birth leading to greater uncertainty for schools in long-term planning and development

These factors pointed to a further decline in numbers at Lake House and fuelled the governors' concerns for the future which led them to consider their options for the school. The researcher was interested to know why these key players, who stand to gain nothing in financial terms, were so keen to take on the battle for the survival of their schools. Rupert Clark explained that due to their standing in their respective communities and businesses it would not have enhanced their reputations had the schools failed. This may then account for the clandestine meetings prior to 1996 – failure of the proposed venture was to be avoided and therefore a plan had to be set in place before official discussions.

6.5.2. Planning

Initial planning had first to take into consideration the withdrawal of Rupert Clark from the discussions owing to his view that a takeover by Lake House was being arranged. After another meeting of the governors of Lake House on March 1st 1996 contact was reported to have been renewed with St. Finian's, the result of which had been a unanimous agreement to the principle of merger. However, even at this stage, Rupert Clark was being quizzed by a Lake House governor wanting to know, firstly, if he was in favour of a merger; and secondly how long he saw himself staying at St. Finian's. The implication here appears to be that he was being considered for a key post at New School. As stated earlier, Clark surmised that a Principal would be brought in to lead the new venture - over him. Indeed, the documentary evidence shows that the governors wanted to link the announcement of the merger with the appointment of the Head, and an element of

horse-trading had taken place, with the governors of St. Finian's compromising on their Head's inclusion in the short list.

Another consideration was how best to see that numbers on roll at New School were as healthy as possible, and here again discussions pointed to Rupert Clark as the key to gaining a maximum number of pupils transferring from St. Finian's to New School; therefore a condition was laid down that Clark would join the Senior Management Team at New School. The appointment of Headmaster of New School was to be made by the governors of Lake House with "appropriate representation" from the governors of St Finian's, and in due course Andrew Smith was appointed as Head of Lake House, and subsequently as Principal of New School with Rupert Clark as his deputy - in all but name.

In the light of this knowledge a cynic could be forgiven for thinking that a wheeling-dealership of an inner-circle of governors was to be responsible for a merger which was not as even-handed as it was portrayed. Even the interview process for a new Head at Lake House had been stage-managed; the eventual Head, according to Rupert Clark, not having been included in the second round of interviews with him. Governors in private schools, according to the National Union of Head Teachers (NAHT) are not legally required to advertise posts for Heads and Deputies, but in this case it was a running sore among colleagues, who maintained that if, as in state schools, the post had been advertised, a new impartial Head would have appeased both sides and the problems that arose as a result of having two Heads would have been avoided. Equally, if either Rupert Clark or Andrew Smith had been found to be the best candidate for the post through their inclusion in the new interview process, he would have been accepted more readily by both parents and staff.

From the staff's point of view news of a forthcoming merger had been reported by teachers at St. Finian's who had been told "unofficially", and the announcement of the merger was not as much of a shock as it might have been. However, the fact that this news had been 'leaked' gave rise to speculation from Lake House staff that St. Finian's governors were in control, and that our governors were not sufficiently mindful of the

need to open lines of communication with the very people who would have the task of making the merger work in practice.

The speed at which events took place were inordinately hasty, and by the beginning of January 1997 – with the start of New School planned for September of the same year - each member of staff at both schools had been given a Consultative Document and a Consultation meeting was planned for January 20th 1997.

The 'points' process for the appointment of staff was a major site of contestation. In this case it is an example of one of the processes of change from which some key issues can be drawn. The first issue was that of parity of salary. The proposal that St. Finian's teachers would receive large pay rises while those at Lake House would incur reductions caused outrage and highlighted at best, the naivety of the governors and at worst, a move to save money by reducing higher salaries; the former reason was cited by one of the governors involved during a telephone conversation with the researcher, but there is no way of substantiating this; indeed it raises the proposition by Preedy et al (2003):

Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change. (p. 195)

The ring-fencing, excluding teachers from St. Finian's from applying for Heads of Department posts, suggests that behind-the-scenes appointments had already been made and that we were just going through the motions of an appointments process. This was particularly evident when one colleague was put in the invidious position of having no job to apply for. It was only after pressure had been brought to bear by the entire body of staff assisted by some parents that this situation was rectified. Again, the researcher, in the course of a conversation with an ex-governor, was able to corroborate the fact that the current Head of Lake House had seen this process as a way of making the teacher redundant. Unfortunately, it was only his word and there are no written records from which it can be substantiated; however, the researcher feels that it is worth recording here as an example of one-dimensional management and a lack of experience of the key players. From this it brings into question the motives for ring-fencing posts: had the appointments already been decided upon; or would the interview process have taken too

long to fit the time-scale? The answer to these questions is now irrelevant, the fact that they are being raised is pertinent and points to management by neglect, or what Dror (1986) quoted in Preedy et al,(2003) calls *'fuzzy-gambling', a situation in which not just the odds but the rules themselves change as the activity progresses. In such a context, policy is far from a straightforward matter of calculating costs and benefits. (p. 39)*

Another example of fuzzy-gambling was the issue of retaining the pre-prep department at St. Finian's. After gaining the agreement of 55 families to move to New School, this consideration was ill-judged and, according to the Head of pre-prep would have been disruptive and likely to lose the goodwill of staff and parents. The cost to New School of maintaining 5 minibuses to ferry children backwards and forwards, as well as the subsidy of staff should this project fail, would have been economically unsound. Indeed, the Principal himself wrote to the governors to highlight the mismatch between educational and financial planning, yet at the same time supporting the idea of a split site pre-prep. The governors decided to bring everyone to the Lake House site in order to facilitate development planning, and agreed that the educational aims should precede new buildings.

Throughout the first four months of preparation and planning for the merger there was no reference to a business plan in the governors' communications with parents; this caused a storm of outrage at the first meeting of governors, parents and staff on May 17th 1997, so much so that St. Finian's' parents went away with negative feelings about merging with such a vitriolic and hostile body of parents. This was reported in the local paper and awakened the animosity of an ill-informed but vociferous local community – the very people that schools such as ours rely on for support and word of mouth recommendation.

As we have seen, earlier in this chapter, the Bursar's explanations for not producing a business plan were fully detailed, but this was too little too late, and only then sent to the governors on the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Had the reasons been made clear to the, understandably, anxious parents, some degree of confidence may have been instilled and the root of apparent anger removed.

This judgement on the Bursar's behalf brings into question the leadership of the merger. The Bursar, at the time, was also Clerk to the Governors, but he appears to be the sole

'owner' of this information which would have forearmed the governors who were in the line of fire at the meeting on May 17th. He is another of the key players with whom it was not possible to conduct an interview to verify such information, since he too, was asked to leave soon after the Principal. The reasons for his dismissal were not made public, but it was intimated that his loyalty to the school had been in question following the departure of the Principal with whom he had shared a close working and social relationship.

Finance of the merger is a major theme running through this study and one in which there appears to be no clear manager, rather management by committee. Having estimated that the merged school would be just in credit at the end of the new school year, the criteria for achieving this had to be judged. A 'sensitivity survey' was deemed necessary in order to assess whether fee increases over the following two years would result in a loss of pupils. The cost of maintaining a high level of staffing was included in this assessment and was critically balanced against the creation of confidence among current and prospective parents. It was felt that this was not an appropriate time to cut staff. The meeting at which these financial considerations were discussed took place on May 23rd 1997, three months before the start of the newly merged school. This appears to be a case of crisis management as there is no evidence, in the reports of previous meetings that the cost of staffing was going to be anything other than a question of the allocation of points and achievement of parity between the two schools' staffs.

6.5.3. Implementation

The implementation of the merger was largely carried out by the Principal, Headmaster and staff, but monitored closely by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of governors. As this study has shown, the Headmaster galvanised Heads of Department into action and planning of the curriculum was a priority; while the Principal's less clearly defined objectives were presumed to be in hand. The key word here is 'presumed' since his presence in school was not visible. The dichotomy of the school's leadership became the cause of further crisis management and behind-the-scenes discussions were rumoured to be taking place. The distractions of a bipartisan leadership and the problems that ensued bring into question the management of the merger, which, rather than furthering the

proactive stance taken by the governors in deciding to merge the two schools while in a financial position to do so, actually became reactive management.

6.5.4. Outcomes

The course of events which followed the sacking of the Principal highlights the importance of planning based on knowledge and experience rather than a well-intentioned, but naïve vision of a distant future state.

The notion that two heads are better than one proved not to be the case in New School. The complementary skills that each man possessed did not take account of their individual personalities, and as a consequence, their inability to achieve a harmonious team. The Principal, as his appointment was 'sold' to the staff by the Chairman of Governors had been appointed largely on the basis of his 'vision' for the school; the headmaster, on the other hand, as the documentary evidence shows, was appointed a matter of expediency despite the fact that he was known to be volatile. The results of this mismatch of leadership became a main focus of the merger.

Ineffective planning engenders conflict among those who not only hold key managerial positions, but who are involved at any levels in mergers.

In the following chapter these key themes are examined with a view to understanding how they shaped this case. Data techniques are discussed and suggestions are made to aid future practice.

Chapter 7: Analysis and Interpretation

7.1   Introduction

This study has attempted to give an objective insight into the merger of two preparatory schools and in so doing has looked at the factors and processes that shape institutional merger in this context. This chapter sets out a summary of the findings of the research and makes recommendations emerging from it. Subsequently a critique of the research methodology is explored and, in conclusion, proposals for future research directions are suggested. However, before examining the findings of the research it is important to revisit the original research questions in order to ascertain whether they have been answered, and, indeed, how they have engendered the various hypotheses throughout the study.

The main research question asked whether there is a case for the implementation of a clear and universally acceptable framework, such as exists in the maintained sector, from which preparatory schools can receive guidance in the event of a merger. As well as this key question four interrelated questions were explored:

- What factors influence the process of merger in preparatory schools?
- What ought to be the involvement of stakeholders, such as teachers and parents?
- How does the governance of a preparatory school influence change in a merger?
- Do leadership styles influence the outcomes of a merger?

The following section reflects on these questions and attempts to reveal emerging suppositions relating to them.

7.2   Summary of the Findings of the Research

This case study has drawn attention to several main difficulties which arose during the merger process; the overriding and most problematic of these was the appointment of two Heads. Whether or not two different candidates could have formed an effective partnership in leading New School is a matter for speculation, but, as evidence from the case study shows, the Principal and the Headmaster of New School had too many differences which

led to eventual conflict. The governors appointed both men on the advice of Roy Percival, the man they brought in to "mastermind" the merger, and it was not until the ensuing fallout that the strengths and weaknesses of the two Heads were assessed. From the evidence in this case, it would appear to have been ill-judged to appoint two Heads without giving greater consideration to their personalities, managerial and leadership skills. Timing, once again, became a factor when faced with requests, from parents and some staff, to advertise for a new Head - the response from governors was that the process would take too long and would prolong uncertainty. This highlights the emerging hypothesis that mergers of preparatory schools are characterised by ineffective planning and insufficient timescales.

The following section enlarges on the cost of failing to acknowledge the importance of strategic planning based on knowledge and experience when contemplating the merger of two preparatory schools, and it considers the value of a clear and universally acceptable framework for use in preparatory schools. This means that not only do the orchestrators of mergers need a basic understanding of school culture and the management of change; they must also have the ability to take a multi-dimensional view of the task ahead. In order to demonstrate what is meant by this it is necessary to conceptualise what happened overall at New School.

7.2.1. Lack of strategic planning

At the time of the merger there was no existing model for change, which would include mergers, in the independent sector of education, apart from the ISJC advice discussed in Chapter 4. Indeed, it was not until 1999 that the Education Regulations for the closure of maintained schools was published. The governors of Lake House and St. Finian's, realising that they lacked the necessary knowledge and experience, put their faith in Roy Percival, based purely on his reputation within IAPS. He was given only eleven months to plan, mediate for and implement the merger, which was clearly not long enough. This resulted in a reactive rather than a proactive process whereby knee-jerk reactions to problems, such as the appointment of staff, turned what should have been a linear process into what can only be aligned to a pinball machine type of communication whereby plans became the ball bearings which were fired off only to be sent back to the perpetrator for

further discussion. Examples of this include: public meetings between governors, Heads of the two merging schools and parents; the production of job specifications, the distribution of new contracts to staff and, perhaps most significantly in this case, the dismissal of the Principal. In the first of these examples, the outcomes of initial meetings to explain the reasons for the merger to parents took the governors by surprise when it appeared that they were unable to produce a business plan. The outcry that ensued forced them to rethink the reasoning behind their decision not to publicise a plan at this stage and how much information should be made available to the parents. At the same time factions among the parent body were forming and questions were being raised by individuals as well as groups. If we liken the scene to a pinball machine or a game of Bagatelle, with parents, governors, Heads and staff as the numbers on the board – the ball bearings were spinning wildly. It was naïve of the governors to withhold such information from the very people who would, ultimately, lead New School to success or failure by either staying or by voting with their feet and finding alternative schools for their children.

In the case of the staff the content of both job specifications and contracts were not thought through in enough detail or with the interests of the teaching staff in mind. It could be argued that this was because the school's solicitors did not specialise in this field and did not have the weight of knowledge that the unions possessed in the field of education, but had the governors consulted experts in the field, before disseminating official documents, needless anxiety would have been avoided and the "ball bearings" would not have been sent spinning between Roy Percival, the governors, unions and staff.

This raises the earlier question of what ought to be the involvement of stakeholders such as teachers and parents. Some may contend that the word 'ought' implies that there is a 'right' way of involving stakeholders; this is not the intention, nor is it the researcher's aim to claim, on the basis of this single case, that there is a 'one size fits all' answer to the manner in which preparatory school mergers may be carried out. However, in this case, the teachers were in 'the front line', required to carry forward the changes in such a way as to contribute to the success of the merger and it would appear that, apart from an appointment schedule, there was no other opportunity for discussion.

Fullan (2001) acknowledges that we would all be better off if changes were introduced more effectively and he suggests that we should feel sorry for those who are responsible for implementation but do not want or do not understand the change – either because it has not been sufficiently developed or because they have not been involved in deciding on the change. He states:

> *Those in authority have a need for meaning, too, if for no other reason*
> *than that the change will be unsuccessful if they cannot convey their*
> *meaning to others. (p.107)*

Effective two-way communication is vital and there needs to be a discussion among governors, in the early stages of planning, as to the desirable level of involvement of teachers, using outside agencies, such as unions, if that is where the knowledge base lies.

The machinations leading to the dismissal of the Principal, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, were by far the most convoluted of all in this case. The appointment of two Heads was, as this study has shown, the catalyst for problems during the post-merger period. It split the governing body, staff and parents. Members of the Board were each given tasks, such as monitoring the Principal's progress, questioning members of staff, setting targets and deadlines for the Principal and consulting with the school's solicitors, then reporting back to the Board. This in turn led to offshoot meetings between the Principal and his solicitors, governors and the Principal, governors and the Headmaster and groups within the staffroom before the Principal agreed to step down.

This bouncing to and fro of argument and counter-argument was not only time-wasting but it also highlighted the lack of relevant knowledge and experience of the Manager and key governors. During this period staff confidence, in the management of the merger, waned and a ripple effect alerted the parent body to the fact that all was not what it seemed. Had the governors allotted more time for this stage in the process, and had they and the Manager been more cognizant of government legislation and the experiences of other schools in similar situations, some of these problems may have been avoided. The hypothesis that preparatory schools are vulnerable during merger because of the fundamental lack of a regulatory framework becomes clear in this context.

The ideal would be a more linear process whereby clarity of vision is accompanied by close examination of cause and effect for each proposal. The lines of communication should be open between governors, Heads, staff and parents, with the Manager set at the top as his main role is to advise and empower governors, who are placed in a position which demonstrates their involvement within the process as facilitators of change. The position of the Union should take on greater prominence but in the absence of any other credible body it is vital that the legal position is considered at the outset, particularly with regard to staff contracts and statutory regulations - which may be used as further guidance.

The parents' position should be more prominent so as to demonstrate their crucial role in the ultimate success of the merger. If lines of communication are kept open throughout the process, between governors and parents, the Head and staff, being familiar with the parents, will be able to sell the idea and explain, as facilitators of change, how it will enrich the school, without there being claims of a cover-up or that the governors do not have the courage of their convictions. However, this should not preclude any meetings or correspondence which individuals or groups of parents may wish to arrange.

This section has shown clearly that to ignore the involvement of stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, particularly in terms of communication, is to open the merger process to conflict, lack of trust and possible failure. If a business plan were to be made available at the outset parents, at least, would have some faith in the governors and teachers would not feel so concerned that they should have to consult outside agencies in the form of the unions.

Closely related to this supposition is the need for clarity of vision, as the goals must be fully established in order for planning to be effective.

7.2.2. Lack of vision of the desired outcome

Apart from the financial success of a school which has eliminated one of its main rivals in the area and in so doing has gained capital to invest in development there appears to be no clear vision beyond this. As governors retire from the board it could be assumed that new blood would bring fresh ideas and experience, however, boards of preparatory schools tend

to be self-perpetuating and as a consequence there is unlikely to be much change in the future. Even parent governors, who are most closely involved in the school, have an interest which is fairly short-lived and mainly concerned with issues surrounding their own children, and as soon as their children leave the school they tend to resign from the board.

In this case the governors were carried along by the interest and enthusiasm of a handful of their colleagues, one of whom was an old boy, another, a parent of two pupils, both wanting the school to survive and to be the best in the area – merger being the only perceived way to achieve this. Governance of preparatory schools is transitory and the experience of governors does not necessarily include business management, implicit in which is the qualification to manage mergers. The need to bring in an outside consultant manager was answered in this case, but the consultant's brief relied on information and aims of the governors, hence the inefficient time-scale and inefficient planning. The ability to manage change is vital in a governing body; the results of ignorance in this area can be seen in this case study. From this we can see that sound planning is vital, and, as stated in Chapter 2, evaluation should be planned at the same time as the change itself so that information about its success can be gathered as it proceeds. Experience in this case has led to the assumption that mergers are handicapped by the diversity and lack of clarity of the aims of different stakeholders.

So far the points raised have been tangible, but the considerations in organizational change may not always be so specific. As we have seen in Chapter 2 the different power relationships which lie beneath the surface of any organization can be conflicting and proposed change can arouse anxiety thus threatening collaborative work cultures. Managers of change should not ignore the significance of organizational culture in their planning if they are to retain the goodwill of those involved.

7.2.3. Lack of understanding of the culture of the schools by their governors.

As this study has attempted to show culture is the unquantifiable factor that forms the soul of an organization and whose power should not be underestimated. In the case of New School the merging of two sets of staff, change of uniform and boarding provision, for example, were not considered by the governors; these were issues designated to the two

Heads after the merger had been announced. Had due consideration been given to these and other factors prior to this likely outcomes could have been discussed and provision made for dealing with the anxiety that was bound to ensue could have been put in place.

