LEADERSHIP NARRATIVES: A LEARNING COMMUNITY
DEVELOPS A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO PRIMARY
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THROUGH COLLABORATIVE
AND RESPONSIVE INQUIRY AND BY MAKING
LEADERSHIP VISIBLE

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

Anne Christine Parker BA, BEd, MA

Department of Medical and Social Care Education

University of Leicester

July 2015
ABSTRACT

Author: Anne Christine Parker

Leadership Narratives: A Learning Community Develops a Systemic Approach to Primary School Leadership through Collaborative and Responsive Inquiry and by Making Leadership Visible

Set within the context of constant change in primary education in England the research aim was to investigate how one school develops as a learning community. It is a narrative representation of developing school leadership within a systemic approach (Whitaker, 2009). Marshall’s (1999) theory of living life as inquiry informed the identification of four research themes which are interwoven throughout the thesis; ‘living life as’ a teller of tales, the leading learner and learning leader, as a global learner and as a practitioner/leader researcher. A thematic framework was created for the purposes of fieldwork data analysis. The analysis informed the further development and validation of the identified research themes.

The notion of a ‘leadership narrative’ is defined and it is within this parameter that the research findings are presented. The school learning community engaged in the process of vision creation and the development of action learning set plans (Senge, 2006; Stark, 2006). Unpredictable and sometimes unnerving events were catalysts for a change in emphasis. The notion of social justice is explored through the active dialogue of a group of ten and eleven year old girls and provides the micro view of organisational learning. This research project was supported, validated and challenged through the engagement with an external action learning group.

Research outcomes were confident learners, trusting relationships, improved academic achievement, consistency and innovation and a contribution to leadership theory. The outcomes informed the conceptualisation of a ‘Leadership Development Web’.
Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without the full participation and permission of my work colleagues and the children, families and governors of the school. They have encouraged, supported and challenged me. This thesis presents our shared journey that we have travelled together with fortitude and pride.

I thank my three tutors and supervisors who have been relentless and rigorous in their support and challenge. Dr Judith West, from the University of Leicester, has ensured I keep a constant and steady path. Dr Margy Whalley, Director of the Pen Green Research Centre, has challenged my thinking ceaselessly and throughout the research process convinced me that I had a valid contribution to make. Dr Karen John has been consistent in her encouragement, persistence and belief in me.

My fellow PhD students, Jackie Drake, Liz Klavins Eddie McKinnon and Julie Vaggers have consistently provided me with strength, respect, resourcefulness and friendship. I hope that I have reciprocated in some way.

Family and friends have also played their part in supporting me in getting to this stage in my academic and professional life. I thank you all but especially my mother, Morfydd Beales, who checked up on me regularly and my partner, Stephen Parker, who has supported me in this endeavour tirelessly.

Finally, I recognise the influence of my tutor Patrick Whitaker, who sadly passed away during my programme of study. Patrick would actively listen then encourage and challenge me with his wise words.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .............................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ ii
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................... iii
Tables, Figures and Textboxes ............................................................................................... viii
   Tables Index ......................................................................................................................... viii
   Textbox Index ..................................................................................................................... xi
Abbreviations .......................................................................................................................... xii
Glossary of Terms ................................................................................................................... xiv

Part 1: Introduction, Research Purpose, Line of Inquiry, Aims and Questions..................... 1
   Chapter 1: The Leadership Narratives Begin ...................................................................... 2
      Context .............................................................................................................................. 3
      Introducing the Learning Community ............................................................................ 7
      The Research Purpose .................................................................................................... 8
      The Potential for Practitioner Research to Influence Leadership Theory .................... 9
   Outline of the Research Project ......................................................................................... 11
   An Indication of the Research Outcomes ....................................................................... 15
   Overview of the Research Thesis ..................................................................................... 18
   Chapter 2: Research as Living Inquiry .............................................................................. 19
      Research Line of Inquiry and Project Aims .................................................................. 19
      Research Questions ........................................................................................................ 20
      Defining Inquiry ............................................................................................................. 20
      First-Person and Second-Person Inquiry ..................................................................... 24

Part 2: Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 26
   Chapter 3: Making Leadership Visible .............................................................................. 27
      Leadership Theory .......................................................................................................... 27
Pedagogical Leadership.................................................................................................................. 32
Andragogical Leadership.................................................................................................................. 33
A Systemic Approach to School Leadership.................................................................................... 34
Action Research in Education........................................................................................................... 39
Leadership Concepts: Strategies for Leadership Development......................................................... 42
Chapter 4: Organisational Learning.................................................................................................. 46
Defining Organisational Learning...................................................................................................... 46
The Multilingual Learner................................................................................................................... 47
Anti-Discriminatory Practice.............................................................................................................. 49
Part 3: Research Methodology.......................................................................................................... 57
Chapter 5: Research Methodology, Research Methods, Research Limitations and
Ethical Considerations..................................................................................................................... 58
Research Methodology.................................................................................................................... 58
Positionality......................................................................................................................................... 60
Co-operative, Action Research, and Praxeological Approaches to Inquiry................................. 61
The Development of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis .................................................. 66
Research Methods............................................................................................................................ 78
Action Learning Sets......................................................................................................................... 78
Leadership Narratives....................................................................................................................... 79
Journalling........................................................................................................................................... 87
Freefall Writing.................................................................................................................................... 91
The Self-Evaluation Process............................................................................................................. 92
Semi-Structured Interview................................................................................................................. 93
Visualisation of the Research Process............................................................................................... 96
Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations............................................................................. 102
Summary of How Identified Research Methods Created Fieldwork Data........................................ 115
Part 4: Research Fieldwork, Data Analysis and the Generation of Research Evidence
leader learning experiences, their practices and their effects on student learning
(Leithwood and Levin, 2004) ................................................................. 273

Appendix 3: Permission request and agreement letter to the Local Authority .......... 274
Appendix 4: Permission request and agreement letter to the school’s Governing Body ................................................................. 275

Appendix 5: Permission request and agreement letter to the Teaching Assistants ..... 276
Appendix 6: Permission request letter to members of the School Council ............ 277
Appendix 7: Permission request letter to members of the Girls’ Chat Group ........ 277
Appendix 8: Permission request letter to members of the Learning Community ...... 278
Appendix 9: The PhD Action Learning Group’s Learning Community Contract ...... 281
Appendix 10: PhD Action Learning Group’s Document: ‘How we want to work
together’.............................................................................................. 281

Appendix 11: Overview of meetings of the headteachers’ learning set and the themes
discussed ............................................................................................. 282

Appendix 12: Research Project Timeline: From February 2008 to July 2015 ............ 283

Appendix 13: Research Journals and Learning Logs, their collation and analysis ..... 291
  Appendix 13.1: Research journal facsimile ........................................ 292
  Appendix 13.2: Extracts from the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis: Research
  Journal .................................................................................................. 293

  Appendix 13.3: Extract from a PhD action learning set journal, showing the
  highlighting process ............................................................................ 303

  Appendix 13.4: Identification of Emergent and Recurring Themes ............... 304

  Appendix 13.5: Identification of Lines of Inquiry .................................... 310