In Chapter 2 a discussion of the role of culture was included within the management of change because of the human factor in organizations, and because, as Wise (1977) argues, schools do not operate in a rational vacuum and wishing them to do so shows a misunderstanding of the culture of the school. The governors, through inexperience and lack of guidance, appeared to act like the policy makers described by Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1996) often imposing ideas without taking account of local context, and very vulnerable to quick fixes. This leads on to the following observation that there was a lack of reflection on the part of the governors.

7.2.4 Lack of reflection by the governors

Owing to the short timescale allocated to the whole merger process, based on evidence, it seems to show that reflection came too late. Issues such as the appointment of two Heads, and the ultimate dismissal of one, were the result of governance by neglect, albeit well-intentioned. The pinball machine effect, of move and counter-move, was a consequence of putting one's faith in the unknown and accepting the advice of one person without question. At each stage of the process there should have been time to assess progress rather than wait until problems surfaced. It is unrealistic to expect one person to be an expert in every aspect of a merger, particularly in an alien environment where cultures and traditions influence daily life; governors were morally obliged to question and consider possible outcomes at every step of the way. They, not the Manager, are known by the staff and parents and it is they to whom queries and problems are naturally addressed; they should, therefore have taken a more prominent role in the process. A continuing monitoring and assessment of the merger process would have highlighted weaknesses early on; whether this would have altered the outcomes is debatable, but certainly relationships between governors and parents could have been ameliorated thus reducing conflict.

Pressure on time and the fumblings of a well-intentioned group of governors conspired against the managers of this merger and led to their vulnerability. Had there been a

regulatory framework in place there may well have been a different outcome, but almost certainly the burden on the key players would have been eased and the planning process would have been more open and transparent, thus allaying the fears and cynicism of stakeholders.

7.2.5 The road to success

It would be easy to assume from the evidence presented here that New School was born out of complete chaos and that nothing went well; this is an incorrect assumption and in order to redress the balance it is important to highlight the achievements as well as the failures.

Firstly, and most importantly, without the intervention of a group of governors from each of the two schools there would have been no merger leading to the possibility that St. Finian's and Lake House would have ceased to exist. In spite of the pain caused by change and the way it was handled, the fact that it happened at all, and that New School is flourishing, must be the greatest success.

Secondly, the merger provided an opportunity to assemble the best staff team possible, and in spite of the obstructive means of achieving this it has, in the long term, proved successful. The act of having to apply for one's own job focused the minds of everyone involved; it gave the opportunity for those who did not share the vision to take a generous redundancy package, paving the way for enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to carry forward the vision; governors joined in the interview process and learned more about the staff and the school than they had ever done before, while staff became more familiar with governors who had previously been faceless names.

While eight families left Lake House because of the way the merger was handled, numbers on roll have continued to rise since 1997 as New School has been able to provide better facilities through the injection of capital from the sale of St. Finian's. The current roll of 364 pupils (1999) means that in some areas of the school there are waiting lists, which, in turn, has created a demand for places, and subsequently the staff feel more secure.

The experience of New School has shown that its culture evolved as the planning and implementation stages were negotiated. The best practices and artefacts of St. Finian's and Lake House were gradually brought in through discussion with staff and children. The consensus among the researcher's colleagues is that culture is a living entity that develops and grows each year, while retaining the intrinsic soul of the founder schools. It is therefore recommended that while the school's culture must be considered in the change process it is not a monster which needs to be tamed, rather an entity in need of nurturing.

What this research has shown is that the Governors and Head teachers of the two schools concerned did not take sufficient account of the different cultures and the human dimensions of the management of change. This was exemplified by a lack of open and transparent communication with all the parties involved from the outset of the process.

During the course of the merger process it became clear that issues of power and authority were simmering just below the surface. It would be natural to assume that Roy Percival, the Manager, wielded the power, which he did from the point of view of the governors who relied on him due to their lack of knowledge and experience. In fact he simply advised the governors, he did not exercise authority over them as they did not have to accept his dictum. Rupert Clark, on the other hand, could be said to have been the most influential by virtue of the perception that he undermined the Principal and through his threats of resignation, yet he did not hold the balance of power. The teaching staff, who campaigned for equal opportunities in the appointments process and who forced the governors and the adjudicator, by bringing in the Union, to rewrite contracts where ambiguity and omission had rendered them unworkable, also exercised power and authority. It was also the teaching staff who became the 'face' of the merger, having to persuade and reassure parents that all was legal and in the best interests of current and future pupils. If the staff, as a body, had conveyed any dissension beyond the Common Room walls it would have caused a greater departure of pupils and endangered the final outcome, not least of which was job security.

From this section we can see that factors which influence the process of mergers in preparatory schools would, from the evidence in this study, include:

- An awareness of the effect of school cultures during the process of change.
- Leadership styles and their influence on the management of change.
- The importance of involving stakeholders such as teachers and parents when planning for change.

A universal model for merger in independent schools would appear to be necessary if a large number of problems are to be avoided. Certainly, in terms of alleviating pressure on stakeholders by ensuring that sufficient time is allowed and by reducing the possibilities of conflict, a model framework is advisable. The following section takes this further by identifying issues raised through interviews.

7.3 Specific Data from Interviews

So far this chapter has explored the broader findings of the research; the next section attempts to identify and describe, more specifically, important issues highlighted by interviewees and which underpin the credibility of this research. The topics raised were based on managerial, cultural, financial and emotional factors.

7.3.1 Managerial

The managerial aspects of the merger were conducted, initially by four people: the Chairman of Governors at St. Finian's and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Lake House's board plus the independent advisor, although the Heads of each of the schools and their boards were involved in the consultation process, meetings with parents and staff and in the appointment of staff at New School.

An aspect of the planning process which led to conflict was the discriminatory ring-fencing of certain teaching posts. If the posts had been open to all the outcomes could have resulted in a two-fold gain; younger, keener staff could have gained a foot on the promotion ladder while at the same time easing the financial burden of costlier teachers' salaries. The whole concept of ring-fencing caused a factionalisation of staff, thus

exacerbating further mistrust due to the perception that any competitive interviews were facile as the governors and Heads had already allocated posts to designated employees.

When it became apparent that two Heads were one too many, and New School was in danger of collapse, another independent arbiter was brought in to calm troubled waters and to renew the confidence of the parent body. His part in the outcome is detailed in Chapter 6. This would not have been needed if the Governors had adopted government guidelines for mainstream schools whereby the mistakes made would have been obviated through the use of clear statutory obligations. Heads and Deputies posts must be advertised nationally; both Heads would have been automatically short-listed but the new appointment would have been the result of fair and open competition.

In an interview with an ex-governor, who took part in the very first exploration into the potential of a merger in 1993, it was made clear that, success depended on starting from a position of financial strength, yet it was to be another three years before plans became a reality. In those three years Lake House was visited by a marketing consultant, and talks continued in London and at the homes of certain governors, of which the researcher can find no written details.

Once the merger had been announced staff became worried about losing their jobs, and since meetings between governors, Heads and staff had taken place on separate occasions in each of the two schools, there was also the concern that arrangements would be fair and unbiased; stress levels were high. George Williams, the school Union Representative, called upon the Union to represent the views of the Lake House staff. As it happened, the staff at St. Finian's was represented by the same Field Officer. At no time did a pre-merger meeting take place with both sets of staff together, which created a difficulty for the Field Officer as he continually had to report back to one school, followed by the other, without divulging any information which was relevant to either one. George Williams admitted to finding it difficult to remain impartial when dealing with management as his own job was involved in possible redundancies. He did not meet with governors or Roy Percival at all during the negotiations, instead he would meet with the Field Officer who would then report to the management and feed back their responses. Because information was not always forthcoming, Williams found it difficult to appease his colleagues, particularly

when the issue of salaries arose. The new salary structure meant a potential drop for certain Lake House teachers due to a need to bring into line the lower paid St. Finian's teachers. This also meant, in the eyes of the law, that if teachers were disadvantaged by their new salaries they had the right to take up a job elsewhere without giving notice. The staff Union Representative should not have been put into this situation. Conflict of interest caused mistrust from rival parties. The regional representative should have been brought in as a more objective interlocutor although, from some colleagues' points of view, the school rep's efforts engendered confidence due to their feelings of powerlessness.

The government guidelines make it clear that advance notification must be made public at least two months before the start of any action in order to give objectors time to present their responses. The requirement, by law to produce full details of expenditure, if applied in this case, would have avoided the angry scenes at Lake House where parents called for a business plan. Ignorance was a huge threat at this initial meeting and the governors' reluctance to produce a written document detailing financial plans and aims for the new school early enough exacerbated the problem.

7.3.2 Cultural

During the planning stages of the merger, interviewees recall meetings to discuss issues such as which of the two sites should be used, governance, staff appointments, deadlines, finance and marketing. The researcher was interested to discover if, at any stage, the more abstract notion of school culture had been taken into consideration. Each school had its own uniqueness and character which had been inspired by its founder, one of whom was still alive, and the family of the other still very much involved in the school, so how, if at all, had the governors built into their plans, the cultural considerations of uniting two distinct entities?

The answer appears to lie with the Principal and the Headmaster of New School, and their wives. The Principal was of the opinion that this was a new school and he, its new Head. He made it clear that his "vision" was to create an environment to suit the needs of the twenty-first century child. His idea was that we should forget the past and look forward.

The Headmaster, on the other hand, although at times frustrated by comments such as: "At Lake House we used to...." and "At St. Finian's we always...." in the course of an interview reflected that this was a healthy response. He said that this did not happen initially because of the Principal's desire to move on. As a result people did not volunteer suggestions based on past experience for fear of antagonising someone from the other "camp".

The school uniform was the outward depiction of the new school. The wives of the two Heads and a committee of parents from both schools had tried to come up with a compromise between the formal blazer, shirt and tie of St. Finian's, and the relaxed polo shirts, jumpers and cords at Lake House. The result was to purchase sets of "Number Ones" (Blazer, white shirt, tie and grey flannels or kilts) for pupils to borrow on formal occasions such as interviews at senior schools or for reading in Chapel. The day to day uniform then took on the Lake House polo shirts, differently coloured jumpers, and cords for the boys, and kilts for the girls. Both wives told the researcher that this choice was intended to keep the parents of the two former schools happy, or as the Headmaster stated, it was imposed by market forces. Had greater thought been given to the implications for the pupils a completely new uniform could have militated against factions arising and promoted an entirely fresh start for New School.

7.3.3 Financial

The main reason given for the merger was financial. In order to preserve something of both St. Finian's and Lake House, there was no alternative. The vice-chairman of Lake House had told the staff that without a merger St. Finian's would fold in a year and Lake House in three years. In an ad hoc conversation following this he made it clear that one school in the area had to go in order for the rest to survive. He had looked into the possibility of a three way merger with Southcliffe, but they were felt to be in too weak a financial position for such a merger to be viable.

The former Headmaster of St. Finian's was consulted about a merger with Lake House, he said that numbers on roll at that time were 110 and he forecast that they might rise to 120, but in order to compete they would need to reach between 160 and 170, which he could

not see happening. He also maintained that parents were looking for more facilities and greater stability. When asked whether finance was the main reason for the merger his response was: "not in so many words.......St. Finian's had money in the bank....would have coped for three or more years quite happily with numbers going up.....was quite well run at that stage".

A rumour had been circulating at Lake House, that the Bursar of St. Finian's did not have enough money to pay the staff, but when the researcher put this to the Head he denied it by saying that they had about £90,000 in the bank and that his school had taken the brunt of the merger costs. He revealed that St. Finian's had a benefactor who was helping with the costs of building a Sports Hall, but that no borrowing had been incurred. However, he then confirmed that St. Finian's would have gone out of business a year before Lake House if things had continued as they were. Later in the same interview he stated that this was a worst case scenario, and that owing to a "pruning" of staff he did not think either school would have gone under.

When asked about the actual cost of the merger, the Head of St. Finian's told the researcher that it was considerably more than it should have been owing to the generosity of the governors in keeping "expensive" staff, added to which was the "misguided" cost of having two Heads.

What becomes apparent is one of the consequences of initial meetings held in secret for which there is no evidence of minutes. While recognising that embryonic discussions would need to take place within confidential parameters should nothing come of them, as soon as 'in principle' decisions were made there should have been free communication flow and dialogue with all principle stake holders. This may have helped to avoid the stand-off between parents and Governors caused by an inability, or perhaps unwillingness to produce a business plan before the first public meeting. This arousal of conflicting and strong emotions could have been avoided had greater consideration been given to people's allegiances and feelings. The following section looks at the implications of neglecting this aspect of change.

7.3.4 Emotional

Throughout this thesis emphasis has been placed on management and cultural issues in the process of change. It is too easy, in carrying out this kind of research, to assume that the management of a merger is a purely clinical response to triggers of change. Indeed it does come about for financial and political reasons but people are not automata and where there is a human element there is emotional involvement no matter how objective one tries to be.

In Chapter 6 the case study was presented giving the rationale behind it, the modus operandi and the resulting fallout. This chapter has looked at these data and attempted to analyse them, but out of analysis has come paralysis because the synergistic overseeing of the case has been neglected. In order to understand the implications of this it is necessary to go back to the Education Act of 1870. This Act brought in Payment by Results which was picked up by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. She saw this as meaning value for money and questioned how we get results. This in turn filtered down to teachers as the government determined to see how competent they were; everything was then seen as a contract – results by performance as in Dickens's "Dotheboys Hall", where children were seen as empty bottles waiting to be filled with knowledge. This type of teaching misses out the limbic system - the emotional motor system – which allows for the didactic, heuristic and maieutic teaching styles. (See Glossary) If the emotional needs of staff are not supplied it cannot be expected that they will be able to look after the emotional needs of the pupils. In order to appreciate the relevance of this aspect we need to review the strained relationship between the two "Heads" of New School – Janus looking in two different directions which created the two headed monster. The consequences of allowing this situation to arise were more far reaching than the case study showed.

The Governors appointed Andrew Smith on the advice of Roy Percival the independent "strategic planner", Rupert Clark was brought in, effectively as the Number Two, as a short term measure in order to increase the roll by bringing pupils with him. As the documents show, he was known, by the Governors, to be volatile and his suitability for the job was questioned on the grounds of his personality. Throughout the time that they "worked together" the Principal and the Headmaster were at loggerheads and their conflicting views spilled over into the Staff Common Room causing staff to take sides.

The senior pupils were also loyal to their former schools and conflicts were never far from the surface which made the teaching and pastoral roles very challenging. In theory the two leaders had complementary skills and characters, Andrew Smith being a gentle, caring people person, good with parents and colleagues, while Rupert Clark was a methodical, disciplined strategic planner on paper but less sensitive to the needs of others. Following the dismissal of Andrew Smith relief that the tension was over was short-lived as Rupert Clark's style of management created tension among staff and claims of bullying by him grew. There is, to this day, an undercurrent of rule by fear which has a negative effect on teaching styles and teachers have a negative image of themselves which manifests itself in staffroom conversations seeking mutual support.

It could be construed that this was governance by neglect by a group of well-intentioned people who were not fully cognizant of the effects of their machinations. Having faced up to their mistakes they were keen to ensure that nothing else should rock the boat and laissez-faire governance prevails. The question that arises is: what did the Governors get from the merger? Some might say it was a sense of power or importance. When questioned altruistic notions of creating a successful school were uppermost in their minds but any ulterior motives would not and could not be expanded. Some might say that financial stability was the Governors' aim but perhaps the risk of the impending financial ruin of two schools was more so. Many of the schools' Governors were high profile bankers, solicitors and Heads of prominent schools where loss of face in the community was a major concern and therefore the need for self-preservation may have clouded their judgement.

To the outside world the school is said to be "happy" and "thriving", this study tells a different story.

The original research questions sought to explore and understand the governance and management of the merger of two preparatory schools taking the management of change and school culture as the main threads. It is only through examining these facets that the researcher has become aware of the need to look more closely at the neurophysiological aspects of planning for change. A person dealing with people and the effect of emotional needs is of paramount importance in an overtly and covertly successful organization.

Leadership style, while an important consideration in the appointment of the Head of New School, was underestimated and acknowledged by the governors too late to avoid the ensuing conflict. Leaders influence school culture whether intentionally or unwittingly and no planning for change, such as merger, should ignore this aspect of management.

In the final analysis everyone involved in the merger, once the wheels had been set in motion, was locked into it, each sector reliant on another to carry it forward, each exercising its own power and authority when necessary.

The evidence discussed here continues to support the idea of a regulatory framework for merger in independent schools. There appear to be ongoing tensions running beneath the surface, which stem from inefficient planning and a lack of understanding of the needs of those involved in the merger and although a universal model may not obviate all of the problems arising as a result of a merger; it would address many of these issues.

7.4   Reflection

The aim of this thesis was to research the planning, implementation and fallout of the merger of two preparatory schools taking into account school culture and the management of change. In particular it looks at how principal decision makers in each of the two schools collaborated and united to form the Board of New School and how the appointment of two Heads had unforeseen results affecting the overall outcome of the merger. The next section looks reflectively at the chaos that happened through ignorance and blind faith.

7.4.1   Governance

The first point, which must be accepted, is that although many different factors prompted the merger initiative, the onus of decision-making, planning and management rests squarely on the shoulders of the schools' governors. The governors were responsible for bringing in an outside intermediary in the form of Roy Percival, and having set the time parameters they accepted his dictum on every aspect of the planning. Without their interest and intervention it can only be surmised as to what the future of the two schools would have been. However, having set the wheels in motion they recognised that their collective

experience lacked the relevant insider knowledge and educational expertise and therefore devolved responsibility for curriculum matters and marketing to the Principal and Headmaster. It is therefore the micro-political influences of a small inner circle from each school that influenced the balance of power and outcomes.

7.4.2 Conflict

The prospect of an amalgamation of the two schools, while engendering a sense of loss and fear for jobs among staff, was initially met with enthusiasm by the Headmaster of St. Finian's and the Principal elect of Lake House. It was seen as an opportunity to be the best boarding preparatory school in its corner of the country due to capital from the sale of St. Finian's being ploughed into a huge development programme which in turn would allow for an expansion of the school roll to a two to three Form entry from Nursery to Year 8.

Principal decision makers from each school brought with them different viewpoints, ideas and experiences, not least of which was the choice of site. Outwardly signs of collaboration and unity prevailed but under the surface private goals were at odds with each other. The Headmaster's animosity towards the Principal and a mutual distrust was not to lie hidden for long and this wakening volcano promulgated fears among the staff that the merger and subsequently the future of the school were at risk. Inevitably staff began to take sides, governors became involved and the events that followed were to have far-reaching effects, which, in spite of an outward appearance of unity are never far from the surface.

With the benefit of hindsight the governors would not have appointed two Heads. They based their decision on the need to bring St. Finian's pupils to New School and for that they needed the Headmaster. They also believed that as he was still a relatively young man he would want to move on to pastures new within five years thereby leaving the school with the Head they had chosen originally and gaining one Head's salary. This well-intentioned decision, given the governors' knowledge of the Headmaster, endangered the future of New School and the collaboration of the people working in it. The cost of this mistake was not solely in the Principal's severance package per se, but in the repercussions for future spending and the ongoing monitoring by the Charities Commission. The

experience of working for two Heads was always going to be fraught with difficulty and in this case proved divisive. Parents' confusion as to whom they should turn to discuss their children or to talk about domestic problems did little to help an already delicate situation, they too had their preferred "Head" and factions among them lobbied governors who, in turn, reacted by eliminating the "problem". This, as the case study shows, created a monster, which had to be tamed.

While there is no evidence to suggest that the legal considerations of the merger itself were carried out in a less than exemplary fashion, the same cannot be said of the governors' communication with the parent body. If the Independent Schools' Joint Council's (ISJC) advice of circulating printed material to both sets of parents and offering an opportunity to visit the chosen site had been taken, they would have been more familiar with the proposition before asking their questions, rather than being faced with a platform presentation at which it was difficult to take in all that was said.

The negative outcomes of this case provide lessons for future practice and fuel for further research. A large-scale study of merged prep schools would generate sufficient data to create a format for independent schools in an uncertain economic climate. Lessons should be learned from the maintained sector and government legislation for the amalgamation of schools.

There are lessons to be learned here for anyone contemplating a similar venture, and it is with some confidence that a model for analysing change in school mergers is presented. This model does not pretend to be definitive, for as this study has attempted to show, each case is situationally unique. However, the key aspects of planning, implementation and reviewing are common factors, and whether or not the model is felt to be of value in future mergers it is, in essence, a tool which may be adapted for individual cases.

7.5 Model for Analysing Change in School Mergers

The researcher is presenting this model because it has emerged from hypotheses in the case study that important issues were overlooked in the planning stage, and mistakes were

made that, had there been a regulatory framework for preparatory school mergers, could have been avoided.

As suggested earlier, schools are vulnerable during merger because of the fundamental lack of a regulatory framework. If one looks at the statutory guidance for mainstream schools (Chapter 4), The Education Regulations (1999) are set out very clearly, for the closure and establishment of new schools. The independent schools, having no such hard and fast guidelines, are in the hands of their individual governing bodies, or, in the case of privately owned schools, their proprietors. Mergers in such schools have taken place (see IAPS figures in Appendix 2) each having a similar rationale but a unique process of implementation. This section, therefore, suggests a model for future practice, based on the need to achieve long-term financial security in the competitive world of the preparatory school.

7.5.1. Planning

Another emerging hypothesis is that mergers of preparatory schools are characterised by ineffective planning and inefficient time-scales. The first and essentially important factor, having agreed that merger is the most appropriate option, is for the Chairmen of Governors of each school to select an impartial Director, or, for the purposes of this study, Manager. This key figure should be appointed on the basis of his or her knowledge and experience in the field, not solely because he or she was a 'good' Head or high profile figure in one of the independent schools' umbrella organizations. In the maintained sector this job would be the responsibility of the LEA, but, in independent schools, the Manager takes on this role.

The initial role of the Manager is to familiarise him or herself by gathering information about the backgrounds to each school, their financial situations, catchment areas, staffing, capacity and accommodation of the new school. A realistic time-scale for achieving the task, if deemed feasible, should then be set. These factors should be considered before the intention to make such a major change is made public, for to make any potentially destabilising announcement before producing a feasibility study would jeopardise future outcomes. The Manager of New School's merger was given only eleven months in which

to complete the task, and as thus study has shown, the planning stage was rushed and subsequently led to an inadequate consultation process leading to the need for staff representation in the form of Union intervention.

The first job of the Manager is to appoint an interim governing body. The best way to do this is for members of the existing boards to nominate individuals, based on their expertise and qualifications for the role and who will provide a breadth of expertise; for example, representatives from the community, a lawyer, a financier, an educationist etc. There does not appear to be an easy way to achieve a smooth and amicable transition unless members volunteer to step down from the board. However, although not governors, those who step down are still members of the Trust and thus eligible to use their voting rights at Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings.

Having established an interim board their first consideration is the appointment of a Head designate of the new school. This is likely to be the most contentious of the planning aspects as each staff will have its own loyalties, therefore, in order to create confidence among them this process has to be seen to be fair. At the time of the merger at New School the School Place Planning legislation from the 1988 Education Act stated that in the event of school closures Headships had to be advertised nationally, although existing Heads could apply. Since then the 2002 Act has allowed the ring-fencing of appointments so that the two Heads only need apply. In the case of independent schools the latter is the favoured option since parents and children are more likely to have confidence in someone they know. Although this is not always the case, it is essential that as many pupils as possible make the transition to the new school and as this study shows, an existing Head is in the best position to achieve this.

The most advantageous position for one of the schools to be in – and this should be a major consideration when timing a merger – is to have one Head who is approaching retirement, thereby removing the problem of redundancy and all the financial expenses that this entails. The temptation of governors to allow the Manager alone to select one of the two Heads must be resisted for, as this study has shown, where the appointment of Head is not seen to be open and fairly conducted it is likely to arouse suspicion of partiality; staff certainly need to be convinced that their leader has been selected on merit

from as wide a field of applicants as possible. This suggestion appears to contradict the aforementioned proposal and it is a moot point whether the views of the staff should carry more weight than the confidence of the parents. Nevertheless, if the two existing Heads are in open competition in front of an interviewing panel, it would go some way towards satisfying both parties that the successful candidate was chosen on merit.

The first task of the Head designate and the governing body is to create the new staffing structure and to appoint the staff team. This must be done with equality of opportunity as the main consideration. Job descriptions and Person specifications should be advertised and available to all existing staff. Ring-fencing of posts so that only certain posts are open to a few is ill-advised and precludes the opportunity to appoint young, dynamic teachers at this stage. There will, inevitably be redundancies and, unlike the maintained sector where every attempt is made to redeploy staff within the LEA, there is no such opportunity in the private sector on the basis that each school is an individual, self-regulating body. Redundancy packages for ex-St. Finian's and Lake House staffs were generous, and it is recommended that ample provision is made for such payments to be as accommodating as possible in view of the fact that redeployment is unlikely.

7.5.2. Implementation

Two other theories which have become apparent during this study are, firstly, that mergers are handicapped by the diversity of and lack of clarity of the aims of different stakeholders, and secondly, that individuals and groups involved in mergers have conflicting agendas. In order that these ideas do not become accusations to be hurled at key players it is essential that the governing body, or representatives from it, should have a business plan which can be made available to current and prospective parents. The support of parents is crucial to the success of the merger and they should be kept informed of developments, initially at a meeting where questions may be answered and reassurance given. It is likely that parents will be concerned that planning has been conspiratorial and that they should have been given an opportunity to put their points of view before decisions had been taken; the rationale and business plan should be presented in such a way as to obviate a mutiny and to maintain numbers on roll.

Once the staff team has been appointed the announcement of the closure of one school and intention to open the new school must be made. It is essential that the movement from one to the other is as smooth as possible so that pupils make the transition with a minimum of disruption and stress. The announcement must include the date of the opening of new school which must be no less than one year from announcement.

The Head designate, during this interim period, will be working with his or her staff on the elements of change; these will include: school policies, staff handbook, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, marketing and publicity, uniform and prospectus. Team building is his key role at this stage since members of staff who have ownership of particular aspects of change are more likely to support and market the new regime.

Other, less high profile, matters should be addressed, such as a schedule for furniture and equipment removal to the new site. Many independent schools let their premises during holiday periods, gaining incomes of around £40K per annum. It is essential that the summer holidays be free of visitors due to the amount of preparation that will have to be carried out. Two aspects in particular, of New School's plans, proved successful and eased the transition; these were the working together on curriculum matters so that both schools were following the same programme of study during the term before the merger. Both schools took the same end of term exams which gave Heads of Department a clearer idea for streaming and setting. Joint activities, such as barbecues and family days, aided familiarisation, as did sleepovers for boarders. There is no panacea for the ill-feeling that is likely to arise from those having to leave their school, or who have to accept former competitors into theirs, but opportunities to work and play together are valuable.

To encapsulate this model the following timetable is suggested. (Fig. 4) It is not intended to be prescriptive but it offers individual schools a starting point which may be adapted in their unique situations. This particular schedule suggests a timescale of two years divided into four phases, each comprising six months; in this way changes may be compressed or expanded depending on circumstances.

While this is not a definitive model it is intended to illustrate a more efficient method, in terms of time and the creation of confidence among those affected by the proposed change

The choice of site and name of the new school will have already been decided.

Schedule for the Merger of Two Schools

Phase 1 Governors appoint a Manager	Manager familiarises him/herself with both schools			Manager presents Governors with schedule	New Governing body is formed
Phase 2 Manager and Governors form business plan		Selection of Head from existing Heads	Announcement of intention to merge is made to staff. Presentation to parents	Meetings between Head, governors and parents	Plans for staff appointments are drawn up by Manager, Governors and Head designate
Phase 3 Details of staff appointments published	Consultation period for staff	Marketing of new school begins	Head designate works with staff teams: policies, staff handbook, prospectus etc.	Interviews and appointment of staff	Uniform chosen and sourced. HoDs meet to plan Programmes of Study
Phase 4 Meetings of HoDs continue	Both schools follow same PoS	Selection of Head from existing Heads	School exams Meetings to discuss Form lists	Joint events on new school site. Equipment to new site	Work continues to prepare for opening in September – signage etc.

Fig. 4

From a model for analysing change, analysis of the data collection methods employed is presented in order to tease out common themes and to amplify the rationale behind this study. As this study has shown, data was collected through participant observation, one-to-one interviews and through a thorough search of the documentation which formed the planning and managerial aspects of the merger.

7.6. Data Analysis

The success of any research project depends on the quality of data collected and each source of data has its strengths and weaknesses. In this case the historical data proved useful as a background to the study while interviews reinforced and validated documentation. Unfortunately, while the Hargreaves' model for mapping change in schools was used, it proved ineffectual; it did not enlighten the researcher with regard to the research questions since it approaches the question of culture from the wrong angle in this particular case. The role of culture must not be underestimated in New School but the perspective which needs to be followed is that of comparison and contrast of the cultures of Lake House and St. Finian's with a pre-merger study of what typology is envisaged at New School. Post-merger a review is needed, firstly to assess how aims have been met and secondly to review progress. The four quadrants could be used beneficially as this model promotes ease of use in a group situation, but would need to be adapted to the needs of the school.

7.6.1 Interviews

The reason for choosing interviews as a means of data collection was mainly to find answers to questions arising from the researcher's personal experience and to corroborate information gleaned from the documentation. This was the most testing aspect of data collection owing to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Emotions still run high and because of the researcher's involvement in the merger, suspicion of collusion from some quarters was never far from the surface. The sample of interviewees was limited because of these two reasons and because the researcher was persona non grate in the eyes of governors and parents in the 'Concerned Parents Group'. An interview with the Principal, Andrew Smith would have balanced the response, but his dismissal and the ensuing

conflict made this an untenable proposition. Nevertheless, the researcher was able to speak to one former governor on the telephone, who corroborated the early details of pre-merger talks. The Headmaster of New School, the Staff Union Representative and the independent advisor, who subsequently became Chairman of the Board of New School, all agreed to be taped, while ad hoc conversations with parents and staff aided the research.

Before undertaking each interview respondents were given assurances of complete confidentiality, and at the end they were asked if there was anything they would like to add or change. Most of the questions were open-ended as it was important for the research that respondents were free to offer opinions as well as the facts of the matter. In hindsight this may have worked against the researcher as interviews were lengthy owing to extraneous information and anecdotal comments. This, coupled with having to arrange interviews into respondents' tight schedules made for a greater sense of urgency, consequently it was difficult to go back for further explanations once transcription had been carried out.

The taping procedure itself proved testing. Although equipment was checked and a quiet room arranged the quality of one recording was far from clear and proved to be a lengthy and frustrating job to transcribe. The researcher was conscious also of the time and the fact that there would be only one chance to gather information; nervous tension was a by-product and although questions had been prepared in advance, the presence of a tape recorder inhibited her ability to respond adequately to unforeseen responses. Interviews are intended to provide one of the most important sources of information in case study research and to the uninitiated appear relatively easy to conduct; the reality is not necessarily so. In this case the open-endedness of the questioning proved advantageous as a tool to gain the respondent's confidence and it generated a great deal of information, however, extraneous comments and anecdotal responses take up valuable time both at interview and at transcription. Had it been possible a dummy run would have enabled the researcher to tighten up the questioning and to be prepared for the unexpected responses.

Interviews were, as previously stated, chosen as the most significant means of corroborating information arising from the researcher's experiences and from documentary evidence. However, there were two other valid reasons: firstly, the issues to be discussed

were sensitive and highly confidential and secondly, the depth of information which it was possible to elicit would provide what Denscombe (1998) calls "value for money".

The researcher's involvement in the merger débacle, while subject to some animosity from "supporters" of the Principal had the advantage of allowing access to certain key players and of being in a position of trust. Having informed them of the intention to carry out this study, and, as a matter of course that anonymity would be preserved, agreement to be interviewed was given.

7.6.2 Documentation

Documents, both current and archival, formed the basis of this study. They set the scene for the drama played out at New School, supported the experience of the researcher and corroborated the interview data as well as providing questions for data collection. However, the researcher is aware that, like well-used jigsaws, there are missing pieces. Details of early meetings for example, between code-named governors, were not available, and to the researcher's knowledge were not recorded in writing; in these instances word of mouth of one member of the group had to suffice.

Much of the written data was given to the researcher as part of her involvement in the merger, but minutes of governors' meetings were harder to acquire. As much as her involvement provided rich data it also denied her access to further, revelatory documents. Once sides had been taken following Andrew Smith's dismissal it became difficult to follow up written details of the event and the researcher's enquiries were welcomed only by the "Rupert Clark side".

After a period of two years the researcher was granted access, by a key governor, to a large volume of written data comprising minutes of all governors' meetings and financial plans. However, a time limit was imposed and the search was closely monitored by his secretary. It was not possible to borrow papers although the secretary was allowed to photocopy selected material, the result of which was, in some instances, disjointed or difficult to decipher. On balance the value of data gathered from this source outweighed the difficulty

in its retrieval but had the divisive measure of dismissing the Principal not happened this would not have been a problem.

7.7   Triangulation

This chapter began by proposing a model for analysing change in preparatory schools; it then examined the data collection methods employed. In order to validate and assess the qualitative data being gathered the most important consideration was triangulation. Within the three data collection methods used several different perspectives of the merger have been revealed. For example, documents have provided an objective historical background to the two schools, interviews have generated data of a more subjective and personal kind and participant observation allowed for a greater understanding of the feelings of those involved as well as a more intimate relationship with key players which, in turn, gave access to the more confidential documents. Because there are weaknesses in every method of data collection findings which are similar from across the spectrum of data collected are more likely to be valid since the inherent weaknesses in each method will have cancelled each other out.

This cross-checking is an on-going part of the research process where one informant is checked against another in order to draw worthwhile conclusions.

7.8   The Research

At the outset of this study the researcher was confident that her findings were to be revelatory, a contribution to knowledge and an aid to future practice. The research was conducted during the evolution of New School and for two years after its tentative beginnings and nothing could have prepared anyone involved in it for what happened. The whole process has asked more questions than it has answered and the "what ifs" are many, one in particular being what if the researcher were an outsider? If the knowledge gleaned in this study could have been shared with the Governors of Lake House and St. Finian's would events have had a different outcome? Would the research questions be the same? Lack of communication with key players caused conflict and it would be interesting to see

how the process could have improved with open communication and not secrecy as described. The Headmaster of New School would have been unable to conduct his undermining campaign and the outcomes would have been altogether different. Nevertheless, in order to understand and assist the management of merger better these appear to be the factors that are significant:

- The role of the consultant was crucial to the planning, implementation and outcomes of the case therefore his credentials for being selected should have been based less on personal knowledge but more on his experience in managing mergers.

- The governors who were the key players had the foresight to explore the possibility of a merger but lacked the educational and relevant managerial expertise to carry it forward.

- The appointment of two Heads was well intentioned but, in the light of existing knowledge at the time, was ill judged.

- The system for appointing teaching staff was too subjective and did not appear to provide a fair platform from which candidates could apply.

- The selection of a governing body of New School was tactical and aroused the animosity of governors who were asked to step down.

- The consultation process was too hasty and details were found to be inaccurate.

- Representative teaching union should have been consulted earlier in the planning stage thus reducing the anxiety felt by the staff.

- A business plan was not available at the time of publication of the intention to merge the two schools, causing frustration and antipathy among the parent body.

- Indecision about the future of the two pre-prep schools was protracted and highlighted the inexperience of the management.

- The time-scale between notification and implementation of the merger, while achievable, was less than twelve months and allowed decision-making to become reactive rather than proactive.

- The large settlement figure awarded to the Principal put the future of the school in jeopardy.

These then, are the key issues arising from the merger process, and from a critique of the research methodology proposals for future research directions are suggested.

7.9   Proposals for Future Research

This study has looked at the factors and processes that shaped outcomes of the merger of two preparatory schools. As this chapter has suggested, a greater understanding and consideration of the social aspects of the principles of neurophysiology would have not only enhanced this research but could also be a valuable tool for use in the planning of future mergers, with particular reference to leadership issues. While processes help to shape outcomes, factors such as emotional intelligence should be an integral consideration in any plans which involve organizations and people working in them.

While this is a single case and while single case studies do, as writers on the subject have suggested (Stenhouse, 1985., Yin, 1994., Simons, 1999) contribute to research, future studies in this field would be greatly enhanced by looking at examples of other preparatory school mergers. A study of the planning and implementation of a wider range of mergers, as well as outcomes would enable a greater evaluation for consideration in the projection of a universal schedule.

As stated earlier in this study, some schools have faced closure due to falling rolls. It would be of value to discover what factors lead them to close while other schools find a solution in merger. The advice to Lake House and St. Finian's was to merge from a position of strength and it may be that schools close because they do not have the knowledge or experience, among their governing bodies, to take action in time to save themselves. The governance of today's preparatory schools is unlike that of those in the maintained sector, where roles are clearly defined, and for whom training exists. Future research into the governance of independent schools, and its role in their success, or failure, could be a major factor in the direction of private education in this country.

Preparatory schools exist in an uncertain economic and political climate and if they wish to retain or improve their chances of a secure future every opportunity to gain their market share must be explored. Mergers are just one way of achieving this; they do not guarantee

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success, but the experiences of schools such as New School and others like it have contributed to knowledge in this area, and have provided a foundation on which further studies may build.

Appendix 1

(Transcript)

Res: Really what I want to know is the background to when the merger first started.