  Appendix 13.6: Extracts from the teaching assistants’ learning logs ............ 312

  Appendix 13.7: Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue: Extract from
document collated to identify learning ................................................ 313

  Appendix 13.8: Leadership Narrative Three: Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from
document collated to identify learning: ‘What is Racism?’ ....................... 314
Appendix 13.9: Leadership Narrative Three: Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from
document collated to identify learning: Shazia’s Story ............................................315
Appendix 14: Music that has Accompanied My Leadership Journey ..........................316
Appendix 15: Overview of the Active Dialogue Sessions ...........................................319
Appendix 16: School Development Plan 2010 to 2012 ..............................................322
Appendix 17: The School Council’s Version of the School Vision ...............................334
Appendix 18: Table to Evidence the Feedback Outcomes .........................................337
Appendix 19: Letter from Zahra: 06.12.2014 ............................................................342
Appendix 20: Learning Community Responses to the Notion of a Systemic Approach
to Leadership ..................................................................................................................343
Appendix 21: The Family Strategy .............................................................................345
Appendix 22: The Professional Development Strategy ..............................................349
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................354
Tables, Figures and Textboxes

Tables Index

Table 1: The equivalence between National Curriculum Levels and Average Point Scores p.55
Table 2: The comparison between research and inquiry approaches: Comparing notions of cooperative, action research praxeological inquiry p.63
Table 3: The interconnectivity between the research aims, the research questions and the research aims p.69
Table 4: Thematic Framework for Data Analysis p.71
Table 5: The Thematic Framework for Data Analysis with Colour Coding p.71
Table 6: The five levels of reflection and their location and relevance within the research project p.72
Table 7: The inter-connectivity between the identified characteristic features of an 'emancipatory action research learning group/set' (McKinnon, 2009) and the thematic framework for data analysis. p.73
Table 8: The Template for the Application of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis to the Fieldwork p.74
Table 9: Application of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis p.75
Table 10: Overview of the Twelve Leadership Narratives p.82
Table 11: Overview of the Three Leadership Narratives p.86
Table 12: Overview of the Number of Journals p.90
Table 13: Framework to Present the Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations for an Action Research Study p.113
Table 14: Leadership Narrative One: Lines of Inquiry p.129
Table 15: Leadership Narrative Two: Lines of Inquiry p.154
Table 16: The connectivity between each leadership aspect, the research project evidence location, and framework variables (Leithwood & Levin, 2004) p.240
Figures Index

Figure 1: Questions for validity and quality in inquiry p.64
Figure 2: An extract from the transcription of the audio-recorded semi-structured interview p.94
Figure 3: Extract from the research findings in the tabulated format p.95
Figure 4: The Learning Spiral p.97
Figure 5: The Bumps: Representing either the action learning groups, or research themes or aspects of leadership p.97
Figure 6: The ‘Petals’: Representing our learning p.98
Figure 7: The Boteh is elaborated to visualise leadership learning p.98
Figure 8: New Spirals represent new directions and new learning p.99
Figure 9: The emergence of the 12 leadership narratives and reflective dialogues p.101
Figure 10: Rich Picture of my role as practitioner/leader researcher p.123
Figure 11: Visualisation to illustrate Leadership Narrative Two p.147
Figure 12: To show the percentage of pupils at age related expectations and above in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 p.163
Figure 13: Visualisation to illustrate Leadership Narrative Two p.164
Figure 14: What is Bullying? p.183
Figure 15: What makes a good friend? p.185
Figure 16: Shazia tells a story p.187
Figure 17: ‘I am feeling happy that my behaviour has changed.’ p.190
Figure 18: The girls’ academic achievement at the end of Year 6, including a comparison with levels of attainment that were expected nationally and an illustration of the significant progress they made in their learning p.192
Figure 19: Visualisation to illustrate Leadership Narrative Three p.198
Figure 20: Kieran’s original script prior to analysis p.209
Figure 21: Kieran has revisited his reflections applying the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis p.210
Figure 22: Kieran’s original script prior to analysis p.215
Figure 23: Kieran has revisited his reflections and created his own diagram to illustrate systemic leadership p.216
Figure 24: The Leadership Development Web: May 2013 p.230
Figure 25: Defining Leadership within the School Context p.232
Figure 26: The Leadership Web p.234
Figure 27: Visualisation: Themes from the three leadership narratives p.238
Figure 28: Framework to illustrate the connectivity of a ‘Community of Learners’ p.241
Figure 29: Leadership and Learning: A Systemic Approach p.254
Textbox Index

Textbox 1: Prompts for the learning community p. 89
Textbox 2: Asma’s Story p.125
Textbox 3: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.129
Textbox 4: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.131
Textbox 5: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.132
Textbox 6: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.135
Textbox 7: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.140
Textbox 8: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.141
Textbox 9: Teaching Assistant Reflections p.143
Textbox 10: The School Vision p.154
Textbox 11: Freefall Writing Extract 1: 29.11.2010 p.219
Textbox 14: Freefall Writing Extract 4: 20.02.2011 p.221
Textbox 15: Freefall Writing Extract 5: 14.05.2011 p.221
Textbox 16: Freefall Writing Extract 6: 06.08.2011 p.222
Textbox 17: Freefall Writing Extract 7: 06.08.2011 p.222
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARE</td>
<td>The Association for Active Educational Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHT</td>
<td>Assistant Headteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>Assessing Pupil Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>Average Point Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfCSF</td>
<td>Department for Children, Schools and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHT</td>
<td>Deputy Headteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL</td>
<td>English as an Additional Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>English Access Specialist Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EECERA</td>
<td>European Early Childhood Education Research Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEF</td>
<td>Education Endowment Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYFS</td>
<td>Early Years Foundation Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLTA</td>
<td>High Level Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMI</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Inspectorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>Headteacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDACI</td>
<td>Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFA</td>
<td>International Football Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPD</td>
<td>Joint Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Key Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>Local Management of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSL</td>
<td>Literacy Subject Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDS</td>
<td>Midday Supervisor Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSL</td>
<td>Maths Subject Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUGA</td>
<td>Multi-Use Games Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL</td>
<td>National Curriculum Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSL</td>
<td>National College for Leadership of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTL</td>
<td>National College for Teaching and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPQH</td>
<td>National Professional Qualification for Headteachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPQICL</td>
<td>National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted</td>
<td>The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPA</td>
<td>Planning, Preparation and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPM</td>
<td>Pupil Progress Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAISE</td>
<td>Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAL</td>
<td>Raising Early Achievement in Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>Regional School Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATs</td>
<td>Standards Assessment Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCITT</td>
<td>School Centred Initial Teacher Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENCo</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary of Terms

**Andragogical Leadership:** The awareness of and application of andragogical strategies to support and develop adult learning and development within an organisation. An andragogical leader knows how to differentiate in order to meet the developmental needs of the adults within a learning community.

**Freefall writing:** A technique to enable the writer to access and respond to thought processes in a way that is free and is not limited by formal writing conventions.

**Inquiry:** Is the process of the formulation of the questions we need to ask in order to make sense of what is happening.