RC: When it first started was before I was made Headmaster at St. Finian's, so in 1993, there were talks between X who was Chairman of Lake House and Y who was Chairman of St. Finian's, and they were called Seahorse and Tiber, Seahorse and something like that, and the first I knew about it was having been appointed in December '93, then about May/June '94 it was called off, and the papers were sent to me by Max Davis saying it was not going to happen, and it foundered I think, because X insisted that it was a) going to be a merger, a proper merger, but Lake House were going to have the site, the Headmaster, everything that they subsequently had before, so I mean it fell down at that stage. It was then resurrected, oh, gosh, a couple of years later. Stuart Andrews was very much part of it, we used to meet and go through which staff were going to be a, b and c, but it was always which St. Finian's staff were going to get the sack, the Lake House staff would remain intact, and I think it sort of ground to a halt then. Then when Stuart was going to retire I was asked to apply for the Head of Lake House, but that was then going to be New School, so I went along to an interview and said, I don't know, the first question X asked or said was "well you know why you're here?" and I said, "well no I don't really" and then he said "New School" and I said "I don't want that, New School" and he brushed that under the carpet and said "no no it's Lake House". I hadn't had any preparation for Lake House, I didn't know the first thing about Lake House so I was rather in the dark there, but there were some St. Finian's governors invited to that. I then got through to the second round with two other people that I know of, and not, I believe, the Principal who was subsequently appointed, I don't think he got through to that round, until I then withdrew, because everything stopped and it became clear that this wasn't going to be a merger, it was going to be a takeover, so it all folded, so I withdrew from that and we carried on at St. Finian's getting the Sports Hall organised.

Res: So that happened in about 1996?

RC: No, no, that would have been '97, in May '97 when Andrew was appointed. Andrew was appointed on..

Res: It must have been May.. there were 11 months till we merged in'97.

RC: September '97, so September '96, it would have been May '96, sorry. Andrew was then appointed as Principal and I think it must have been in that holidays, in that summer holidays in France that I got a phone call from one of the Lake House governors, Z, saying, in theory would I be in favour of a merger. And I said, well, yes, he then asked me rather a strange question like how long did I see myself staying at St. Finan's and whatever, and I said, I don't know, first headship, 5 years perhaps, small school, move on to something bigger, and I suspect from that they surmised that I'd be amenable to, you know, a Principal coming in and taking over. But I'm not sure because then Z rather faded from sight. We heard no more about it until just before the governors' meeting in about November '97 when, who was then the Chairman of course, received a letter from X saying would we like to resume talks? And the feeling round the St. Finian's table was yes, all right, providing it's a merger, and providing, you know, all things being equal, and the Lake House Board met, I think, about a week later and agreed that that was the case, that we should go ahead.

Res: On that basis, what was the reason they gave you?

RC: The St. Finian's Board?

Res: For the merger

RC: The St. Finian's Board? Well, basically they asked me. I think it was basically, we had the planning permission for the Sports Hall, we had the funds for the Sports Hall, the Sports Hall was seen as our salvation because it was going to offer something that others didn't have, it was going to be quite big and smart, it was going to allow us to build inside, internally, a new Arts Centre, new changing rooms, it would have done a lot, but my feelings always were, we were about 110 I think, at that stage, the numbers in the Prep School, and I could see us getting to 120, I mean the numbers had gone up by about 10 every year I was there, about 8 to 10, they were going up slowly, but I could never see them getting to 160, 160, 170 which I thought was the number we needed to be to compete; not with Lake House because the numbers at Lake House were fairly steady, 150? 160... There was a downward curve, not much, and it just struck me that these days parents wanted more facilities, greater competition, greater stability.

Res: So can we say then, that the people taking hold of the merger were doing it for financial reasons because the schools were going to fold in x number of years if they don't?

RC: Not in so many words, both schools were, I mean out of all four schools, St. Joseph's had just merged and were not doing terribly well, I think one was always staggered that Benedict's continued to get another term, whatever, um, but no, I mean St. Finian's had money in the bank, St. Finian's was financially, would have coped for three or four more years quite happily with numbers going up. St. Finian's had done everything, you see, that the merger had got Lake House to do three years before, a pruning of staff, a great cost cutting exercise. St. Finian's was quite well run at that stage, very well run, you know, the salaries were fine, they weren't generous, they weren't certainly as generous as Lake House was.

Res: And what about that rumour that they didn't have enough money to pay the staff?

RC: Absolute bollocks. I mean because St. Finian's took a lot of the, a lot of the, inevitably the merger costs because it was the school that was closing and ultimately was going to provide the ballast through the sale of its site. As far as I remember, I think we had £90,000 in the bank when the merger was coming, we were being assisted financially by a benefactor in terms of the Sports Hall, so actually that was going to come out of something different, but no, I think we had no borrowing.

Res: So this presentation we were given later, we were all

RC: Yes.

Res: Then showed that St. Finian's would have gone out of business a year before the other.

RC: Yes, yes, I think that was, yes, that was the road that would have been taken if all things, if we'd gone on, yes.

Res: So..

RC: Yes that was the worst case scenario, I mean that was always, I think both schools were then involved, I don't think they would have gone under, you know, the staff had been cut and whatever.

Res: Do you know how much the merger actually cost?

RC: No. It cost considerably more than it should have done because of the, how can I put it, because of the generosity I think, or the feeling I think with the merger,

rightly or wrongly was that it was a time to be generous to people in the sense that we could have been more ruthless with the staff, you know we could have said now is an opportunity to prune, but we didn't, that was certainly Andrew's and Roy Percival's view, so perhaps one kept expensive staff when perhaps it was an opportunity to cut them down. Staff were paid, and still are responsibility points for weekends, which both schools have done quite happily as part of their duties without the extra cost. I think the very fact that there were two of us running it, Andrew and myself, you know, was misguided in hindsight. I don't know what would have happened if we'd both staggered on till the end of the year and neither of us could get another job. Would they have said we really can't afford both of you and one of you has to be made redundant, or would they have said in a negative way, both of you carry on.

Res: Do you think, in hindsight, it was a bad mistake, or do you think it was well-intentioned?

RC: I think it was very well-intentioned, exactly why things happened I think, this is going to sound terrible, but I think the mistake was on the Lake House side in appointing somebody new. If they didn't like me that was fine, then both groups get together and find somebody there, but to go and appoint somebody on May 1st, knowing that three months later you're going to go back and if you're in the middle of negotiations with them struck me as batty, because you've got two people who are in post.

Me: They didn't tell Andrew Smith there was going to be a merger when they appointed him Head of Lake House, did they?

RC: I don't think so, no.

Res: So he had no idea that when the merger came, the Head of Lake House would have to reapply.

RC: Up to a point. I met Andrew, you can pinpoint the date, I can tell you exactly what was happening, in London, with Roy and Y, at Y's father's house, on the day that England played Holland in the European Championship match in 1996, Euro '96, and Andrew had been appointed at that stage. Now presumably, this must have been May/June, so it would have been very soon after he'd been appointed.

Res: Was Stuart Andrews there because Stuart claims he never knew, they didn't tell him anything.

RC: Until?

Res: Until the day before it was announced to the staff.

RC: I would hope to say he'd not heard anything. We had a briefing with Roy Percival. It was quite close, you know, he must have known, what I remember, it was the beginning of November, governors' meeting, end of November, everyone was told. And in those four weeks we had several briefings with Roy Percival. The people that, Milly was there, Jane, I think, was there, Pat was there because they had to do a lot of the,, but there was certainly a briefing about what we were allowed to tell the staff and what we weren't allowed to tell the staff. Now interestingly, Y said to me, "do you want me to do it or would you like to do it at St. Finian's?" and I said "no I'd rather, I'll do it" X I don't think, gave Stuart the choice. Did X tell you?

Res: Yes

RC: Yes, you see I don't think Stuart was allowed to, and I thought that was the difference. I felt was in charge at St. Finian's, and I think it was quite clear, from things that Stuart had said before that the governors, I mean, little things like the minibuses, when we were talking in the earlier time, before Andrew was

appointed, how you get St. Finian's parents to travel all over to Exton, and I said, look you just extend the bus run, and Stuart said, golly, my governors won't allow me to have bus runs. And I said why do you ask them? I just said we've instituted minibus runs, this is what's happening and it's very popular with parents, but it occurred to me that Stuart was very much being told what to do and what not to do, and I suspect that he may well have been kept in the dark.

Res: During that period between announcing the merger and the merger actually happening.

RC: What, in the following September?

Res: Yes. From November '96 to September '97, in that intervening period, what did you see as your main role?

RC: Well, to turn up to meetings prepared, because it was quite clear that Andrew, and I was fed up being told that he had a school to run, didn't come with any bits of paper, and that all the job descriptions and the personalised specs. All that sort of stuff that you got I had produced, based on Roy Percival's sort of tableaux, but physically I had to type them out so that when we sat down in Bill's Room to go through things...Andrew tended to have the vision if you like, and I tended to run round doing the work, um, Andrew said, well I think we need this or that, but I produced the ballast.

Res: Who produced all the paperwork? Policies?

RC: The policies weren't produced until halfway through the first term...

Res: Job specs?

RC: I did those. Personnel specs, basically the staff handbook, you all got a handbook I think. Do you remember, the consultation document or, I think, I think Roy did a lot of that. But it was quite difficult because I was never entirely sure what my role was.

Res: If you remember, you got together the HoDs.

RC: I did all that, yes.

Res: Held meetings.

RC: That's right, because it did seem that nobody else was having meetings. I was fending off people at St. Finian's, saying oh, well that Andrew would be here for this, that and the other, and he never was, it was difficult, and I remember you and one of the others staying behind afterwards, saying why was he always at St. Finian's because he was never at Lake House, but he was never at St. Finian's. But I think he was in a difficult position, was he in a difficult position? I think he could have been more around, and he was always welcome at St. Finian's, but he sat in my study and shut the door.

Res: But during that transition, while you were at St. Finian's, what do you think were the biggest problems that you had to overcome?

RC: Well, I mean in terms of New School I was working in the dark because I didn't see that Andrew really had much of a grasp, he was, no he wasn't, he never, it was very difficult, it was like working through a sort of cloud.

Res: But when you were managing that, you still had to run that school.

RC: Yes.

Res: Until the end of the summer term.

RC: Yes.

Res: How did you manage to keep things going there? You'd made some people redundant and they were leaving.

RC: Yes.

Res: You were all packing up and leaving your building, so what was it like?

RC: What was it like? Great! It wasn't great. It was great, because people were terrific, a lot of it was trying to placate parents and saying "now, come on", you know, really to tell them how wonderful New School was going to be but not quite sure what I was promising them. You know I would say "Of course you'll be fine and do Latin although you may not know what Latin is, and ay not have much of an idea, um, but actually the St. Finian's bit, we just carried on as normal.

Res: What was the fallout? In terms of numbers.

RC: Not enormous, the first fallout was after the first, there were two public meetings, one at St. Finian's and then followed by one in the Chapel at Lake House, and it was after the one in the Chapel, when I was with Y, were you there? When Arthur Miller got up and started being silly..

Res: That was the first one.

RC: Yes, there was one at St. Finian's on the same evening and then we all came up here, and Arthur Miller took over and it was after that, that quite a few St. Finian's parents had come to that because they couldn't get away to the earlier one, again you see, looking back on it, the St. Finian's people were treated badly, I mean if you've got a public meeting at 5 o clock you're not going to get parents there, fathers there, so I think the St. Finian's meeting was a lot of mothers who were all terrific and they were interested in their children, staff that they knew and liked, the education, and the fathers then came up to Lake House, where they get, quite clearly a Chairman of governors that they hadn't really seen before, X, pontificating about things that really he didn't seem to grasp, whereas St. Finian's had Y who they'd known and seen around on the touchlines, they'd chatted to him, you know, been part of it all. They knew Sir John Bright, they knew me. But Lake House had Stuart Andrews who said nothing and was rather fazed by the whole thing. They had X who it was clear they didn't know, and you know, Roy Percival who pontificated. They had Andrew who I gather said exactly the same as he'd said the first time he appeared to the Lake House people, they had me who'd been painted as some sort of ogre, and St. Finian's highly academic, so they really didn't stand much of a chance there, and then you get Arthur Miller coming up, and it was then that people like, I don't know if you know them, Thompson, Millview doctor, three children, highly intelligent children, lovely family, great following, said, bugger me, this isn't what we want, you know we wanted the nicer, calmer, the education, and all we get is a madman coming up and all we hear about is business plans and God knows what, that's not for us, so they left and took with them, not many, I suppose about 20.

Res: So you had 110 at that point?

RC: Yes, 10 would have left, it was quite a small leave that year.

Res: So about 70 came?

RC: Yes, I suppose about 60 or 70 came. That's it, if you look at the list. (He shows me a school list.

Res: And where did they all go?

RC: I steered them all towards St. Joseph's because that was much the same sort of school as St. Finian's was. Some went into the state system. One or two went to Benedict's, not many.

Res: From September '97, what were the main tasks for you personally, how did you manage change?

RC: Well, there wasn't a great deal.

Me: From September '97, what were the main tasks for you personally, how did you manage change?

RC: Well, there wasn't a great deal.

Res: You'd got the practical issues sorted, such as the curriculum, but what about things like the culture of the school, you had two different organizations coming together, both with a different culture, how did you personally feel, or did you not feel that wasn't the most important feature?

RC: No, I feel it was very important, there were definite differences between the two groups.

Res: Let me stop you there, what do you think the main differences were?

RC: Well, I think at any school, the Lake House staff were much noisier, you had Stan Weller, you had Tom Barnes, you had George who didn't talk to the children, they shouted at them..

Res: Do you mean noisy as regards the children?

RC: Yes,

Res:.. that's what you mean, or at meetings?

RC: Oh, no, no, no, yes, I think the Lake House staff felt that this was their school so why did they have to change. I think the St. Finian's staff were much quieter, calmer and better, if you like, and just went along with it, and I think Andrew sort of, didn't really, hadn't done his homework in a way, or if he had he'd say Lake House was like this –a, St. Finian's was like this –b, therefore we, as New School have got to do it –c. You know, and, and, one doesn't want to go back, but you've asked me, I was just staggered by the way Andrew didn't know the children. I mean, I would have thought, like DM down in the pre prep, the important thing is knowing the children, you can't really get to grips with discipline or discussions or anything unless you know people.

Res: Yes but forget him for now..

RC: Yes, well, from my point of view, the problem was my role. I had had a meeting in June/July at Banham, with Roly, X and with Y and Andrew, and we went through job descriptions because I said this is hopeless because I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing, and we produced job descriptions which was agreed between us. I have to say that if I'd been Andrew and the other bloke had got the job description I'd got, I would have been horrified, you know and stamped my feet, but Andrew was very good and said no no, that's fine, if that's what he wants, and then he......... and I wasn't able to do it, so I was frustrated at not doing what I saw as my job..

Res: What did you see as your job?

RC: The day to day running of the school. I was very happy that Andrew should sit in the study and pontificate and get out a policy and say do this or do that, but what actually was happening was Andrew was pontificating, not saying do this or do that, but going away and doing something else. There was a situation where Anna Lewis came to me and said could she do x and y and I looked at it, the pros and cons, because a and b, and the next thing I knew was she was doing it because she'd gone to Andrew, who said, "Oh, yes", and it became, it was a mess, and understandably, you know, human nature, if you don't get what you want from a, you chat to b. Well that was it, and I think Andrew tried to be accommodating, and at that stage, at Lake House if no change was required and you just wanted someone to walk round and say this is the estate, I'm sure he would have been excellent, but I think it needed something a little more proactive. I just kept thinking he wasn't terribly interested in the detail. I mean, I think, you know, so much happens here because of the geography of the place, you know, you have to have that amount of time to get into that, because you can't do it any other way,

and he just sort of ignored all that, and his great line was we were a blank sheet of paper, which used to drive me round the bend because of course you had a school which was 70 years old and a school which was nearly 50 years old, both having worked jolly well and been loved by so many, and what you're saying, in fact, is let's have something completely different, which no sets of parents would subscribe to, which no sets of staff would subscribe to. You know, you've got to look at what schools have got because both schools did certain things really well, but both needed to change in some ways.

Res: Now going back to that, when I said to you what you think the differences were, St. Finian's very much sold itself on the academic front.

RC: Yes I think that was, um, it was one of those wonderfully easy things to do, we're the academic school, Lake House is the fun and games, and yet you look at it and it's not that at all. I mean I think they were very much closer to each other than they thought in that sense.

Res: In hindsight do you think there were very few differences between us?

RC: I think there was a difference in attitude, definitely, now that may have come from the top. I think the St. Finian's staff enjoyed the children more than Lake House.

Res: Because you had fewer boarders.

RC: Possibly, no I think it may well have been the boarders. There was more of an opportunity to flop and chat, whereas here it's harder. I think yes.

Res: And what was the

RC: I think change, difference, people they'd heard about. Take GK and TB. The children were terrified.

Res: And from the staff

RC: Well that was it, they were worried about having as colleagues people who were ogres and bullies and nasty to them, I think they were worried about change and it was sad to be leaving that site.

Res: Now what do you think, if you had to sum it up in a nutshell, what was the culture of St. Finian's, and then think about the culture that you found here, or is that too difficult?

RC: Well it is. Lake House, I would say when we first saw it, when Jane and I first saw it, the prospectus had seemed to us, ways and means and moods, yet when we saw it we were looking at it in terms of colours, we saw it very much in shaggy reds, browns, it was warm, it was friendly, not ill-disciplined because I think there was a discipline there, but it was very relaxed, hazy, there were no barrels, you know, not because it was anarchic in any way, it was just the way it had evolved. Coming here I think it was much more straight lines, you know you had Tom... and that was I think, the difference as one found it. Having said that, that may just have been a response to Tom, or a Lake House response to people coming in, you know, you immediately sort of sharpen up, you're not quite sure and you're on the defensive, but I think now it's not like that, and if you having been here years have noticed a softening, I don't know, I mean certainly somebody like Tom, people have commented on how less uptight he is, and you know, if ever a job comes, you know JS has been teaching geography, and, you know, you make a ...., you know, I don't know.

Res: I feel, that before we merged we talked to somebody from St. Hugh's, who said that for the first year it was fine and then the resentment started creeping in about a year or two later, and that's what I'm finding now.

RC: Now. Are you?

Res: I felt, that as the merger happened, it all went rather smoothly and everybody was very nice to each other, and was very accommodating, and that's how it was, and now, two years on, there is this inference I hear and I see and I feel, on both sides..

RC: Really? In what sense? Who said what that's made you feel that?

Res: It's not just me. Both sides say towards the other, little things, like you can't help but say, "well we've always done it this way", even though we're two years on.

RC: Isn't that healthy? Isn't that saying oh, well at St. Finian's we did this, at Lake House…and if you say we've always done it this way, that's great, I'm all for that. You see I think that's what we didn't have to begin with. You see Andrew wouldn't have that because he said we're completely new, whereas I think we've got to merit, there's so much time wasted by me saying, by you, anybody saying, we've got to think of a way round this as though it's something new, it's the first time. Every three years we've got to think of a way round, how do we get the Pageant, and WM keeping quiet knowing that for 5 years he's done a Pageant, whereas I think now he would come in and say, look, I did one, this is the way we did it then, and then you can build on that. I think that's healthy, that's, that's…

Res: No, that's slightly different, I'm just trying to think of an example but I can't. Maybe it's because people have become more familiar with each other, more relaxed in each other's company, but then you start to think, um, perhaps this is our school, why should they say that. I don't know whether it's that.

RC: Oh I see, yes, but I think that's something I've got to get over isn't it? You know, because it's not Lake House, it's not St. Finian's, it never will be either of those, it's got to be an amalgam, and it may well be that it's 90% Lake House and 10% St. Finian's, and that's fine, but if it actually works better as 90% St. Finian's and 10% Lake House, that's fine, but it's got to be right for the children, the staff, the people that we've got now.

Res: I don't know why it is, but it's what happened at St. Hugh's, and I just wonder whether it's something that does actually happen..

RC…in mergers, I… I

Res:…and why it happens, I'm not quite sure.

RC: I think you could be right, that people are more relaxed now, and are able to say, feel more comfortable in saying x or y, but I hope it's not antagonistic, and I hope…

Res: I don't know the feeling, it's not something that you can put your finger on but it's an interesting thing that, two years on, in both schools, there is a feeling that there is a greater resentment of it, because maybe one is looking back and saying, did we really need to merge? What would it have been like now if we hadn't, would we still be here, and then you have to sit up and react and say, well if we hadn't merged we wouldn't be developing the Art Room, x, y and z.

RC: No

Res: But I don't know why that it is a question..

RC: It's certainly true, Lake House would never have been able to afford to do the Art Room, to do the buildings, and they wouldn't have been able to afford to keep the staffing levels at the same salaries. St. Finian's, as I've said, had gone through that and therefore may have been able to, but having said that, their resources were much less.

Res: We've said that perhaps there weren't many differences between us..

RC: Do you agree with that though?

Res: It's hard to tell for me, because now we've merged, it's all happened, it was all awful for a year, and then we were all busy trying to.......and we just wanted to get that year over really.

RC: Yes well, I think the year had extra bite didn't it?

Res: But how have we managed it, to put two cultures together.

RC: Because I don't think, I think, you know, full credit to the staff who have worked hard.

Res: But can you think of a reason, can you think of an instance, an example of where we've had to work hard to create this new team...it's difficult isn't it, because when you think about culture, you had a very formal uniform, shirts, ties, blazers and Lake House had polo shirts and jumpers, we had to overcome, or create a middle road that suited what we were aiming at, but how did we do it?

RC: Well, I think basically it was imposed wasn't it?

Res: By whom?

RC: By market forces, one did a lot of question and answers, the uniform, there were great committees and mothers were involved, and what do you want, and that sort of thing. The HoDs had meetings to sort out a little bit of the academic side, SMT met to sort out bits.

Res: So do you think the parents had a great interest in managing the merger?

RC: I think they made their feelings known, I mean I was always surprised at how few came to the meetings that we had, but those that did, going on about, um, bus runs, mainly the school of course.

Res: And the name of the school, the questionnaire.

RC: That was a big one at the time wasn't it?

Res: Will there be another bash at that?

RC: The questionnaire?

Res: You've had questionnaires, so you have actually gone to the stakeholders and said what do you think about this? So would you say that the management is fairly democratic?

RC: I hope so, but resides in, I would like to think now that it's quite clear, you know, that we run it. It's not parents that say it, I mean we've got parents on the Liaison Committee, and we listen to their advice, you listen to the 3rd Form parents, and they say "it's a long day", so we can go back to that without anybody saying "oh well of course" you know, we've gone because that's what happened at Lake House, ha, ha ha. But we've gone past that, that doesn't matter now; we've gone back to it because that worked well.

Res: There's a new market coming on..

RC: Yes, but I mean, I'm very happy to go back to something that worked at Lake House, because it worked at Lake House. You know, if there was something similar that had worked particularly well at St. Finian's, that was a solution to a problem that we may have, let's implement that. I hope we're not now at the stage where we say, now, we got that thing from Lake House and we got the other thing from St. Finian's because I don't think.. somebody asked me yesterday, oh, the Filton-Smythes, who from St. Finian's was going to be in Ellie's Form. I found it very difficult and I said it's hard because I hope we don't think of them like that any more.

Res: Does it occur to you though that the reason behind why the school day worked better at St. Finian's maybe because of the buildings. The way we are, because we're so...

RC: Oh, I'm sure...

Res:... Relaxed

RC: I'm sure.

Res: And the fact that there's greater freedom, because we go outside from the classroom, whereas at St. Finian's you had that..

RC: You were inside and it was warm and it was friendly and it was homely, and I'm sure that informed a lot of what happened, which is why I go back to it, I thought it was always strange when Andrew didn't, and the first thing to do is find out what the routine is all about, and why it's like that, you know, I'd much prefer, I've always said I'd much prefer to have the Friday assemblies in the gym because it's not a Chapel, but, realistically, by the time you've got the entire school down to the gym, sitting down quietly, it's hopeless, and I think one's got to be pragmatic and at the same time one's got to explore all these things. It may be that the Junior Chapel service on a Wednesday morning doesn't work for whatever reason whether it's a timetabling problem,, whether it's logistics or whether it's just not suitable, it worked brilliantly at St. Finian's, but as the pre preps had to come there, the Chapel was divorced from the school, the 4th Forms were there, it was wonderful. I think it's a jolly nice thing to have, and I'd be thrilled if we're able to give it a try this year, because we'll be one stage further on, we've got the confidence in that, and I don't mind being seen now to make mistakes, I hope we don't, I hope people come and say it's wonderful, but last year and the year before if there was anything wrong it would be us, that school can't make up its mind, now I think we've all got the confidence to say, actually, yes, and similarly if everybody in the 3rd Form at half term comes to you and says look, the second half of term they're staying for Games because, fine, we've tried it, we've done it, we'll lose the Gills sure, but, we're doing what we think is right, and I don't think that was happening at the beginning because I think we were doing it because it was a new school and we had a clean sheet of paper, we hadn't really gone into our homework..

Res: Was it because we were frightened of losing pupils so we'd have had to bite the bullet..

RC: This goes back to having a Principal and a Headmaster, having to appoint every member of staff whether they were the right ones or wrong ones. I think there was so much, understandably, but in hindsight, if I were to give someone advice about a merger, I'd have said, be brutal now... wouldn't you, really, don't have two Heads, don't have this or that go for what you believe to be the best.

Res: Even if it means losing pupils?

RC: Initially, I think you will, you will lose the Gills, who will go for whatever reason, you know, and I think, with the Howes, no parent goes because of finance, they all go for something else.

Res: You have to justify it to yourself another way.

RC: Mm.

Res: So here we are two years on, what do you think is the success, do you think the merger, two years on, knowing what you know now, was the right thing to do, and do you think it provided any more stability for the school and for the future?

RC: Yes, in both cases. I think it was absolutely the right thing to do, because I think, when they spoke to the parents with all the financial and whatever, I think it was right, it would have been a quick death, basically I think it would have been long and lingering and there would have been moaning and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among the governances, and neither school would have functioned at its best, they would have kept going in the same way that perhaps

Benedict's is, you know, the sheer sweat of waking up and not knowing whether you've got a job next year or whatever, but I think it was right, it had the benefit of removing a competitor and it was fun to come here and find a lot of people who had been to see St. Finian's and who had chosen Lake House, and I suspect the Andrews' thought golly, there are all these people coming back. And it's been good to see the way they've accepted what they didn't like at Lake House, they've seen things they haven't liked at New School, and the ones who chose Lake House haven't been so appalled by any changes, with St. Finian's coming in. So I think it was the right thing to do. I think it has given us stability, and with the sale of St. Finian's, a large sum of money in the bank, we are, the governors are very keen to run at a surplus, numbers are looking good..

Res: What about the boarding numbers?

RC: Well, this is something we've got to look at, everywhere boarding is dodgy, and we have got to be the only school in this area to offer boarding. I think, if you are looking for a boarding place, you can't look at St. Joseph's now, that's closed to boarding.

Res: Well, thank you, Rupert, I have enjoyed talking to you about the merger.

RC: Not at all, I hope it helps.

Appendix 2

(DfES and ISIS Documents)

SECTION C1: ACTION REQUIRED BY LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES AND GOVERNORS WHEN BRINGING FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Consultation

1. The legislation places a general requirement on proposers to consult those they consider appropriate, taking account of guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State. The latest statutory guidance is in Circular 9/99, paragraph 10, attached as an annex to this guidance. Where the proposals affect early years provision, ie children below compulsory school age, the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership should also be consulted.

2. The consultation process should take place well in advance of the actual publication. It may be appropriate for a number of options to be considered before a final decision is made, but proposers should ensure that in the course of the consultation the emerging choice is sufficiently identified to enable those being consulted to focus on it. Where an entirely new option emerges from the consultation process the Secretary of State generally expects proposers to broaden the consultations to take account of that option.

3. In order that proposals are informed by up-to-date feedback, the Secretary of State would normally expect consultation to have taken place not longer than 12 months before the proposals are published.

Availability of recurrent and capital funding

4. Before approving proposals, the School Organisation Committee and the Adjudicator will need to be satisfied that the proposals can be implemented; in particular, that any necessary recurrent and capital funding will be available. Before publishing statutory proposals, the proposers will therefore need to make an assessment of the financial implications, in particular to ensure that any capital costs associated with implementing the proposals can be met.

5. Proposers will be expected to provide written confirmation from the body or bodies concerned that any external capital funding on which the promoters rely will be available at the level required and at the right time.

6. Capital may come from one or more of a number of sources: grant or credit approvals from central Government; private investment supported by PFI credits; private investment for a financially free-standing project; capital receipts; and donations and other fund-raising.

Capital Funding from the Department

7.   Where proposals rely on capital grant or credit approvals issued by the DfEE, proposers should establish whether credit approvals or grant will be available at the level required. Proposers should, generally, seek the advice of their Local Education Authority, and bids for capital resources should as now be routed through the LEA. In some cases it will be appropriate for the promoters of new voluntary aided schools to make a direct approach to the Department (see section E of this guidance). There can be no assumption that the approval of proposals will trigger the release of capital funds from the Department unless the Department has confirmed in writing that such resources will be available; nor that any allocation "in principle" can be increased.

Credit Approvals - current arrangements

8.   For the immediate future, the Department is continuing to invite applications for credit approvals, publishing the criteria in June or July and announcing Annual Capital Guidelines in December. Ideally, proposals will have been published at the time the LEA's application for credit approvals is sent in to the Department in the Autumn.

9.   Where this timetable is not achievable, the DfEE would be prepared to consider an application for a Supplementary Credit Approval. This would be considered on its merits in the light of available resources and other claims on them. A decision could be made in principle to make an SCA available, and this again would be released if the proposals are approved, or held for redistribution if not. Such applications would not be given any greater priority through being linked to statutory proposals. Because the majority of the available support will have been allocated in the annual capital round, only limited resources will be available for in-year projects. Once any reserve funding has been exhausted, immediate capital support would only be possible if further funding became available because of slippage in other projects. It is therefore not certain that immediate funding will be able to be provided even for projects that clearly meet the national priority criteria.

10.   Where SCA funding is not possible, the Department will be prepared to consider the possibility of earmarking some capital cover for allocation in the next ACG round. However, only limited resources would be available for this purpose. Any such provisional allocation linked to statutory proposals would be released if the proposals were approved.

VA governors' grant - current arrangements

11. Where VA governors' grant will be required to implement proposals, this should be identified, wherever possible, in the Annual Capital Guidelines exercise. If this is not possible, then at least two months before the publication of notices, details of the proposals must be sent to the Voluntary Aided Schools Team in Darlington. A decision on the availability of grant would then be made in principle, to allow the School Organisation Committee to make a decision on the proposals. Applications between ACG rounds will be considered on a first come, first served basis until available funds are exhausted. If the proposals are approved, they will then move to the design stage. Enquiries on VA Capital should be addressed to the VA Schools Team: 01325 392152/2168.

PFI credits

12. Enquiries about PPP/PFI should be addressed to the Schools Private Finance Team: 020 7925 5667.

Credit Approvals and VA governors' grant - future arrangements

13. The Department sent out a consultation paper in January 1999 "Schools Capital Strategy" outlining a revised system for allocating resources for capital expenditure on schools. The Department's broad aim is that Local Education Authorities should have robust systems for assessing and prioritising needs, and for consulting partners in all school sectors so that the Department may confidently distribute resources for spending in line with Asset Management Plans. In the meantime, the criteria for capital allocations are being considered annually, as hitherto.

Provision of prescribed information

14. As well as the formal Notice, proposers are required to submit to the Committee the information set out in the relevant parts of Schedule 3 to the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 which replace the "statement of case" which was previously submitted to the Secretary of State in connection with statutory proposals. The Information should be submitted to the Committee at the same time as the copy of the published Notice. Where the school is situated in an area other than that of the maintaining Authority, the information should be sent to both Committees. Proformas for each type of proposal indicating the detailed questions which should be addressed in the information provided to the Committee are provided in the Annexes to this guidance. All LEAs will have copies of the proforma relating to community, foundation and voluntary schools, and they should provide copies of these to

governors and promoters of voluntary and foundation schools as necessary and advise on the information which they will need to submit in support of their proposals.

Publication of notice

15. Once the LEA, governors or promoters decide to proceed with statutory proposals they are required to publish these in the form of a notice:

> e.g. 1. "The X Local Education Authority hereby gives notice in accordance with section 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that it intends to discontinue X school on...."

> e.g. 2. "Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 28(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that the governing body of X (Foundation or Voluntary) school intend to make a prescribed alteration to the school by...."

16. The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 specify the following information which must be included in all notices:

- The name of the persons of body publishing the proposals.

- The time or times of implementation. (The time specified need not be a precise date, and will depend on how far in advance of implementation the proposals have been published - e.g. for the final stage of a major reorganisation being planned in 2000 the implementation date might be "at the beginning of the autumn term 2005).

- A statement explaining the procedure for making statutory objections, including the date by which objections should be sent to the relevant Local Education Authority or School Organisation Committee, and

- The address of the Local Education Authority or School Organisation Committee to which objections should be sent.

17. Depending on the type of proposal, the following additional information should be included in notices:

Establishing a new school

- The location of the site of the new school (including, where appropriate, the postal address)

- The category into which the proposed school will fall (it should be noted

that a community school cannot have a religious character).

- Information on whether the new school will admit pupils of both sexes or whether it will admit pupils of one sex only,

- If the new school is to have a religious character, information about such religious character.

- The proposed arrangement for transport of pupils to the new school.

- The number of pupils to be admitted to the new school in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented or, where it is intended that the proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the new school in the first school year in which each stage has been implemented. This will establish the standard number for admission of pupils of that age.

- Where the proposed school is to be established on the site which is occupied by a school which has been identified as failing and which it is intended to discontinue, a statement as to how the curriculum, staffing and (if relevant) the buildings of the proposed school will differ from those of the school proposed to be discontinued. It will also be helpful if the statement is able to set out clearly:

  - the rationale behind the decision to establish a new school on the site of a school identified as failing and intended to be discontinued;

  - the individual proposals designed to ensure that the new school will provide a significantly higher standard of education to its pupils than the school proposed to be discontinued;

  - the full details of the necessary expenditure related to the establishment of the new school, including capital, management and administration, salaries and other staffing costs, and how the costs will be met; and

  - that where the school to be formally discontinued has surplus places, consideration has been given to whether such places are really needed.

- A statement as to whether the governing body of the proposed school or Local Education Authority will be the admission authority.

- Where the proposals are to establish a new voluntary controlled or foundation school, a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the Local Education Authority or the promoters, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

Making an alteration to a school

- A description of the proposed alteration.

- Where the alteration consists of an enlargement of the premises of the school, a statement of the number of pupils at the school at the time of publication of the proposals, the capacity of the school and the proposed capacity of the school after the enlargement.

- The number of pupils to be admitted to the school in each relevant age group in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented or, where it is intended that the proposals should be implemented in stages, the number of pupils to be admitted to the school in the first school year in which each stage has been implemented. This will establish the standard number for that age.

- Where the proposals relate to a foundation or voluntary controlled school, a statement as to whether the proposals are to be implemented by the Local Education Authority or the governing body, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, a statement as to the extent to which they are to be implemented by each body.

Closing a school

- Details of the schools which pupils who are at the school to be closed may attend including any interim arrangements.

- Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school places available in consequence of the proposed closure.

Changing the standard number of a school

- Details of current standard number, proposed standard number, and admissions to the school in the year in which the proposals are published

18.   The Act sets no maximum limit on the time between the publication of a proposal and its date of implementation. Clearly, however, circumstances may change significantly if too long a period elapses. In general, therefore - with the possible exception of proposals for major authority-wide reorganisation which may have to be phased in over a period - the implementation date for proposals should be within 3 years of their publication. Authorities will be expected to show good reason if they propose a longer timescale.

19.   Pro forma Notices showing the information required to be given in Public Notices for statutory proposals are attached in the Annexes to this guidance. If the full effect of the proposals is not apparent to the general public from the published notice it may be supplemented by an explanatory note or background statement, but this should be clearly distinguishable from the formal proposals.

20.   Where proposals concern two or more separate changes, e.g. a change of age range and a change of admission arrangements by reference to sex or ability, the changes may be the subject of a single notice but should be identified and described separately. Where related proposals are to be implemented over a period of several years, proposers are encouraged to publish these together in a single notice.

21.   In accordance with The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999, notices have to be published:

- by being posted in a conspicuous place in the area served by the school and the area proposed to be served by the school;

- in at least one newspaper circulating in the areas referred to above; and

- by being posted at or near the main entrance to the school, or, if there is more than one main entrance, all of them.

It is open to proposers to circulate a notice more widely in order to ensure that all those substantially affected have the opportunity to comment.

22.   All proposals affecting community schools must be published by the Local Education Authority (with the exception of proposals to change the category of a school which may also be published by the governing body - such proposals may not be published until September 2000). The Local Education Authority may also publish proposals to close voluntary or foundation schools and to establish or enlarge foundation schools. Otherwise for voluntary and foundation schools responsibility for the actual publication rests with the governing body. Where the LEA and the governors both have responsibility for some element of the implementation of the proposals, the Notice must make it clear which elements

fall to the LEA and which to the governors. It is may also be appropriate, where proposals for community and voluntary schools are closely linked (as for instance where an entire area is to be reorganised) for combined proposals to be made by the LEA and governors provided these are signed by all concerned and make clear who is making each. **Statutory proposals to remove selection from a designated grammar school, including a community school, may be published only by the governing body.**

23.   The law requires that a period of two months is allowed after the date of publication of notices for objections to be made (one month in the case of proposals which relate to a school which is subject to special measures, has serious weaknesses, or is subject to a warning notice by the LEA under section 15 of the Act). For this purpose the publication date is taken as the date on which the notices have been published in all the forms required. Ideally, notices should therefore be posted before, but as close as possible to, the date of publication in a newspaper, to avoid confusion.

Invalid notice

24.   Where a published notice has not been properly formulated in accordance with the statutory requirements, the notice is invalid and may not therefore be determined by the LEA or the Committee. In these circumstances the Committee Secretariat would write to the proposers informing them that the notice is technically deficient. It is open to the proposers to publish a revised notice, in which case the statutory period for objection would run from the publication date of the revised notice.

Submission of notice and supporting information to School Organisation Committee

25.   A copy of the published notice must be sent to the Committee on or immediately after the date of publication. (Submission of a copy of the final version of a notice in advance of publication does not meet the statutory requirement.)