**Islamophobia:** is the fear of all matters relating to Islam and those who follow Islam

**Leader:** ‘Leader’ to mean either a person who is a practitioner within a defined profession and has a designated leadership role and corresponding responsibilities or a person who takes a lead while ‘seeking and finding a way through.’ The distinction is thus made between ‘designated’ leaders and leaders.

**Learning Community:** Is a group of people who come together to learn. There is a commitment to participation, a shared context and an expectation of improvement around an agreed theme.

**Leadership Narrative:** Is the telling of either a leadership story or leadership journey. A leadership narrative exemplifies aspects of leadership including the research themes. A leadership narrative considers what it means to be leaderful.

**Living Life as … :** Is the acknowledgement of ‘the interconnectivity of our personal and professional lives.’

**Pedagogical Leadership:** Leadership that actively supports and develops effective pedagogical strategies and practice through the continuous development of knowledge and understanding of how children learn taking due regard of learning theories and research.

**Practitioner:** Person engaged in a professional activity with others, within a professional framework that ensures a specific role and responsibilities, purpose and accountability.
**Praxeological:** A notion that combines a consideration of theory, practice and reflection; noting emergent concerns. A praxeological process is participatory, multi-perspective and aims to be transformational, acknowledging practitioners as theorists.

**Researcher:** Person engaged in academic inquiry, working within a robust and rigorous framework that ensures accountability, validity and authenticity.
Part 1: Introduction, Research Purpose, Line of Inquiry, Aims and Questions
Chapter 1: The Leadership Narratives Begin

“Everyone is born to lead in the same way everyone is born to learn. The leader may be seen as a person in whom the dream of making a difference has been kept alive”

(Lambert, 2003, p. 422).

This research thesis is a narrative representation of a leadership learning journey. It is a collaborative and responsive inquiry into the process of action research (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002) as a multidisciplinary and sustainable approach to school development. Set within the context of constant change in primary education in England, this research project is an investigation into how a primary school developed as a learning community. It illustrates the school’s developing leadership within a systemic approach, which evolves as an integral part of the action research process (Whitaker, 2009). The notion of inquiry serves as a starting point for development, the identification of themes, evaluation and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations. Making leadership visible through the telling of our narratives provides the threads that are interwoven to create the whole piece. Through engagement in this research process school based researchers, children and adults, have engaged in practitioner led learning and told their stories which, within the context of this research project, are named, ‘leadership narratives.’

In this chapter the context for this research project is presented in terms of primary school education in England since 1988. This context setting serves as the introduction to the school learning community, the research purpose and line of inquiry. The potential for practitioner research to influence leadership theory is considered. An outline of the research project, an indication of the research outcomes, impact and limitations and an overview of this research thesis completes this chapter.
**Context**

**Primary Schools in England since 1988**

Before presenting an overview of changes in primary school education since 1988, a brief description of how primary schools are organised and managed is given.

Primary schools in England provide non-statutory educational provision for children aged four-years old and five-years old until the term after their fifth birthday. This is referred to as the 'reception' year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014). Statutory provision is for children aged five-years old to eleven-years old. Most children aged eleven-years old leave primary school to start their secondary phase of formal education. There are a few remaining local authorities\(^1\) where primary education is organised within First schools, for children aged four-years old to nine years old and Middle schools for children aged nine-years old to thirteen-years old.

Formal educational provision is divided into 'key stages'. The primary phase of education covers Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Key Stage One is for children aged from five-years old to seven-years old, generally organised into two year groups, ‘Year One’ and ‘Year Two’. Key Stage Two is for children aged from seven-years old to eleven-years old, organised into four year groups.

The governance of primary schools in England has been, until the recent past, managed by a voluntary group called the 'governing body'. With the implementation of more diverse school constitutions, such as academies, free schools and federations, the education governance is more variable and includes school organisations being overseen by Regional School Commissioners (RSCs) who act on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. Within the context of this research project the focus is on school management and leadership through the work of the school’s governing body. Since 1988 the statutory role and responsibilities of the elected members of the governing body have been strengthened, diversified and become increasingly focussed on accountability and performance management. The relationship with the designated  

\(^1\) In England local government is organised within designated Local Authorities.
senior school leaders, led by the school headteacher, has altered. It is a professional relationship and a relationship that is key to the success of the school and therefore one that can generate pressures and anxieties for both parties (Robinson, 2012). The majority of primary schools in England are strategically led by the senior leadership team in partnership with the governing body. The senior leadership team consists of, depending on the size of the school, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders for literacy and mathematics, the lead for inclusion, the school business manager and in the case of larger schools assistant headteachers. The senior leadership team has additional responsibilities to fulfil for the financial management of the school organisation, including management of the school site in its entirety, catering services, cleaning services and business services. The governing body holds the legal responsibility for the staffing structure of the school. This responsibility is delegated to the headteacher and the senior leadership team except for the recruitment and retention of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

In primary schools children’s learning is traditionally facilitated by qualified teachers and they are education professionals. Teaching assistants are education and care professionals who are trained in supporting children as learners. Recently the teaching assistant role has been under academic and government scrutiny (Education Endowment Foundation, 2014). Opportunities for teaching assistants to develop as a professional body has been a priority for our school and features in this research project in Chapter 6. Local Authorities have retained statutory duties for maintained schools within their designated locality. These duties focus on accountabilities including school standards which, in the primary school phase, are statistically analysed by outcomes at the end of Key Stage Two.

---

2 School size is determined by the designated number of children for the school as planned for and agreed by the Local Authority.

3 The ‘lead for inclusion’ is responsible for children with special rights inclusive of protected characteristics.

4 Maintained schools in England are those that are publicly funded by the State.
Raising standards, in terms of children’s academic achievements, has been the focus in schools in England since the late nineteen eighties with the implementation of the National Curriculum and Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in 1991 (Alexander, 2010). The dilemma for schools has been to develop and sustain meaningful pedagogy within a climate of formal testing of literacy and numeracy skills (Robinson, 2012). It is evidentially true that the changes in primary school education since 1988 have impacted on primary school culture in ways that are now irreversible (Alexander, 2010). The dilemma of raising standards has fuelled the education debate in England and specifically at each and every General Election. It is within this educational climate that primary schools, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, are engaged now in collaborative programmes of self-improvement, whether as members of academy chains, federations or less formal local authority arrangements (Robinson, 2012; Hargreaves, 2012). A prevailing concern is for the development of practitioner-led, sustainable and transformational school improvement that acknowledges the deep pedagogical learning required within each school learning community and the need for engagement with multidisciplinary local, national and international partners (Alexander, 2010).