Comments on objections

26.   Except for proposals relating to changes in standard number, where objections must be sent to the School Organisation Committee, objections to proposals published by the LEA should be sent to the LEA concerned. If an objection is received by the Committee, the objectors will be advised that in order to count as a valid statutory objection it will need to be sent to the LEA. Following expiry of the objection period, the LEA is under a duty to forward to

the Committee within one month all statutory objections which have not been withdrawn in writing, together with their comments on them (this period is shortened to two weeks where the proposals relate to a school which is subject to special measures, has serious weaknesses, or is subject to a warning notice by the LEA under section 15 of the Act). It is clearly helpful if Authorities notify the Committee as soon as statutory objections are received and send in any objections and associated comments well before the deadline. (For further details, including proposals by governing bodies, see paragraph 2 of Section F1).

Consideration by LEA of whether any statutory proposals made by them must be decided by the School Organisation Committee

27. Where there are no objections the LEA will need to consider whether they can decide the proposals themselves (except for standard number proposals which must be determined by the School Organisation Committee). Paragraph 4(3) of Schedule 6 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that in reaching a decision on this matter the LEA must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State's formal guidance is that the following proposals should be regarded as linked:

    a.   all proposals that are included in the same notice;

    b.   proposals where a decision on one of them would be likely directly to affect the outcome of consideration of the other.

28. Examples of item b would be where both proposals were to provide additional nursery places within the same 2 mile radius or where both proposals were to provide sixth form places in an area where the schools would be in competition for pupils. Another example would be the change in age range of a school so that there would be a need for the other school to follow the same pattern.

29. This would not, however, include indirect effects such as the fact that the level of capital funding available for other proposals would be reduced by the approval of one of the proposals.

Determination by LEA

30. Any determination by the LEA must be made within the period of four months beginning with the date of publication of the proposals. If they failed to make a determination within this time-scale the proposals would require the approval of the School Organisation Committee. Once proposals have been determined by the LEA they must notify the School Organisation Committee and the Secretary of State.

Reference to Adjudicator

31.   The Committee must reach a unanimous decision on any proposals which fall to it to decide. Where the Committee cannot reach a unanimous decision on what the decision should be the proposal will be passed to the Adjudicator to decide. The proposals will also pass to the Adjudicator to decide at the request of the proposers if the Committee fail to reach a decision within two months of receiving objections forwarded by the LEA (or, in the case of non-LEA proposals, two months from the end of the objection period) or, if later, two months from the date on which the Committee receive the prescribed information. The Committee must send the proposals to the Adjudicator within two weeks of failing to reach a unanimous decision or of receiving a request from the proposers.

Duty to implement

32.   The LEA or governors are under a statutory duty under section 5 of Schedule 6 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to implement all statutory proposals which an LEA has determined to implement or which have been approved by the Committee or Adjudicator.

Revocation

33.   Except for Standard Numbers, the LEA or governors may seek to be relieved of their duty to implement statutory proposals by publishing further proposals to this effect under paragraph 5(4) of Schedule 6 to the 1998 Act. Such proposals will be referred to the Committee for a determination. If the Committee are satisfied either that implementation of the proposals would be unreasonably difficult or that circumstances have so altered since the proposals were approved that their implementation would be inappropriate, the Committee may determine that the LEA or the governors may be relieved of their duty to implement. In the case of standard numbers, proposers must apply to the Committee or Adjudicator for a review of the decision (see paragraph 16 of Standard Number section).

SECTION F1: MORE DETAILED BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Requirement to publish proposals

1.   The alterations to schools that require statutory proposals are set out in Schedule 1 to the (Regulations) and Circular 9/99 and its Addendum (15/99 for special schools).

Objections

2.   Once proposals are published there is a statutory two month objection period during which objections may be made (but see paragraph 3 below). Where proposals are published by a Local Education Authority, objections are sent to the Authority (except for proposals relating to changes in standard number). The Authority then has one month from the end of the objection period to forward the objections and its comments on them to the School Organisation Committee (but see paragraph 3 below). In other cases, ie where proposals are made by the governing body of an existing school, or the promoters of a new school, or where the proposals are in respect of variations in standard number, objections are to be sent to the School Organisation Committee. The Committee should invite the comments of the proposers on any points of substance raised by objections that are relevant to the Committee's consideration. The Regulations do not prescribe a period during which the proposers should respond. Committees may wish to consider inviting proposers to comment within a month, in line with the statutory timescale for LEAs to submit comments on objections to their proposals. Committees will also wish to consider whether to adopt the practice of sending objections to proposers in a single batch at the end of the objection period. This may be administratively more satisfactory than sending objections to proposers individually as they are received by the Committee.

Objection period for schools causing concern

3.   The objection period is shortened to one month for proposals to close, or make a prescribed alteration to, a school which is subject to special measures, has serious weaknesses, or is subject to a warning notice by the Local Education Authority under section 15 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; or proposals to establish a new school on the site of such a school. The period for the Authority to send its comment on objections to the Committee is shortened to two weeks in these cases.

4.   Any person may object to proposals (there are no longer categories of statutory or non-statutory objectors as in previous legislation). Any objection is a statutory objection, provided it is made within the statutory objection period. This is of significance when deciding whether there have been statutory objections to proposals published by a LEA, and therefore whether the proposals may be determined by the LEA, or whether the decision must be taken by the School Organisation Committee.

Decisions

5.   Decisions on statutory proposals can be made by either the LEA, the School Organisation Committee or an Adjudicator in the following circumstances:

a.   by the LEA where the proposals have been published by the LEA (apart from standard numbers); there are no objections; and the proposals are not linked to other proposals to be decided by the Committee;

b.   by the School Organisation Committee where each of the groups voting on the Committee (or Committees) are of the same view;

c.   by the Adjudicator where a proposal is transferred to the Adjudicator for decision.

6.   It is very important that proposals are dealt with quickly. There are a number of specific time limits placed on those involved (see paragraphs 30 and 31 of section C1 above):

a.   the LEA must pass on objections within one month of the end of the objection period, or two weeks if the proposals are in relation to a school under special measures;

b.   if the School Organisation Committee does not reach a decision within two months of a specified date the proposer may require them to refer the proposals to the Adjudicator for decision.

Implementation

7.   Under paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, any body which publishes a statutory proposal (Local Education Authorities, governing bodies and independent promoters) is required to implement the proposal if it has been approved by the Local School Organisation Committee or the Adjudicator or if the Local Education Authority has determined to implement it.

9. The following table indicates where responsibility lies for the implementation of different types of proposals.

Proposals relating to:	Local Education Authorities	Governing Bodies	Independent Promoters
Community Schools; Maintained Nursery Schools	Yes		
Voluntary Aided Schools	Yes, in relation to discontinuing a school and to the provision of playing fields and buildings which are not school buildings (as defined in the Act) for a new* or altered school	Yes, in relation to proposals to discontinue a school published by the governing body and in relation to the provision of premises for an altered school except playing fields and buildings which it is the responsibility of the LEA to provide	Yes, where proposals are published by promoters in relation to the provision of premises for a new school except playing fields and buildings which it is the LEA s duty to provide
Voluntary Controlled and Foundation Schools	Yes, where proposals are published by the Local Education Authority for a new foundation school, the enlargement of a foundation school or the discontinuance of a foundation or voluntary controlled school and in relation to proposals to establish or alter such schools, to such extent as the public notice describes, and to discontinue such schools	Yes, in relation to proposals by the governing body for a prescribed alteration of a voluntary controlled or foundation school, to such extent as the public notice describes, or the discontinuance of such a school	Yes, in relation to proposals by promoters for a new voluntary controlled or foundation school, to such extent as the public notice describes

* Local Education Authorities are not required to provide such buildings where the schools are established in the existing premises of one or more discontinued independent, foundation or voluntary schools.

Disposal or change of Use of School Playing Fields

10.   Circular 3/99 on the Protection of School Playing Fields provides detailed guidance on the circumstances in which it would be necessary for a local authority, governing body or foundation body to seek the Secretary of State's prior consent to dispose, or to change the use, of school playing fields. These requirements are quite separate from any need there might be for planning permission. In relation to statutory proposals, it is not necessary to seek consent for the change of use of a school's playing fields where the playing fields will continue to be used by a local authority for the provision of educational facilities for a maintained school, or for any recreational facilities. So, for example, consent would not be needed to erect permanent or temporary classrooms on a school's playing fields in connection with a prescribed alteration involving the enlargement of the school. There are certain types of disposal in respect of which the Secretary of State has given a general consent, so specific consent will not be required, as explained in Part IV of Circular 3/99.

The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999

11.   The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 set out the standards for school premises, including minimum areas of team game playing fields to which schools must have access. Statutory proposals should ensure that these standards are met. However, section 543 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by paragraph 159 of Schedule 30 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) empowers the Secretary of State, in certain circumstances, to relax the prescribed standards. Detailed guidance on the circumstances in which a relaxation may be given and on how to apply for are set out in the Department's circular, 'Standards for School Premises', to be published during 1999.

Provision of sites and buildings for foundation or voluntary controlled schools

12.   Where a Local Education Authority is required to provide a site for a foundation or voluntary controlled school in accordance with a duty to implement approved statutory proposals, the Local Education Authority is also required, by paragraph 16 of Schedule 6 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, to transfer their interest in the site or buildings to the trustees or foundation body of the school. The Secretary of State is responsible for deciding to whom the Local Education Authority should make the transfer if any dispute arises.

Closure/Fresh Start proposals

13.   LEAs should consider at an early stage the long term viability of schools judged by Ofsted to require special measures or found to have serious weaknesses. They should consider closing such schools where there are places nearby at better performing schools. If a school is in special measures for two years and not due to be removed from special measures within the next term then closure should normally be the preferred option. A Fresh Start (opening a new school on the site of the old school) should only be considered where there is a need for the places locally and there is no suitable alternative provision.

Transitional Exemption Orders

14.   Single sex schools are not required to comply with certain provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. When a single sex school becomes co-educational, the school will automatically become subject to those requirements. Since the change from single sex to co-educational would normally be phased over a period of years by changing the school's admission arrangements to allow the admission of pupils of both sexes, the school would not be able to comply with the requirements for some years. Transitional Exemption Orders relax the requirement to comply with the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act during the transitional period before the school becomes wholly co-educational. In the context of statutory proposals, where proposals are published to make a prescribed alteration to a single sex school which, if approved, would have the effect of making the school co-educational, the School Organisation Committee will treat the proposals as an application for a Transitional Exemption Order.

Sex Discrimination

15.   LEAs will be aware of their obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (notably in sections 22 and 23) and the consequent need to ensure that any single-sex provision is made available in a way that does not result in discrimination. In applying the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act, we would expect local authorities to have regard to sensible local planning and to the new admission framework put in place by the School Standards and Framework Act, rather than rigid numerical parity.

New Framework matters

1.   Schools can change categories if they see benefit in so doing but all the new categories of school share common characteristics. In particular:

      a.   all schools are self-managing. They are run by their governing bodies, not by LEAs. The Code of Practice on LEA-School Relations ensures that LEA intervention is kept to a necessary minimum.

      b.   all schools are funded by LEAs under the new "fair funding" arrangements which do not provide incentives for schools to opt for one category rather than another.

2.   However, schools do have different histories and aspirations. So there are also differences between the categories. These can be summarised as follows.

Governing Bodies

3.   The composition of governing bodies will vary between categories. If schools change category their local authority will need to modify their Instruments of Government.

Staffing

4.   At all categories of school the governing body will, as now, exercise employer functions, including appointments and dismissals. At <u>foundation</u> and <u>voluntary aided</u> schools, the governing body is also the employer of the school's staff. At <u>community</u> and <u>voluntary controlled</u> schools, staff are employed by the LEA.

5.   At <u>foundation</u> and <u>voluntary aided</u> schools the governing body are able to agree with the LEA's chief education officer (CEO) that he or she should have advisory rights relating to appointments and dismissals. At <u>community</u> and <u>voluntary controlled</u> schools, the CEO will have automatic advisory rights.

Religious Character

6.   A school which is not designated as having a religious character cannot assume one by changing category. Schools with a religious character can apply a religious or denominational test in appointing, remunerating or promoting staff. This applies to all teachers, including a headteacher, at <u>voluntary aided</u> schools; and to *reserved teachers* at <u>foundation</u> and <u>voluntary controlled</u> schools. <u>Foundation</u> and <u>voluntary controlled</u> schools can take account of a person's fitness to preserve religious character in appointing a headteacher.

7.   Foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character normally provide religious education (RE) in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus unless parents ask for "denominational" RE to be provided (in accordance with the school's trust deed or, if the trust deed makes no such provision, in accordance with the tenets of the religion(s) or denomination(s) stated for the school in the Order listing schools with a religious character). Voluntary aided schools with a religious character provide "denominational" RE unless parents ask for the locally agreed syllabus.

8.   Foundation, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools with a religious character will provide "denominational" collective worship.

Land and buildings

9.   At foundation schools the land and buildings are owned by the governing body, unless the school has a foundation in which case it is likely that the trustees own all or some. Normally voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools have trustees who own all or some of the school's land and buildings. The land and buildings of a community school will usually be owned by the LEA.

Capital Funding

10.   LEAs are responsible for funding all capital works at community schools. At foundation and voluntary controlled schools LEAs are responsible for all capital works except capital works arising from the implementation of proposals to make a prescribed alteration to the school which have been published by the governing body to the extent that the proposals state that they will be implemented by the governing body. At voluntary aided schools, governing bodies are responsible for the provision of premises and all alterations and external repairs to school buildings. The Department assists the governors of voluntary aided schools with grants of up to 85%, with the governors generally meeting the balance.

Admissions

11.   The admission authority for a foundation or voluntary aided school is the school's governing body. The admission authority for a community or voluntary controlled school is normally the LEA.

12.   There is a separate framework for the consideration of admissions arrangements, and it is therefore not expected that they will play a central role in decisions on statutory proposals. All LEAs and other admission authorities must have regard to the Code of Practice on School Admissions. They are also required to consult on their admission arrangements before they are determined. Where

there is a dispute that cannot be resolved locally, the objecting admission authority can refer it to the admissions Adjudicator (or the Secretary of State in some circumstances) for determination.

Group Foundations

13.   Section 21 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides for three kinds of foundation school and three kinds of voluntary school. One of these is a foundation or voluntary school in a group foundation. This new type of foundation was established by the Act.

14.   A group foundation consists of three or more foundation, voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools. It is conducted by a foundation body, made up of governors from all the schools in the group and members drawn from the wider community. The foundation body owns the premises of all the schools in the group and appoints foundation governors to their governing bodies.

15.   Forming or joining a group foundation will be the simplest way for a school without a foundation which was not previously (prior to 1 September 1999) a voluntary or ex-voluntary grant-maintained school to meet a requirement for entry to either voluntary category. Establishing a group foundation involves an application to the Secretary of State. For more information, contact the School Framework Liaison Team on 0171 925 5804 or write to them at the DfEE, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Single school foundations

16.   A school which is not a former voluntary school also has the option of forming a new foundation under private trust law, or of modifying an existing trust, to meet the requirements for entry to either voluntary category. A school using this route is also likely to have to seek the Secretary of State's consent for a transfer of assets. Such cases are likely to be very rare and will have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. In the first place contact the School Framework Liaison Team as in paragraph 15 above.

Asset transfer

Schools changing category under the new schools framework.

17.   Where a GM school changes category on the appointed day any resulting transfer of land and any associated rights and liabilities will be subject to the provisions contained in section 74 of, and Schedule 21 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Where a transfer of land is required (eg. where a GM school has opted to become a Community school) it will, in the first instance, be

for the Education Transfer Council (ETC) to identify and reach agreement with the parties on which land should transfer. Where the ETC is unable to get the parties to agree on what should transfer, it will refer the matter to the Secretary of State to determine.

18.	Where, from September 2000, a Community, Foundation or Voluntary school wishes to change category and publishes statutory proposals under Schedule 8 to the 1998 Act, any resulting transfer of land will be dealt with under regulations to be made under Schedule 8 which will apply the provisions set out in Schedule 21. In other words it will again be for the ETC in the first instance to reach agreement with the parties on what should transfer.

19.	Where a Voluntary school wishes to become a Community school it will first be necessary for the school trustees to enter into a transfer agreement with the maintaining Local Education Authority.

20.	Further advice on the transfer of land associated with change of category can be obtained from the School Assets Team on 01325 391081 or 01325 391083.

Land disposal

21.	Statutory proposals may involve the closure of one or more schools or the transfer of a school to a new site. They may also include proposals for the sale of school land to provide some or all of the capital to fund those proposals. Where the sale of such land includes playing fields, the Secretary of State's prior consent must be sought.

Definitions

22.	The term "disposal" includes the granting or disposing of any interest in land, entering into a contract to grant or dispose of any such interest, or granting an option to purchase any land or such interest.

23.	"Land" includes buildings and other such structures, land covered with water and any interest in land.

24.	"Playing fields" are defined as land in the open air which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation. This includes hard surfaced play and recreation areas such as playgrounds and tennis and netball courts.

Disposal of school playing fields

25.	Section 77 of the 1998 Act requires a local authority to first obtain the Secretary of State's consent before disposing, or changing the use, of any school playing fields. Section 77 also places a similar requirement on the governing and

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foundation bodies of maintained schools. Circular 3/99 provides full details.

Disposal of publicly funded premises held or owned by the governing or foundation body of a foundation or voluntary school

26.   Schedule 22 to the School Standards and Framework Act makes provision for the disposal of land held for the purposes of a foundation or aided school and for the discontinuance of such schools. It provides for the distribution of assets, including sale proceeds, when a governing body, foundation body or trustees dispose of school land or buildings which are no longer required by a continuing foundation, voluntary or foundation special school. This will usually involve obtaining the Secretary of State's prior consent to the disposal. The Secretary of State will also determine how the assets or their proceeds are to be distributed.

27.   Part II of Schedule 22 provides for the distribution of assets on discontinuance of these schools.

Disposal of premises on discontinuance of a maintained school

28.   Schedule 22 also provides for the disposal of land and distribution of assets on the discontinuance of a maintained school. Further advice on the disposal of land, including playing fields, can be obtained from the School Assets Team on 01325 391031 or 01325 391082.

Site issues for Voluntary Aided Schools

Responsibility for providing any new site

29.   In all cases where statutory proposals are required, the promoters or governors of the school are responsible for the provision of any new or additional site (excluding playing fields which are the responsibility of the LEA). In all other cases (i.e. where statutory proposals are NOT required) it is the responsibility of the LEA to provide the site.

30.   Grant may be payable by the Secretary of State to assist promoters or governors with their site purchase, for up to 85% of their costs. Promoters may also apply for a loan from the Secretary of State to assist them with up to half of their 15% share of the site/ building costs. In addition LEAs may use their power to assist governors, by providing the whole or a contribution to the cost of the site themselves.