Primary schools in England have experienced high levels of political and social change since 1988 (Alexander, 2010). Robin Alexander and his team presented an overview of government legislation and guidance since 1944, which they called milestones. This is not the place to highlight every initiative but it is useful to acknowledge the significant changes experienced in England in the past 28 years. By 1988 the Conservative party had been in power for nine years. The Education Reform Act of 1988 heralded the introduction of the National Curriculum5, Key Stages and the Local Management of Schools (LMS)6 followed by the introduction of the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) and League Tables in 1991. The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) was set up in 1992, to replace the majority of the school inspection responsibilities of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI). A change in government in 1997

5 The National Curriculum is defined and explained from page 21.
6 The Local Management of Schools (LMS) was implemented following the 1988 Education Reform Act. The impact on schools was a greater responsibility and accountability for devolved resources including financial management and related decision-making powers.
saw the Labour party intensify the rate of change with significant government legislation and guidance including the introduction of professional qualifications for school leadership and the National Strategies, implemented in 1998 for numeracy and literacy, combined in 2003 as the ‘Primary National Strategy’. Two hundred and forty three guidance documents were published from 1999 to 2010. Local authorities were tasked with the development of a unique integrated approach to public services for children and young people and this was strengthened by the integration of public services under the banner, ‘Every Child Matters: Changes for Children in Schools’ (DfES 2004), alongside the development of extended schools7. Significant changes in the domain of initial teacher training have been numerous (DfE, 2015) and continue as the current coalition government pursues a school based initial teacher training agenda.

Reflecting on the part political agendas have played over the past twenty-five years, it is a challenge to extrapolate the politicians’ view of the child and of childhood. The frustrations of the education world run deep (Alexander, 2010). In England, as elsewhere, there is a rich resource of knowledge and pedagogical understanding about children and young people, yet UK governments continue to focus on a performance-oriented methodology to drive school improvement (Bell, 2008). In England the education system is performance-oriented rather than one that is learning-oriented (Watkins, 2001). A learning-oriented education system would allow every child to experience success and have their individual achievements acknowledged as has been proven through rigorous research (Watkins, 2005). Schools that want to hold their integrity and are concerned with the wellbeing of both children and adults (Rose, 2009), adhere to a learning-oriented perspective in a performance-oriented educational world. The evidence, through ‘Self-Improving Schools’ initiatives (Hargreaves, 2012), is indicating that the tensions created by a performance orientation can be alleviated through collaborative and participatory approaches across the school system with a positive impact on academic outcomes for children (Hargreaves, 2012; Robinson, 2012).

7 The extended schools programme funded the expansion of ‘out of school’ provision and was developed to provide children with enrichment opportunities at the beginning and end of the school day and during school holidays with a remit to raise educational standards.
The leadership narratives, presented in this research project, contribute to the current national educational debate.

**Introducing the Learning Community**

The school learning community that is the subject of this action research project is a larger-than-average primary school with, at the time of writing, a capacity for four hundred and fifty children. The school is an inner city school in an area of high disadvantage as indicated on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). A school opened on the current site in 1897 and was originally a school for boys. Following Local Authority reorganisation in 1983 the school was given a new name and became an all through co-educational primary school for children aged four-years old to eleven-years old. The school is a culturally rich and diverse community. All the children attending are multilingual and over 90% are Muslim. Over twenty different languages are spoken and the children’s countries of heritage are Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, East Timor and The Seychelles. The Pakistani heritage community is the majority minority community in the city. In April 2014 the community celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the arrival of the first Pakistani heritage immigrants. Although the vast majority of children attending the school are of Pakistani heritage this demographic is changing. In 2008 the percentage of Pakistani heritage pupils was at 93% and by 2014 was at 83%. This changing demographic can be explained by three contributing factors. Firstly aspirational Pakistani heritage families have relocated to more affluent locations in the city. Secondly, a rise in immigration from other countries, including those Eastern European countries that have joined the European Economic Community. Finally, new immigrant families are housed in the school’s locality, often in rented accommodation.

In spite of this changing demographic the mobility of children has remained below the national average. On average under fifteen children left the school in an academic year and under fifteen children were registered as in-year admissions. The Local Authority has identified a rapid rise in the numbers of children aged six-years old and below and demographic predictions into the future remain high. As an outcome, in April 2013, the
school became involved in the local strategic plan the ‘Expanding Schools Programme’. By September 2021, the school will be a four form entry school throughout. Each year group could total a maximum of one hundred and twenty children with a school total of eight hundred and forty children. Therefore, alongside significant national changes for schools (Bell, 2008) we are leading and managing local change. Engagement in this research project has provided andragogical learning which in turn supported the leadership of change and the conceptualisation of leadership across the school as evidenced in Chapter 9.

This research project explains and reflects on school leadership within the context of not only significant national political change but also within the context of international political, economic and historical upheaval. The impact of world events has a far-reaching significance on our local schools, and therefore on the children and adults who learn in these organisations (Westley et al, 2007; Nabhani et al, 2012). Key world events that impact on our political and social stability include, 9/11, 7/7, conflict and war around the globe, the impact of migration (both economic and in search of asylum), the Arab Spring and the continuing world economic crises. In some respects these events, alongside the rapid rate of technological change can appear overwhelming to contemplate within the context of one research project.

The Research Purpose

This research project is a study of primary school leadership. It presents how school communities can develop leadership that is sustainable and recognises successful leadership within the whole school team, the children and the community which it serves. Therefore this thesis presents a sustainable approach to school development and promotes responsive leadership, supports accountability and recognises aspirations in learning and successful outcomes for children. The focus on the development of ‘sustainable’ school improvement contributes to contemporary school leadership theory and practice as well as counteracting school improvement methods that can either resort to the ‘quick fix’ or be overly dependent on the lead leader, for example the headteacher, driving developments exclusively.
This research project is an inquiry into the process of action research (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002) as a methodology for developing this responsive, collaborative and sustainable approach to school development, with the children as primary beneficiaries. Reason explains, “The idea of co-operative inquiry is simple. Fundamentally it is that people work together as co-researchers in exploring and changing their world” (Reason, 1988, p.18). This research inquiry embraces the notion of a learning community as a group of people who come together to learn with a commitment to participation, a shared context and an expectation of improvement around an agreed theme. That there is a contribution to the development of an organisation for the purpose of raising aspirations and enabling children to reach their potential. This research inquiry process makes visible the research process as one of interconnectivity between systems, one that is value led, that acknowledges social and cultural capital and thus has moral purpose and seeks social justice. A primary theme of the research is the notion of the school as a learning community that embraces both the learning communities within the organisation and those outside the immediate school environment. The focus of the research is a multidisciplinary, integrated systems and inquiry approach to primary school leadership. Within the context of this research project the notion of a multidisciplinary approach is defined to be one that acknowledges the range of professional disciplines represented within the school learning community from early childhood, education, care, social care, local government and business.

The Potential for Practitioner Research to Influence Leadership Theory

Current notions of leadership in children’s services are influenced by the significant political changes since 1997, that is, the development of integrated services provided through local authority based children’s services (DfES, 2003; DfES, 2004). Leadership has been identified as the key to unlocking children’s potential, to children achieving academic success and making a difference to children’s lives (Leithwood et al, 2006; Ofsted, 2009). Defining good and effective leadership and what makes the difference is a complex task. Leadership concepts in children’s services in England are informed by leadership theory as presented within the national qualifications for headteachers
(NPQH) (NCTL, 2015) and leaders of integrated services (NPQICL) (NCSL, 2004a) as well as output from the National College of School Leadership (Hargreaves, 2012). The notion of ‘Systems Leadership’ as defined by Collarbone and West-Burnham (2008) and Robinson (2012) is to the fore in terms of school leadership development alongside the leadership theorising of Hargreaves (2012) and his proposition for Joint Professional Development (JPD) where practitioners learn together either within one school or across a triad of schools. In addition Brighouse and Woods (1999), Claxton (2008), Davies and Brighouse (2008), Fullan (2005), Gronn (2010), Hargreaves (2012), Lambert (1998) and MacBeath et al (2012) are influential thinkers and academics in school leadership. There is a significant resource to support thinking in school leadership and leadership theory. Action research methodology is recognised as an effective strategy for sustainable school improvement (Lillis, 2000; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). The challenge for schools is to create a learning organisation that acknowledges the context of the local community, meets the learning and developmental needs of the children and is making a difference for children so that they are reaching their potential as individuals and as members of a diverse and dynamic learning community.

This research project developed practitioner-led participatory action research embracing a multidisciplinary, collaborative and responsive inquiry approach. It was imperative that academic outcomes for children at the school improved. This was inclusive of improvement in progress made and levels of attainment in comparison with national averages. At the start of the research project attainment at the end of the two key stages was well below national expectations and progress made was inconsistent, with particularly low levels of progress for children in Key Stage Two. An outcome of this research project is a contribution to leadership theory that advocates a systemic and praxeological way of working and learning. Throughout the research process a consideration of the conceptualisation of leadership within leaderful learning communities (Lambert, 2003), an interpretation of inquiry (Marshall, 1999) and systems theory (Whitaker, 2009) informing fieldwork analysis and the relevance of a systemic and praxeological approach (Pascal & Bertram, 2012; Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012) to leadership have been pursued.
Outline of the Research Project

Prior to explaining the research plan it is necessary for me in my role as the research project author to clarify my positionality in relation to my fellow researchers and colleagues. I retain several roles as the author of the piece. I am the lead researcher, I am an early years practitioner and I am the headteacher of the primary school that is the research subject. I bring, to these roles, specific knowledge, understanding, experience, positions and passions which enrich this research study as well as creating research limitations. Specifically, I have lived and worked in another country, I consider myself to be an expressive artist and I am an early years practitioner working within the primary school phase of formal education. Positionality, within the context of this research study, is explored further in the methodology chapter. Here I expand on aspects of my personal motivation and personal experiences.

My personal and professional life experiences have included a period of time living and working in Pakistan. The significance of what I did, learnt and appreciated is evident in the choices I made on my return to the UK, that is, I have chosen to work in communities where the Pakistani heritage community has settled. I have made a conscious decision to give back to a community that, in my personal experience, has welcomed, informed and nourished me.

The expressive arts hold a special place for me as a human being and creative artist. In a study of this breadth and depth I have actively sought opportunities to ensure I have been nourished through engagement with music and art. From my personal perspective, rhythms of the past, present and future had to be captured through my freefall wiring, research reflections and when communicating my ideas to action learning partners.

My career, which now spans a period of thirty five years, has primarily sat within the early childhood education sector in primary, first, infant and nursery schools. When employed in the primary school sector I facilitated learning for older children in the expressive arts. My status as an early years specialist leading a primary school in the role of headteacher is uncommon in England.
From the outset of this formal process of research study I became a member of the PhD Action Learning Group based at the Pen Green Research Centre, Corby. The notion of this group was a motivation to access doctorate level study. Discourse and reflective research journalling were important research processes and embedded from the beginning. The PhD Action Learning Group was significant in supporting members in their position as practitioner researchers (Schön, 1983). The group supported and challenged the process for each research project. This group placed the leadership narratives within an innovative dynamic for doctoral study: a dynamic that added passion and rigor to the research process.

Since 2000 I was employed as headteacher of a nursery school. By 2008 the school had developed into an Early Years Centre; a multidisciplinary setting providing a nursery school, Children’s Centre and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training. I was working with the local authority as an associate headteacher offering advisory consultancy to several local primary schools. Early in 2008 my original proposition in embarking on this research project was to investigate how early years leadership theory sits within the English primary phase of education. Where and how could leadership theory developing within the early years sector, make a difference and possibly transform primary school settings? From September 2008, I found myself in a unique position of being that early years person in the role of primary headteacher. Therefore the main purpose of the research, which is in developing leadership theory to impact on primary school education, had not changed but the vehicle of transformation had.

Boog (2014) advocates that researchers have to give the most time to the first stage of the research project. Phases 1 and 2 of this research project took almost three years to complete. During that time knowledge and understanding about the school had to be acquired. Collaborative approaches were being developed as professional relationships and trust emerged. Throughout this time the practitioner researcher reflected, documented and shared reflections and leadership learning with the PhD Action Learning Group and a group of colleague headteachers (Appendix 11). Praxeological inquiry was enriched through reference to leadership and research methodological literature and theory. The second phase was a further exploration of the research...
context and two professional development and community projects were planned, implemented and evaluated and one is documented in Chapter 6. Within the school learning community, an inclusive approach to involvement in this research project was adopted. Action learning groups included the teaching assistant action learning group and the school vision action learning groups. In addition a girls' chat group and members of the school's leadership team were specifically identified as sample groups. Outcomes from this initial phase provided research findings and results which influenced the final conclusions and recommendations.

The school's Vision Day in November 2010 marked the formal start of the third phase of this action research project, the research project plan and implementation. The formulation of the school's vision was integral to the development of the strategic plan. Each action learning group, inclusive of the school council\(^8\), reflected on what was already happening within aspects of school life. They identified their concerns, why they were concerned and their future actions to improve practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). There was a collective need to be self-directive, to make choices and decisions that would make a difference for the children in transforming their learning. The School Vision was created and all members of the school team contributed to the School Development Plan (SDP), 2010 to 2012 (Appendix 16).

Phase 4 was a continual cycle of evaluation and planning the next steps. Collaborative approaches to inquiry were enriched through the development of responsive approaches. In January 2013 the school team revisited the school’s vision for the last time for the purposes of this research project. Collated collaborative outcomes are presented in Chapter 7.

Phase 5 represented the emergent quality of this research project and the notion of a praxeological approach to research planning. The period from November 2010 to

---

8 The majority of primary schools in England have ‘school councils’. A school council is a decision making body made up of elected members, all children.
October 2013 was not one of smooth progression with ever increasing confidence in the conceptualisation of leadership. A number of events and circumstances destabilised the forward trajectory. One event of significance was a racist incident initiated by three girls which is retold in Leadership Narrative Three. Further turbulence for the learning community was experienced in November 2011 when the school was judged by Ofsted to be in ‘a notice to improve’ (Ofsted, 2011), an Ofsted category.

Phase 6 saw a focus on research documentation and the beginning of assessing the impact of the theoretical underpinning. Research documentation has been essential in sharing with co-researchers and members of the PhD Action Learning Group, thus enabling the process of evidence collation, data analysis and confirmation of research results. Co-researchers responded during this phase and reflected on their understanding of leadership and learning. Their leadership stories are reported in Chapter 9. The thematic framework for data analysis was created.

Phase 7 was a period for further reflection and making sense of the fieldwork. The impact of freefall writing as research method came to the fore. Making sense of the research results brought conclusive evidence concerning the research impact on and for children. During this phase Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) returned to the school in January 2013 and the school was judged as ‘good’. Members of the learning community revisited leadership in May 2013 and the Leadership Development Web was created.