31.   Where the promoters or governors have to provide the site, and wish to seek grant aid, a District Valuer's report stating his assessment of its current market value (and of any buildings upon it) should be sent with Form SB1. If the site is approved, a letter will be issued to that effect, and will also state whether grant aid will be payable. However, promoters or governors must contact the VA Grants Team to confirm the timing of the purchase /conveyance, to ensure that the necessary funds are available. All parties should aim to complete the site conveyance as soon as possible.

Ownership of any new/additional site.

32.   The promoters or governors of schools seeking capital grant must confirm whether the freehold interest in the new school site will be vested in trusts, the objects of which provide for the school. If it will not, or if the school is to be situated on a leasehold site, the investment of public funds could be lost if the school were to close or move site in the future. This would be a matter of concern and it may be necessary to explore other site options which would safeguard public funds for education. Alternatively, it may be possible to set a 'condition of grant', whereby if that should happen and the premises cease to be used for maintained education purposes, then any grant paid by the Secretary of State up to that date, would need to be repaid.

33.   In cases where the LEA is to provide the site for a voluntary aided school, they are under a statutory duty to convey their interest to the trustees for the school, and should do so as quickly as possible. The Department will seek confirmation that this has been done.

Measuring School Capacity

34.   This section constitutes the Secretary of State's guidance under paragraph 11(4) of Schedule 23 to the School Standards and Framework Act. There are a number of different measures of the capacity of a school. For statutory proposals, including variations in standard number, Committees should use the measure of capacity prescribed for the annual return which LEAs make to the DfEE on the supply of school places. The formula should also be used as the measure of physical capacity where this is one of the relevant factors in considering variations in standard number (further information on standard numbers is given at page 111). The formulae for assessment of capacity are set out in the Annexes to this guidance, together with instructions on how to complete the forms.

35.   For primary schools the formula is relatively simple assuming that each class of pupils will require a teaching base within the school within which they will spend much of the day with their class teacher. Very small rooms and those equipped to serve particular aspects of the curriculum will not normally be used as teaching bases and may be discounted. Halls and other large spaces are also omitted but large open plan areas should be divided into areas suitable for up to 30 pupils. Large rooms are assumed to hold 30 pupils unless they are large enough for two teaching groups.

36.   For secondary schools the formula consists of a work place assessment which takes account of the size and use of space and the varying space needs of different subjects. The capacity of the school is calculated using a utilisation factor which acknowledges that because of the constraints of timetabling not all workplaces can be occupied all the time and that older pupils will tend to be taught in smaller groups than those in earlier years.

37.   Any national formula will not necessarily reflect the use made of spaces by any individual school. Admission authorities may reasonably consider that particular schools can accommodate more pupils than the number indicated by the formula. That is why other measures are taken into account in determining standard numbers.

38.   The physical measure is also used for calculating the number of surplus places in an area. The Department is currently considering a new method of assessing physical capacity which could be used across the statutory age range and for a range of purposes. This is likely to be based on a work place method with utilisation factors similar to the secondary capacity assessment formula currently in use. This may become the physical capacity measure to be prescribed for LEAs' annual returns to DfEE on the supply of school places, and may be used in conjunction with asset management plans and the introduction of a revised

capital allocation system.

Area Guidelines given in Building Bulletin 82 set out guidance for the physical capacity of new school buildings.

STANDARD NUMBERS

Definition of a standard number

1.   Standard numbers are designed to enable parents' preferences for the schools of their choice to be met to the maximum extent possible. A standard number (SN) is a fixed minimum entry number and is an indicator of the school's capacity to accommodate pupils. The new framework for schools does not of itself change a school's standard number. Under Schedule 23 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which came into force on 1 September 1999, the standard number for an age group at a school which was a county or voluntary school immediately before that date is the standard number applying to that age group in the 1998/99 school year under sections 417-420 of the Education Act 1996. In the case of a school which was a grant maintained school immediately before 1 September, the standard number is the approved admission number applying to the school under sections 426-428 of the Education Act 1996 for that age group in the 1998/99 school year. If proposals under section 28 of, or paragraph 5 of Schedule 7 to, the 1998 Act for the establishment or alteration of a maintained school fall to be implemented after 1 September 1999 the standard number will be the number stated in the proposals. Where implementation is to be staged the number stated in the proposals for each stage of implementation will be the standard number applying to that age group in any school year in relation to the stage of implementation reached.

Admission numbers

2.   The admission authority for a school (as defined in section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) ie either the Local Education Authority or the governing body, is responsible for fixing annual admission numbers. Admission authorities are required to consult other admission authorities in the relevant area before setting or amending admission numbers and should do so through the local Admissions Forum. Each year the admission authority is required to publish details of the number of pupils it is intending to admit to a relevant age group in the next academic year. Under section 93(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 an admission authority may not set as an admission number a number which is lower than the standard number. It may however, subject to the requirement to comply with the infant class size limit, set a higher admission number- normally known as the Published Admission Number(PAN). Admission authorities cannot refuse to admit children on grounds of prejudice to efficient education or the efficient use of resources in a school year in which the number of pupils in the age group concerned does not exceed the standard number or any higher PAN (see section 86(5) of the 1998 Act).

3.   However, the Education (Infant Class Sizes) (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 1998 (SI1998 No 1947) allow for admission authorities to seek the Secretary of State's consent for the disapplication of the requirement to admit up to standard number in the 1999/2000 school year. This is where to admit children up to that number in reception classes in that year would be incompatible with meeting the infant class size limit. Where the standard number has been disapplied, admission authorities must admit up to a maximum admission number certified by the Secretary of State; and they must also take steps to vary the standard number so that, for subsequent school years (when the SN will re-apply), the SN will be compatible with the duty to meet the class size limit (see paragraph 10 below).

4.   Subject to the duty to comply with the class size limit, an admission authority of any primary or secondary school may fix a PAN higher than the standard number without the approval of the School Organisation Committee/Adjudicator, but before increasing an admission number the admission authority must consult other admission authorities in the relevant area and should do so through the local Admissions Forum. Before going out to wider consultation the Local Education Authority (where it is the admission authority) must consult the governing body, and the governing body (where it is the admission authority) must consult the LEA.

5.   Where an admission authority in successive years publishes an admission number higher than the relevant standard number, they should consider publishing proposals for a permanent increase in the school's standard number. Authorities should also refer to Circular 9/99 and Schedule 1 to The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 for changes requiring the publication of statutory proposals under section 28 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

6.   In the case of some schools, the governing body (where the LEA are the admission authority), or the LEA (where the governing body are the admission authority), may consider that an admission number higher than the one fixed by the authority should be set for the school. Such a request would normally be discussed during the consultation process mentioned above. However, if the relevant admission authority refuse a request for a higher admission number, the governors (or LEA) can make a formal written request to the admission authority that a higher admission number be fixed. If the authority decides to reject the request it must do so in writing within two months of receipt. Otherwise it is under a duty to implement the higher admission number as requested. If the request is rejected, the governing body or the LEA as the case may be can publish proposals and apply to the School Organisation Committee for an increase in the

standard number. In considering the application, the admission authority's view should be sought as to why the original request for a higher admission number was rejected.

Reviewing a standard number

7.   Paragraph 11 of Schedule 23 to the School Standards and Framework Act requires admission authorities to keep standard numbers under review having regard to the school's capacity to accommodate pupils and, as appropriate, to the need to ensure that prejudice will not arise to the efficient provision of education or to the efficient use of resources as a consequence of the need to comply with the infant class size limit. The admission authority for a school containing an infant class was required to carry out a review as soon as was reasonably practicable after 1 September 1998 (which is when the regulations imposing the limit come into force).

Varying a standard number

8.   Where an admission authority consider that (i) the standard number for a school no longer reflects its capacity to accommodate pupils, or (ii) the current standard number is incompatible with the requirement to comply with the infant class size limit, they may (or, in the case of (ii) must) apply to the School Organisation Committee for a variation of that number. Paragraph 5 (1) of Schedule 23 to the School Standards and Framework Act requires that before doing so they must publish their proposals relating to the variation in the manner prescribed by the Education (School Organisation) (England) Regulations 1999. Proposed changes to standard numbers usually result from additions or reductions to buildings already made or in train, but could also reflect the need to be consistent with the class size limit, and should not in themselves attract capital funding, though the adaptations to the buildings which give rise to the changes may have met the criteria for priority allocations of grant or credit approvals, for basic need or surplus place removal, for example. Capital funding will normally have been previously obtained through the capital bidding process as a result of a demonstrated need for additional school places (including in order to comply with the infant class size limit) or the removal of surplus school places. Other changes such as changing the use of individual rooms in the building (for example changing a class base to a library) might not require capital funding.

9.   Having considered the proposer's application for a variation to the standard number the Committee may:

      a.   refuse to vary the standard number;

b. make a decision varying the standard number to the number proposed;

c. where the application is to increase the standard number, after consulting the governing body and the LEA, vary the standard number, but to a lower number than the one asked for;

d. where the application is to decrease the standard number, after consulting the governing body and the LEA, vary the standard number, but to a higher number than the one asked for. The Committee may also decide that the standard number should be varied with effect from a date other than that specified in the proposals.

10. In making their decision the Committee must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State, the School Organisation Plan for the area in which the school is situated and, where the application is for a reduction at a primary school, the infant class size limit (imposed under section 1 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). The Committee must not make a decision reducing a standard number unless they are satisfied that a reduction is necessary having regard to the school's capacity to accommodate pupils and, in relation to standard numbers applying to infant classes, that admitting up to the current standard number would give rise to prejudice to efficient education or the efficient use of resources on account of the requirement to comply with the infant class size limit. If they are satisfied (in the case of a standard number applying to an infant class) that such a reduction is necessary the Committee must make a decision to reduce the standard number by the smallest number they consider sufficient to avoid prejudice arising.

Criteria for Decisions

11. It will not be sufficient for an admission authority to propose the reduction of a standard number simply because that number is higher than the capacity indicated by the capacity assessment formula (see paragraphs 34-37 in preceding section). The Committee's starting point should be the current standard number which may not be directly related to the school's physical capacity as measured by the formula. The current standard number is an indication of the school's ability at some time in its recent history to accommodate pupils. For primary schools the standard number will originally have been set at the highest of three factors:

a. the physical capacity derived from the formula set out in the Annexes to this guidance

b. the number on roll on 1 May 1991, or

c. the published admission number for the school year beginning in 1990.

12. For secondary schools the standard number would have been set as either the number admitted to the relevant age group in the whole of the 1979-80 school year or the number admitted to the relevant age group in the whole of the 1989-90 school year whichever is the higher.

13. For both primary and secondary schools the number may have been changed since then either by application or in the approval of statutory proposals for school reorganisation.

14. Other key factors for the School Organisation Committee to consider are:

a. The physical capacity of the school - any changes that have occurred or are proposed since the standard number was last determined. Physical capacity should be calculated using the formulae attached in the Annexes to this guidance. It is important that proposers complete accurately the capacity assessment form for the school concerned. The form should be completed before the proposals are published so that interested parties may view it if they wish. The completed form should be sent to the Committee together with a copy of the published proposal, the formal application for a reduction in the standard number, and the other information specified in Part VI of Schedule 3 to the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999. If accommodation has been removed or added, schools should submit capacity forms showing the accommodation available before and after the change. Standard numbers should reflect the school's ability to accommodate pupils and should not be set, except in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is a requirement to comply with the infant class size limit, below the level indicated by the capacity assessment formula.

b. The requirement to comply with the infant class size limit - bearing in mind that the standard number should be reduced by the smallest number the Committee consider sufficient to avoid prejudice arising to efficient education or the efficient use of resources. Account may be taken of any physical constraints of the school building, such as small classrooms, and the organisation of pupils within the school.

c. Whether the proposed change results from a need to add necessary

school places or reduce surplus capacity for which funding has been allocated.

d.   Relevant requirements of the School Premises Regulations/Health and Safety requirements. The Committee may also wish to consider whether the use of space is reasonable in the circumstances, including whether a disproportionate amount of space has been discounted. Where accommodation has been reduced, the Committee should consider whether a reduction in standard number proportionate to the reduction in physical capacity would be appropriate. Where a reduction in standard number is sought but there has been no reduction in the accommodation available, the Committee should consider whether a reduction in standard number is necessary, having regard to the capacity of the school to accommodate pupils, including the physical capacity of the school as measured by the capacity assessment formula, and the organisation of space within the school (such as the number and size of classrooms). Where the proposal is for an increase in standard number, the Committee should satisfy itself that the school can accommodate the increased number of pupils and that the increase can be sustained over a long period of time, and is not requested on the basis of a temporary availability of space, for example due to previous lack of recruitment.

e.   Whether any alteration to the building will be completed by the proposed date of the change. Where building work has not been completed the Committee may, after consultation with the governing body and the Local Education Authority, decide that the standard number should be varied from a date other than that proposed - for example the date on which the building work will be complete.

Reference to the Adjudicator

15.   In the case of proposals published by the governing body, if the Committee fail to vote upon the variation within two months of the end of the objection period or, if later, two months from the time the prescribed information is provided to the Committee, the application has to be referred to the Adjudicator for decision if the governing body so requests. In the case of proposals by the LEA, this period is two months from the date the Committee receive any objections and the LEA's comments on them (or notification that there have been no objections) or, if later, two months from the time the prescribed information is provided to the LEA. The application must also be referred to the Adjudicator for decision if the Committee fail to reach a unanimous decision.

Reviewing decisions

16.   The Committee or the Adjudicator may review any decision they have taken about the variation of a standard number and, if appropriate, either revoke or vary that decision. They will only do this if they receive written notice setting out the grounds for review from either the governing body or the LEA within one month of receipt of the original decision letter. Before reviewing a decision the Committee or the Adjudicator must be satisfied that it was made on the basis of a material error of fact contained in the information originally provided to them in the variation application, or that it was obviously wrong. The procedure governing an application for a review of a standard number decision appears in Regulation 16 of the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999.

PROCEDURES

17.   Only the relevant admission authority can publish proposals for a reduction in standard number. The relevant admission authority and, in the circumstances set out in paragraph 6 above, the governing body or the Local Education Authority (whichever is not the admission authority) may publish proposals for an increase in standard number. The main procedures to be followed are consultation, publication and the submission of proposals and prescribed information to the School Organisation Committee.

Consultation

18.   LEAs must consult governing bodies before publishing proposals and similarly governing bodies must consult the LEA (except in the circumstances referred to in paragraph 6 above). It would also be appropriate for parents, teachers, other schools in the area and, where there is post 16 interest, the FEFC, to be consulted. Section 89(2) of the School Standards and Framework Act requires that admission arrangements (including admission numbers) must be discussed with the LEA and other admission authorities in the area before they are determined.

Publication of notice

19.   Following consultation, the proposers should prepare the notice. Part V of Schedule 2 of The Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999 requires that notices include the following information:

> a.   the name of the Local Education Authority or governing body publishing the proposals

b.   the standard number applying at the time of the publication of the proposals for the relevant age group to which the proposals relate

c.   the standard number proposed for that relevant age group

d.   the number of pupils admitted to the school in that relevant age group during the school year in which the proposals are published

e.   the date from which it is proposed the new standard number should take effect

f.   a statement explaining that, under paragraph 5(4) and 5(5) of Schedule 23 to the School Standards and Framework Act, any person may object to the proposals and that any objection should be sent to the School Organisation Committee within the two month period prescribed in the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999.

Examples of notices to reduce standard numbers are included in the Annexes to this guidance.

20.   The proposals must be published:

a.   by being posted in a conspicuous place in the area served by the school;

b.   in at least one newspaper circulating in the area served by the school to which the proposals relate;

c.   by being posted at or near the main entrance to the school or, if there is more than one main entrance, at all of them.

Objections

21.   Any person may object to the proposals. Any objection should be sent to the School Organisation Committee within the two month period prescribed in the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999. Where the subject of the proposal is a school situated in the area of a Local Education Authority other than the Local Education Authority which maintains the school, objections must be sent to the School Organisation Committee for the area of the maintaining LEA. The Committee secretariat should seek comments on the objections from the promoters specifying a date (perhaps one month later) by which those comments should be received.

Submission of Information to the School Organisation Committee

22. The proposers should prepare the Prescribed Information to send to the School Organisation Committee as detailed in the pro formas in the Annexes. The Prescribed Information must include the information set out in Part VI of Schedule 3 to the Education (School Organisation Proposals) (England) Regulations 1999, including: the objectives of the proposal; evidence of consultation; details of numbers on roll and historic admissions to the school; plans of the school together with gross area and teaching area; where appropriate whether the proposed standard number was included in the class size plan; and, where the application is made by a body which is not the admission authority a copy of the relevant correspondence under section 93(5) and section 93(6) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

ISIS SCHOOL CLOSURES/MERGERS etc SINCE 1985

ALL IAPS = prep schools
& some ISAI will have been.