Transference of new knowledge and research dissemination marked Phase 8 of the research process. Opportunities were taken to disseminate findings to students and headteachers. Such dissemination has allowed for the continual checking of the formulation of leadership theory. In October 2013 the school team met to reflect on and evaluate our leadership journey. The director from the Pen Green Research Centre, Corby joined us as critical friend and contributed to the process of reflection. These opportunities for reflection, identification of future actions and collation of responses were documented and contribute to the research findings and results.
Finally, Phase 9 of the research project saw the consideration of the impact of the research project on the school learning community. This phase has involved sharing the writing-up process with school colleagues and co-researchers, including the children involved in the central piece, The Girls’ Chat Group, the PhD Action Learning Group and the headteachers’ learning set. This phase has supported the search for validity, authenticity and rigour. It was timely to revisit the notion of research limitations and these are presented towards the end of Chapter 9. In conclusion a reconsideration of the emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry influenced the final interpretation of leadership and learning. It is to be noted that research phases did overlap.

I acknowledge my role as headteacher and my power as lead learner within the context of this research process (Boog, 2003; John, 2012b). I recognise that I fulfil the role of lead researcher and facilitator. Therefore I have had to consider the potential for bias in the research focus, methodology, processes and outcomes. In the positions I held during this research, authenticity, validation and rigour have been sought through requests for the right of participation by co-researchers and participants, gaining permission and the presentation of research methods and outcomes to a range of forums. A consideration of research limitations and ethics is presented in Chapter 5 and a review of limitations is provided in the concluding discourse in Chapter 10. Due to the school’s context and vulnerabilities that are told through the leadership narratives, I have made some research decisions in isolation. This factor exemplifies the complexities of school leadership and contributes to the discourse concerning sustainable leadership styles (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). However, it has always been my enduring aim to create the context, the environment and the conditions for colleagues to lead in research conceptualisation, planning, implementation, evaluation and in the identification of conclusions and recommendations.

An Indication of the Research Outcomes

The outcomes of this research project illuminate the interconnectivity of action learning groups that have a common perspective and moral purpose to make a difference in the lives of children thus enabling children to develop their resilience, academic
achievements and proactive responses to social injustice. This inquiry contributes to the body of work of research within rich and diverse cultural contexts (Elton-Chalcraft, 2009; Pascal & Bertram, 2009).

This research inquiry informs and enriches the debate concerning what is right for primary school-aged children in how adults in schools consider and reflect on pedagogy, pupil voice and themes of social justice. It illustrates how we can successfully build strong and resilient learning communities led by both adults and children who are recognised leaders. Primary schools are under increasing pressure to conform, to follow models of leadership that are perceived as replicable (Adonis, 2012; Bell, 2008), rather than leadership that is evolutionary, emergent and driven by the school community. This investigation incorporates the implementation of ways to facilitate and develop discourse and action research projects that further inspire and develop rich learning for primary-aged children.

This action research project demonstrates that value-led, patient and sustainable leadership is desirable in times of rapid and constant change (Whitaker, 1993). The outcomes of this research project are considered from the perspectives of the practitioner researcher, the children, co-researchers and colleagues in the PhD Action Learning Group. It is argued that the role of school leader is strongly linked to that of academic researcher. However, it is acknowledged that the potential for research bias, without due regard for research rigour and validation, creates academic risk. Therefore attention has been paid to the engagement with co-researchers and research participants through rights to non-participation, permissions, active involvement and presentation of research outcomes through professional meetings and sharing writing as an on-going process. The research line of inquiry recognises that knowledge of, and the application of research methodology and academic theory, provides a framework for sustainable school development for both the adults and children in the school learning community (Lillis, 2000). This research project does not provide a blueprint for all schools in how to approach pedagogical and andragogical leadership but it does exemplify how the application of action research methodology can and does impact on sustainable improvement in outcomes for the children they serve (Fletcher, 2014).
The principle outcomes of the research inquiry were the recognition of confident learners (Nutbrown, 1996), improved academic outcomes for children (Watkins, 2005), the development of trusting relationships in leaderful teams (Whalley, 1994; Lambert 2003), school leadership that sought consistency and innovation (Whitaker, 1997) and thus the emergence of new leadership theory. Leadership theory is demonstrated through the creation of a ‘Leadership Development Web’. The predominant themes that have emerged are systems consciousness, wellbeing, social justice, pedagogical leadership, andragogical leadership and organisational learning. A praxeological approach to inquiry is acknowledged within an action research paradigm. The evidence to substantiate these claims is presented in Part 4 and further discussed in Chapter 10.

To conclude this opening chapter, this research project is about primary school leadership in an area of rich diversity and high economic disadvantage. It is an investigation into sustainable school development through the application of action research methodology within systemic and praxeological approaches. It is about the work of action learning groups and the development of ways of working that are both collaborative and responsive. It places the ideas of social justice and moral purpose to the forefront of school development without diluting the impact on academic outcomes for children. Finally the purpose of this research project was to develop our school team in ways that are just, value andragogical strategies and keep children at the centre of all we do.

We learnt, as a learning community, that qualitative action research does provide a structure for school improvement that is collaborative, responsive and effective. Within the domain of school improvement, we discovered the value of feedback in our adult learning, the value of self-evaluation processes that are inclusive in involving all members of the school community. I identified the andragogical strategies that impacted on and enriched adult learning. In terms of my learning as researcher praxeological and systemic approaches were developed. This research project exemplifies the connectivity and interdependency between leadership and research. A complex research process is presented here, which brings the power of the child’s voice to the fore as well as the voices of my fellow practitioner researchers. At times my research voice is displaced by
the voices of others. I consider this to be a strength of this project.

Aspects of this action research project present a source for research design and development. It is claimed that future researchers could revisit the thematic framework for data analysis. The phased praxeological approach to action research is worthy of future development. The process presented for creating a school vision and school development plan has potential for future implementation. Finally the process of action learning with children as co-researchers advocates an approach of open and safe discourse and reflective writing with impact on organisational learning.

**Overview of the Research Thesis**

Chapters 1 and 2 set the scene for this research project, ‘Our Leadership Narratives’. Chapter 1 has provided the context for the research, the research purpose, outline and the research outcomes. In Chapter 2 the research aims and questions are presented and the notion of research as living inquiry is explored. Part 2 of this research project, the literature review, is presented in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 describes leadership theory and action research relevant to the research project. Chapter 4 explores the notion of organisational learning within the context of meeting the needs of the multilingual learner. Part 3 explains the research methodology in Chapter 5 and the four research themes are identified and justified. Part 4 consists of Chapters 6 to 9 and is the presentation of the research findings and results. Finally part 5, in Chapter 10, discusses, states, and confirms the contribution to leadership theory, the research conclusions and the recommendations.
Chapter 2: Research as Living Inquiry

“Living life as inquiry means that I hold open the boundary between research and my life generally. Often, therefore I am aware that a theme I am pursuing in research is also relevant to some other area of my life, and I will seek to work with, rather than suppress, that realisation”

(Marshall, 1999, p.4).

The idea of ‘Living Life as Inquiry’ (Marshall, 1999) has had a significant influence on the formulation of the research project aims and research questions. Living life as inquiry embraces action research methodology within the context of the researcher’s perspective on her own life and in recognition of the interrelatedness of personal and professional lives. In this chapter the research project line of inquiry, aims and research questions are stated. The notion of ‘living life as inquiry’ is elaborated upon and inquiry is defined within the context of this research project.

Research Line of Inquiry and Project Aims

To restate, the research project line of inquiry is whether collaborative action research is a sustainable approach to school development that promotes responsive leadership, accountability and aspirations in learning and successful outcomes at many levels?

The aims of this action research project are to:

Reflect on and further develop notions of leadership as a dynamic and creative learning process from both a personal and learning community perspective, with the prime purpose of impacting on children’s lives

Investigate and identify how collaborative and responsive inquiry can influence, shape and transform children’s learning and school leadership

Establish the value of action research as a method for sustainable school development and improvement through the presentation of evidence of impact that makes a difference for children.
Research Questions

From the beginning of this research process reference to the theories of inquiry and action research processes were constant. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) emphasise the starting point, ‘How do I improve my practice?’ The process of formulating the research questions is informed by the continuous process of learning through reading, active discourse, pause and reflection and noting what is relevant. In finalising the research questions it was important to ensure the questions were fit for purpose, an exemplification of the process of making the familiar unfamiliar (Marshall et al, 2011).

The research questions are:

How can learning communities investigate and influence leadership as a dynamic and creative process to impact on children’s lives?

How can learning communities, including children, make their learning and leadership visible?

How can collaborative inquiry facilitate the shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?

How can action research support sustainable school improvement to impact on outcomes for children in primary schools?

Defining Inquiry

Marshall explores who the researchers are and the importance of integrity when taking on that role (Marshall, 1999). As a researcher it is one’s intention to create knowledge. Marshall highlights the political concerns of this potentially powerful act, and states, “Creating knowledge is political business.” I have thought deeply about Marshall’s concept of ‘Living Life as Inquiry’ and the interconnectivity between our personal and professional lives. In this thesis living life as inquiry has equal relevance to leadership as it has to research.

A recurring theme of research, by its nature, is related to the questions asked. The framing of those questions is critical to the investigation. Through the research process the intention is to pause, reflect, formulate the questions, then explore, investigate,
discover and finally influence theory. What follows is a consideration of ‘inquiry’ reflecting on cooperative and collaborative inquiry, participatory inquiry and praxeological research inquiry.

Cooperative inquiry requires co-researchers to co-construct the research questions and formulate the actions to follow. From my experience as the leader of an early years integrated centre and a school leader I could identify with this process in how we work together to formulate our development and improvement plans, originating from our lines of inquiry. There is a process of collective decision making about agreeing concerns, areas to focus on, future actions and how it is known that aims and objectives have been achieved. Members of the research community have each other for support, encouragement, challenge and recognition of achievements. Stringer presents the term ‘Inquiry in Use’ (Stringer, 1999, p.11). In designated leadership roles there is an expectation that organisations will “enhance the lives of the people with whom it is engaged” (ibid). Making a difference, that research outcomes will be useful, is intrinsic to this research project. It is both an expectation and a pressure.

Reason describes “authentic collaboration and dialogue” (1988, p.11). Authenticity relates to integrity as a leader. It is integrity and authenticity that enables the development of ways forward that are both positive and appreciative (Torbert, 2006). Reason talks about the idea where team members are approached with love and concern and discards ‘hierarchy’ and ‘compulsive control’ (Reason, 1988, p.15). Faced with the reality of the English school system, although desirable this approach is a challenge to implement. Education in England is a public service where high levels of stress and anxiety are experienced (Robinson, 2012). It is acknowledged that workload and the combination of internal and external pressures can be overwhelming. The acknowledgement of the depth of challenge in the workplace intertwined with unsuccessful aspects of the research project add strength and are as powerful as the indicators of success and achievement. The ‘areas of shadow’ are not to be avoided (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formoshino, 2012, p.603).

The notion of leadership and research, as emergent processes, appeals. In the role of leader one starts out with an idea of the leader you want to be but it is a role and
responsibility that emerges and responds to needs, experiences, people and events (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012, MacBeath, 2012). The same can be applied to the field of research. At the beginning of a research project there is an idea that is emergent and responsive to needs, experiences, people and events. What is most thought provoking is the inquiry process that team members embark on together. Stringer describes participatory inquiry (Stringer, 1999) within the context of community-based action research. Participatory inquiry requires the engagement of all organisational stakeholders. It creates the opportunity for meaningful and challenging dialogue to think deeply about what is happening within an organisation. He identifies the characteristics of being “democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing” (Stringer, 1999, p.10). Participatory inquiry is relevant to a systemic approach to school leadership. It supports the facilitation of team learning and the creation of a shared vision. A community-based action research project, by definition, has to make a difference to the lives of the people who engage with the service.

Early childhood theorists have developed the theory of praxeological research. Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho emphasise the need to ask, “What is the nature of the phenomena to be studied? What are the central problems to be addressed? What is the reality to be understood?” (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012, p. 471). Thus there is an acknowledgement of the complexity of the inquiry process. Praxeological research connects with the idea of a systemic approach to leadership because of the stated concern of the unravelling of complexity. It has emerged from and connects with action research methodology with a focus on the transformational and change processes as well as the constructivist ideal of creating new knowledge. A praxeological approach to research is in the qualitative research paradigm and validates the telling of ‘life learning stories’ (ibid p.594). It is practitioner led and values the emergent as a research characteristic. It is for these reasons that a praxeological approach is included in the comparison of inquiry and research processes as illustrated in Table 2. A praxeological approach sits well within this action research project because it is through the leadership narratives that the aim of illuminating the visibility of leadership is to be achieved. A praxeological approach, as Pascal and Bertram argue, explores the dilemma of capturing and valuing a “polyphonic, multi-perspective approach” (Pascal & Bertram, 2012, p.483). They acknowledge the role of “adventurers, encouraging leaders, explorers and risk
takers” in their quest to create transformed cross cultural, multidisciplinary public services for young children (ibid). The possibilities of a praxeological approach to research within early childhood education and care have been explored. This research project attempts to explore a praxeological approach within a primary school context.

For the purposes of this research project, inquiry is defined to mean the process of the formulation of the questions to ask in order to make sense of what is happening. To elaborate, inquiry takes into account the interconnectivity of our personal and professional lives. Inquiry is difficult, challenging and causes disequilibrium as well as being rewarding, inspiring and enriching. To “love the questions” (Rilke, 1929 in 2011, p. 18) and the inquiry process strengthens the resolve to be collaborative and responsive, to pause, reflect and seek ways forward, to act, evaluate and influence theory. First and second person inquiry are honoured and supported in the endeavour to ensure child and adult agency (Marshall et al, 2011).