This list includes all schools which appeared in the 1985/86 edition of "Choosing Your Independent School" but which have subsequently disappeared. (Those tutorial colleges and maintained schools which were listed in 1985 have been excluded).

| Closures appear in BOLD | | *Mergers appear in ITALIC* | | Final roll is as listed in CYIS |

UPDATED: February 1995   ../NUMBERS/closelist   (Print: HPLandscape/Unheaded)

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Allen House	IAPS	B	Surrey	1986			[?Merger: St Andrew's Horsell?]
Alleyn Court	*IAPS*	*B*	*Essex*	*1993*			*Merged with Eton House 1993*
All Hallows	**GBGSA**	**G**	**Suffolk**	**1989**			**Closed [?1990]**
Amberley House	ISAI	C	Avon	1985			
Ancaster House	*GSA*	*G*	*E.Ssx*	*1985*			*Merger with Charters Towers 1986*
Ardenhurst	IAPS	C	Warwicks	1994		82	*[?Merger with Emscote Lawn? 1994]*
Ash Lea	ISAI	C	Lancs	1986			
Assumption	**GSA**	**G**	**N.Yorks**	**1993**	**56**	**98**	**Closed 1993**
Avalon	IAPS	G	G.Mersey	1986			[?Left IAPS?]
Avonhurst	**GBA**	**B**	**Avon**	**1991**			**Closed 1992**

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Balfour House	ISAI	C	S.Wales	1992			Closed [?1992]
Battleborough	ISAI	C	Devon	1985			Closed
Beckets Prep	IAPS	B	Bucks	1985			
Belmont Abbey	SHMIS	B	H/Worcs	1993			Closed 1994
Belmont House	IAPS	B	Scot	1988			Closed [?1990]
Beresford House	GSA	G	E.Ssx	1991			Closed 1991
Bishop's Court	IAPS	C	G.Mersey	1985			
Blairmore	IAPS	C	Scot	1992			Closed 1993
Bracondale	ISAI	B	Norfolk	1994	2	99	[Deleted 1994]
Bramdean	ISAI	B	Devon	1991			
Brereton Hall	ISAI	G	Cheshire	1991			
Brightlands	*IAPS*	*C*	*Glos*	*1994*	*13*	*103*	*Merged with St John's on the Hill 1994*
Brocksford Hall	IAPS	B	Derbys	1993			Closed 1994
Brook House	IAPS	C	Eire	1990			Closed [?1991]
Buckfast Abbey	IAPS	B	Devon	1993			Closed 1994
Buckland House	IAPS	B	Devon	1986			
Burcot Grange Hill	ISAI	G	W.Mids	1986			
Buxlow Prep	ISAI	C	G.Lond	1986			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Chard School	ISAI	C	Som.	1990			
Charlton Park School	GBGSA	G	Glos	1986			
Charmandean	**ISAI**	**G**	**Bucks**	**1991**			**Closed [?1992]**
Charters Towers	*GSA*	*G*	*E.Ssx*	*1985*			*Merged with Ancaster House 1986*
Charters-Ancaster	*GSA*	*G*	*E.Ssx*	*1995*	*39*	*242*	*Merger with Battle Abbey 1995*
Chelmsford Hall	IAPS	C	E.Ssx	1991			
Cheswycks	ISAI	C	Surrey	1985			
Chilton Cantelo House	**ISAI**	**C**	**Som.**	**1988**			**Closed [?1988]**
Chorlton Convent High	ISAI	G	G.Manch.	1988			
Christ's College	ISAI	B	G.Lond.	1994	91	98	[Deleted 1994]
Clarendon	*GSA*	*G*	*Beds*	*1991*			*Merged with Monkton Combe 1992*
Clark's College	**ISAI**	**C**	**G.Lond**	**1988**			**Closed [?19]**
Clark's Grammar	**ISAI**	**C**	**Surrey**	**1987**			**Closed [?19]**
Clark's Grammar	**ISAI**	**C**	**Avon**	**1994**		**161**	**Closed 1994**
Collegiate School	*GBGSA*	*G*	*Avon*	*1990*			*Merged with Colston's Boys' 1991*
Coniston	ISAI	C	Surrey	1987			
Convent of the Assumption	**GSA**	**G**	**N.Yorks**	**1992**			**Closed [?1992]**
Convent of the Nativity	**ISAI**	**G**	**Kent**	**1992**			**Closed 1993 (but partly re-opened 1993)**

Cotton College	SHMIS	C	Staffs	1987		Closed [?1988]
Cranborne Chase	GSA	G	Wilts	1989		Closed 1989
Crescent	IAPS	C	Oxon	1994	185	Closed 1994
Crookham Court	ISAI	B	Berks	1988		Closed 1990 (membership rescinded 1989)

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:	Fate
Dormie House	ISAI	C	G.Mersey	1991		
Duncan Hall	ISAI	C	Norfolk	1985	B: 86 D: 55	
Dunchurch-Winton Hall	**IAPS**	**C**	**Warwicks**	**1992**		**Closed 1993**

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:	Fate
Ellerslie	*GSA*	*G*	*H/Worcs*	*1991*		*Merged with Malvern College 1992*
Essendene Lodge	ISAI	C	Surrey	1985		
Eton House	*ISAI*	*B*	*Essex*	*1992*		*Merged with Alleyn Court 1993*

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Felixstowe College	**GSA**	**G**	**Suffolk**	**1994**	**176**	**130**	**Closed 1994**
Forest Grange	IAPS	C	W.Ssx	1990			
Forres	*IAPS*	*C*	*Dorset*	*1992*			*Merged with Sandle Manor 1993*
Fort Augustus Abbey	**SHMIS**	**B**	**Scot**	**1992**			**Closed 1992**
Fosse Bank	**GBGSA**	**C**	**Kent**	**1994**		**76**	**Closed 1994**
Foxbush	ISAI	B	Kent	1985			
Friern Barnet Grammar S.	ISAI	B	G.Lond	1985			?Left ISAI?

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	Final roll D:	Fate
Glengorse & Hydneye	*IAPS*	*C*	*E.Ssx*	*1988*			*Merged with Battle Abbey [?1990]*
Glengyle Prep School	ISAI	B	G.Lond	1986			
Glenhow	**IAPS**	**C**	**Cleve.**	**1992**			**Closed 1992**
Grey House School	ISAI	C	Hants	1985			
Grove, The	*GSA*	*G*	*Surrey*	*1995*	*71*	*209*	*Merger with Royal Naval School 1995*
Grove House	IAPS	G	Surrey	1992			Now St Theresa's, Effingham

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Harrow High School	ISAI	B	G.Lond	1986			
Hawtreys	IAPS	B	Wilts	1993			Merger with Cheam 1994
Hermitage House	ISAI	G	Avon	1990			
Holmwood School	IAPS	C	G.Mersey	1990			
Homefield	IAPS	C	Warwicks	1994	8	99	Merger with Bilton Grange 1994
Hunmanby Hall	GSA	G	N.Yorks	1990			Closed 1991
Hurn Court	ISAI	B	Dorset	1989			
Huyton College	GSA	G	G.Mersey	1992			Merged with Belvedere 1993

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Keffolds Farm	**ISAI**	**C**	**Surrey**	**1994**	**18**	**9**	**Closed 1994**
Keighley Prep School	ISAI	C	W.Yorks	1985			
King Aldred School	ISAI	B	Som.	1988			
King's Hillcrest Sch	IAPS	C	Som.	1985			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Ladymede	IAPS	G	Bucks	1986			
Laurels College	ISAI	C	Leics	1986			
Lawnside	*GSA*	*G*	*H/Worcs*	*1993*			*Merging with St James & The Abbey 1994*
Lawrence House	**IAPS**	**C**	**Lancs**	**1993**			**Closed 1993**
Leelands	ISAI	G	Kent	1985			
Linden School	ISAI	C	T/Wear	1985			
Lindisfarne	**GBA**	**C**	**N.Wales**	**1994**	**99**	**78**	**Closed 1994**
Littlemead Grammar Sch.	ISAI	C	W.Ssx	1985			[?Left ISAI, then closed?]
Llanarth Court	IAPS	B	S.Wales	1985			
Lonsdale School	ISAI	G	Norfolk	1987			
Loughton School	ISAI	C	Essex	1990			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:		Fate
Marsh Court	**IAPS**	**C**	**Hants**	**1988**			**Closed**
Marton Hall	IAPS	C	Humber	1986			
Micklefield	*GSA*	*G*	*E.Ssx*	*1993*			*Merged with Wadhurst 1994*
Mill School	IAPS	C	Wilts	1991			
Milner Court	IAPS	B	Kent	1989			
Moorlands	ISAI	C	Beds	1987			Left ISAI
Morcott Hall	ISAI	G	Leics	1989			
Moreton House	*ISAI*	*C*	*Hants*	*1994*		*102*	*Merged with Churcher's 1994*
Motcombe Grange	IAPS	C	Dorset	1985			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Nativity School	ISAI	G	Kent	1993		304	[Deleted 1993]
Nelson School	ISAI	C	Glos	1988			
Netherleigh School	ISAI	C	W.Yorks	1987			
Norfolk House S.	ISAI	C	W.Mids	1989			
Norman House Prep	ISAI	C	G.Manch.	1987			
Normanton	ISAI	C	G.Lond	1991			
Normanton	ISAI	C	Derbys	1994	72	12	[Deleted 1994]
Northcliffe	*IAPS*	*C*	*Hants*	*1994*	*38*	*167*	*Merged with Atherley 1994*
Nowton Court	IAPS	C	Suffolk	1988			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Oakdene	GSA	G	Bucks	1991			Closed 1991
Oakleigh House	IAPS	C	S.Wales	1992			Closed 1993 (?)
Oakley Hall	IAPS	C	Glos	1994	56	77	Closed 1994
Old Ride, The	IAPS	B	Wilts	1989			Closed 1990
Orme House	ISAI	C	Surrey	1985			
Overthorpe	IAPS	G	Oxon	1989			
Oxenfoord Castle	GSA	G	Scot.	1993	58	40	Closed 1993

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
Penrhos	*GSA/IAPS*	*G*	*N.Wales*	*1995*	*117*	*105*	*Merger with Rydal 1995*
Pierrepont	**SHMIS**	**C**	**Surrey**	**1992**			**Closed 1993**
Pointer S.,The	ISAI	C	G.Lond	1985			
Portland House School	GBGSA	G	Leics	1985			
Powis College	ISAI	C	N.Wales	1992			
Presentation of Mary C.	*ISAI*	*C*	*Devon*	*1993*			*Merged with Mount St Mary's 1993*

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	Final roll D:	Fate
Ravenswood	IAPS	B	Devon	1991			Closed 1992
Reeves Hall	ISAI	C	Suffolk	1993	17	2	Closed 1993
Rosebank High School	ISAI	C	Cleve.	1986			
Rowans, The	ISAI	C	Surrey	1987			Now Downsend Rowans
Royal Naval School	GSA	G	Surrey	1995	142	95	Merger with The Grove 1995
Runton Hill School	GSA	G	Norfolk	1990			Merged with Sutherland House 1991
Rydal	HMC/IAPS	C	N.Wales	1995	177	154	Merger with Penrhos 1995

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:	Fate
Sacred Heart	GSA	G	Kent			Now Beechwood Sacred Heart
Sandle Manor	*IAPS*	*C*	*Hants*	*1992*		*Merged with Forres 1993*
Savile House S.	ISAI	C	Notts	1985		
St Anne's Convent	ISAI	G	G.Lond	1986		
St Anthony's Convent Prep	**IAPS**	**G**	**Dorset**	**1992**		**Closed 1993**
St Audries	**GSA**	**G**	**Som.**	**1990**		**Closed 1991**
St Brandon's Junior S.	**IAPS**	**G**	**Avon**	**1991**		**Closed 1992**
St Brandon's	**GSA**	**G**	**Avon**	**1991**		**Closed 1991**
St Christopher's	**IAPS**	**G**	**Surrey**	**1991**		**Closed 1992**
St David's	ISAI	B	W.Yorks	1990		?Left ISAI
St Erbyn's	IAPS	C	Cornwall	1986		
St George's Prep	IAPS	C	Ch.Is.	1990		
St Hilary's	GSA	G	Kent	1991		
St James & The Abbey	*GSA*	*G*	*H/Worcs*	*1993*		*Merged with Lawnside 1994*
St John's Prep (Alton)	IAPS	C	Staffs	1988		
St Mary's Convent	ISAI	G	Kent			Now St Mary's College
St Mary's	IAPS	G	S.Yorks	1988		
St Michael's	ISAI	C	H/Worcs	1985	D: 142	

St Michael's Burton Park	GSA	G	W.Ssx	1994	105	22	Closed 1994
St Nicholas	ISAI	C	G.Lond.	1985			
St Stephen's	GSA	G	Kent	1990			Closed 1991
St Wilfrid's	ISAI	C	Devon	1994		66	[Left ISAI]
Sheffield Manor	ISAI	C	Lincs	1985			
Shernold	ISAI	G	Kent	1985			
Springfield Perk S.	GBGSA	G	W.Ssx	1988			
Springfield PNEU	IAPS	C	Essex	1985			
Stepping Stone Sch.	ISAI	C	G.Lond.	1987			
Stratford House S.	*GSA*	*G*	*G.Lond*	*1993*			*Merging with Farringtons 1994*
Streete Court	IAPS	B	Surrey	1995	28	98	Closed 1994
Stubbington House	IAPS	B	Berks	1988			
Summerfold House	ISAI	G	W.Ssx	1985			
Sunderland Church High	*GSA*	*G*	*T/Wear*				*Merged with Tonstall 1993*
Sutherland House	*ISAI*	*G*	*Norfolk*	*1990*			*Merged with Runton Hill 1991*

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:	Fate
Taunton Jun. Boys/Jun.Girls	*IAPS*	*B/G*	*Somerset*	*1994*		*Merger*
Tower Lodge Prep S.	ISAI	C	Warwicks	1988		
Tonstall	*IAPS*	*B*	*T/Wear*	*1992*		*Merged with Sunderland High School 1993*

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	D:	Fate
University School	ISAI	C	G.London	1987			
Upper Chine	*GSA*	*G*	*I.o.Wight*	*1994*	*85*	*70*	*Merger with Ryde School*
Upper Tooting Ind. High Sch	ISAI	C	G.London	1987			

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B: D:	Fate
Vale School, The	ISAI	B	Bucks	1991		

School name	Assn	Type	County	Last CYIS listing	Final roll B:	Final roll D:	Fate
Wadhurst Coll.	*GBGSA*	*G*	*E.Ssx*	*1993*			*Merging with Micklefield 1994*
Walmsley House	ISAI	C	Beds.	1994		269	[Left ISAI]
Waterside	**ISAI**	**C**	**Herts.**	**1994**		**167**	**Closed 1994**
Wells House	**IAPS**	**C**	**H/Worcs**	**1990**			**Closed 1991**
Westbourne School for Girls	*GBGSA*	*G*	*Scot*	*1991*			*?Merged with Glasgow Academy*
West Bridgford H.S.	ISAI	B	Notts	1992			Left ISAI
West Downs	**IAPS**	**B**	**Hants**	**1988**			**Closed 1989**
Weston Favell Prep S.	ISAI	C	Nhants	1985			
Westwood House S.	ISAI	G	Cambs	1990			
Whitefield Prep S.	ISAI	C	G.Manch.	1985			
Whitefriars	ISAI	B	Glos				Now St Edward's
Whittingham	ISAI	C	G.Lond	1985			
Winton	**ISAI**	**C**	**G.Lond**	**1995**		**147**	**Closed 1994**
Wylde Green College	ISAI	B	W.Mids	1986			

Appendix 3

(Letter from Ex-Deputy Chairman of Lake House)

Letter 3rd January 1998

From Ex-Deputy Chairman, New School

I am sending this letter to former governors who will be able to vote as a member of the school trust at the EGM on 6th January. Since you are being asked to decide on the future of the present board, the chairman asked me to contact you setting out some relevant information for the period before he became involved in late November 1997. In doing so, I am anxious to add to you understanding, rather than stating anything which will lead to greater division.

The message I have received from a number of people is "Andrew Smith is such a nice man, how can you sack him after only 8 weeks in the job". The short answer is that being nice doesn't necessarily make someone good at their job, and Andrew had been employed by the school for over 7 months when the decision was made.

The terms of the settlement with Andrew prevents governors from saying anything concerning his employment which might be seen as detrimental. This is consistent with the board's own wish that he should depart with dignity. I hope you will understand that it is consequently not possible for me to shed as much light on this matter as you would like. I can confirm that the settlement with Andrew was generous, however we were paying salaries for two headmasters and their wives, a commitment which the school could not really afford in the longer term. We are now free of this and in economic terms the payback is relatively short.

It is probably fair to say that the difficulties started after Lake House and St. Finian's merged in that we had two heads. Since half the merged board only knew Rupert and the other half Andrew, it was difficult for us to arrive at a decision on who should lead the school. As you know, it was Roy Price's recommendation that Andrew should be 'Principal' with Rupert being his number two but retaining his 'Headmaster' title. In retrospect, many people feel that this advice amounted to fudge, but at the time Roy's advice was certainly influenced by the knowledge that

both men carried support, albeit from different groups of parents. On paper, they had complementary skills and despite the misgivings of some people, we tried very hard to make the arrangement work.

Although Andrew only became Principal this September, governors and staff have actually been working with him since he arrived at Easter. As time went on, the staff became demoralised because they felt uncertain as to what direction the school was taking. Another problem was that Rupert Clarke was not getting on well with Andrew. Rupert made his feelings known to Andrew directly, (as did other senior staff) but frustration sometimes got the better of Rupert, and he was also critical of Andrew in the staff common room.

Despite governor support, particularly from the then chairman Jonathan Stokes and the steering committee, it became clear that the Principal/Headmaster structure was not working. Recognising that Andrew and Rupert do have complementary skills, the governors' preferred course of action was to encourage the two men to work together by making them joint heads. This proposal was put to Andrew on two separate occasions this term, but rejected both times. Having lost confidence in the Principal's leadership, Rupert tendered his resignation from the end of term.

Faced with this situation, the governors agreed that a single head should be appointed. They had to decide who had the necessary skills for headship of New School by looking at the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two men. It was on this occasion that the governors were unable to agree. Those who supported Rupert included those who had governed him at St. Finian's for 3 years (and therefore knew his strengths and weaknesses) as well as Tom Watson and myself. I worked closely with Andrew and Rupert from the start of the summer term, as chairman of the Merger Steering Committee. The governors who disagreed had not worked so closely with either man, but most of them had been involved with Andrew's appointment.

reserves. Both schools were solvent, with considerable assets, and it was in both our interests to merge.

The question of school policies has been raised. As chairman of the steering committee which asked for policies to be drafted, I felt that it was essential that the staff (consisting of former Lake House, former St. Finian's and newly recruited teachers) should all have a point of reference as to how things should be done in New School, from day one. Policies also serve to ensure that the school's obligations in law (for which governors are liable) are met. The accusation has now been made that the governing body were unreasonable to ask for these to be ready for the start of the winter term.

Several parents have suggested that we should advertise for a completely new head. In the ideal world that might have been appropriate, but we have to accept that recruiting such people takes two or three terms, and that such a period would lead to prolonged uncertainty. However, Rupert Clarke is under no illusion that if doubting parents are to remain with New School, he has to prove himself to them, and we as a governing body intend to see that he does. We are trying to steer people away from emotional responses and towards judging the school by its performance, adherence to the ethos and what it does for the children.

A group of 'Concerned Parents' are demanding the reinstatement of Andrew. They do not represent all parents (or even all ex-Lake House parents) but they have drawn support from those who feel sympathy for Andrew (which is understandable) and suspiciously regard Rupert as the man from the former rival to Lake House. The decision to change the school's head at an early stage has unsettled many, although there is another body of parents and staff who are very supportive.

The Concerned Parents Group are also demanding the resignation of all governors, and the creation of a new 'independent' board. Whilst those governors who voted for the decision remain certain that we had to take action, we have to accept that it has

proved divisive, both within the governing body, and amongst parents. It was for this reason that Jonathan and I felt that some action had to be taken to restore confidence in the board. We consequently stepped down as chairman and vice-chairman before Christmas, and the board unanimously elected David Grace as its chairman.

David is the retired head of St. James's, and lives in Exton. He was Chairman of the Society of Headmasters of Independent Schools; JP and Bench Chairman; Chairman of Governors, Thorpe School; Chairman of Governors of the Amadeus School and has been Diocese of Barchester Reader since 1960. He was originally approached by John Peters to see if it was possible for him to act as an intermediary, and undertake an independent appraisal of recent events. He produced a report which concluded that our decision had been properly arrived at. David Grace is in discussion with all concerned, and I hope that he will be able to restore confidence where Jonathan Stokes and I have lost it.

In summary, I would like to stress that I remain very committed to healing the divisions and ensuring that New School is a success, but not at the expense of discarding the values to which the old Lake House and St. Finian's respectively held dear. (Letter of 3rd January 1998)

Glossary

Didactic: Intended to teach, in particular having moral instruction as an ulterior motive

Heuristic: Enabling a person to discover or learn something for himself

Maieutic: Of or denoting the Socratic mode of enquiry, which aims to bring a person's latent ideas into clear consciousness

(Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2002)

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