In this research project the terms ‘practitioner’, ‘researcher’ and ‘leader’ are defined as follows:

**Practitioner** to mean a person engaged in a professional activity with others, within a professional framework that ensures a specific role and responsibilities, purpose and accountability

**Researcher** to mean a person engaged in academic inquiry, working within a robust and rigorous framework that ensures accountability, validity and authenticity

**Leader** to mean either a person who is a practitioner within a defined profession and has a designated leadership role and corresponding responsibilities or a person who takes a lead while ‘seeking and finding a way through.’ The distinction is thus made between ‘designated’ leaders and leaders.

To be an effective practitioner in a rapidly changing socio-political context requires one to have the skills, knowledge and expertise of a researcher. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is a core function of designated leadership roles. The term practitioner/leader is to be connected to the term researcher. From my perspective I
am a practitioner/leader researcher. Each role has equal validity and aspects of accountability. Each role has a specific part to play as well as being interconnected.

**First-Person and Second-Person Inquiry**

Marshall, Coleman and Reason (2011) provide clarity in first-person and second-person inquiry. In terms of first-person inquiry they explain that engagement in action research emerges from practitioner practice and is a participatory approach. There is a focus on paying attention to identified lines of inquiry, personal responses and how evidence is generated to substantiate theoretical claims. They state that first-person inquiry “begins with paying greater attention to everyday practice and how we make sense of our lives, making the familiar less familiar and more open to questioning” (2011, p31). Torbert confirms first-person research as a means for the practitioner researcher to attend to their actions. It is claimed that ‘first-, second- and third- person forms of research are ‘mutually necessary’ (Torbert, 2006, p172).

Second-person inquiry denotes research where members of a learning community learn together, for example, in the action learning groups as demonstrated in this research project. The group members have mutual concerns and the nature of discourse is valued. Third-person inquiry describes research where there is an insider/outsider construct and the researcher comes into the workplace to implement a research programme having gained permissions.

Fulfilling the roles of practitioner, leader and researcher in this research project I confirm that this is first person research and that second person discourse presents the authentic voices of co-researchers and research participants. I acknowledge that this is academic discourse and I aim to achieve the pursuance of clarity, rigour and validity. The narrative approach is varied in this research thesis. Presentation in the first and third persons is considered appropriate and is in recognition of the academic status of this piece.

There are many leadership theories to explore, examine, revisit and critique and a growing number of theories that explore concepts of inquiry. Cooperative inquiry and
collaborative inquiry (Reason, 1988; Heron, 1996; Marshall, 1999) all offer models of approach. This research project will contribute to this body of knowledge through a reflection on the power and impact of the questions we ask within the dialogic interactions that take place in a primary school. Questions that are proposed for moving learning on within a school learning community, as well as informing the outcomes of this research study.

Having introduced and presented the context for this research project, stated the research line of inquiry, aims and the research questions and deliberated on living life as inquiry the literature review follows. The two principle themes of the literature review are leadership theory (Chapter 3) and an exploration of organisational learning within the context of meeting the needs of multilingual learners (Chapter 4).
Part 2: Literature Review
Chapter 3: Making Leadership Visible

“From our diverse heritages and experiences, we had come to the same basic belief that developing and sustaining egalitarian and supportive environments and leadership, which promote reflectivity, open dialogue, invite challenge and also a shared vision, values and agreed standards for practice and relating, unlock the creativity of individuals and groups – children, families and communities – and maximise their potential for lifelong growth, development and resilience”

(John, 2011, p.147).

Part 2, the literature review, presented in Chapters 3 and 4 sets the scene for Part 3, the research methodology followed by Part 4, the research project fieldwork and results. The purpose of Chapter 3 is to consider leadership theory within the context of primary schools in England, the impact action research has had on educational research and to focus on two leadership concepts which in this thesis are considered as strategies for leadership development. They are leadership toxins and nutrients, and critical friendships. Finally, in the concluding paragraph, aspects that inform the identification of the research themes (Chapter 5) are confirmed.

Leadership Theory

In Chapter 1 the changes in primary school education in England over the last twenty five years were explained. One consequence of this period of extensive and at times rapid change and development is that school leadership has diversified, become increasingly complex and a focus for educational research (Gronn, 2010). With an increasingly performance-oriented educational landscape (Watkins, 2005) the need to address and improve school leadership has become imperative. What follows is a consideration and critique of a sample of contemporary leadership theories, including an appreciation of a constructivist approach to leadership, moral and sustainable leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992; Hargreaves, 2003; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006) and passionate leadership (Davies & Brighouse, 2008, Preedy et al, 2012). These four leadership theories
do not exist in isolation. They are interconnected and share theoretical underpinnings. These leadership theories steer away from what Gronn describes as the leadership style of a heroic or charismatic disposition (Gronn, 2010). Gronn advocates for school leaders to focus on how “leaders can influence learners’ learning” (ibid, p.435), that is on pedagogical leadership. His conclusion is that the prevalence of leadership styles and ‘types’ of leadership detract from the principal aim of developing pedagogy.

The constructivist approach to learning and leading originates from the work of Dewey (1910 in 2012), Piaget (1959), and Vygotsky (1978). The theories of the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, have been particularly influential in shaping how children were taught in the twentieth century, and with the recognition of Vygotsky’s work, this influence continues to strengthen in the twenty-first century. The ideas of observation to find a child’s starting point for learning, the value of experiential learning and learning as a social construct are embedded for practitioners in education (Pollard, 1997). Athey developed constructivism in developing partnership working with parents to support and extend children’s learning (Athey, 2007). She identified the dominance of both behaviourist and laissez-faire approaches in early childhood education, and it was her pursuit of an alternative methodology that resulted in the deep investigation into children’s schematic patterns of learning. Athey’s research with Bruce influenced pedagogy at Pen Green, Corby and the development of professional development for practitioners alongside the children’s families (Arnold, 2012). Lambert and co-constructors have explored constructivism moving beyond the child as learner and have applied constructivist theory to leadership and organisational learning. Walker defines constructivism as “the theory of learners constructing meaning based upon their previous knowledge, beliefs and experiences”. Walker restates their definition of constructive leadership as the “reciprocal processes that enable participants in a community to construct meanings that lead toward a shared purpose of schooling” (Lambert et al, 2002, p.1). With the second edition of ‘The Constructivist Leader’ the definition does not change but the changing social and political agenda is taken into account within the contexts of equity and culture. The notion of developing as a community is stated to be dependent on the development of relationships to support sustainable organisational change and improvement. The building of “reciprocal, mutual, equitable relationships” (ibid, p.xvii) acknowledges diversity and complexity.
Lambert et al (ibid) state the case for the acknowledgement and honouring of the connectivity between learning and leading. As every child has the potential to learn so it is deemed that every adult has the potential to lead. The metaphor of weaving a cloth of many threads is presented in order to visualise leadership learning and learning leadership. Six design principles for developing constructivist leaders are explained as the ability to be “trusting, purposing, doing, constructing, reframing and transforming” (ibid, p.208). Thus, the theory of constructivism resonates with transformational leadership as well as systems theory and participatory research and meaning making. These learning theories relate to ideas of sustainability and maintaining an ecological stance.

Sergiovanni (1992) advocated ‘moral leadership’. He identified “democracy, group authority and accountability, variability, generality, and interactivity in work assignment, self-discipline and control exercised individually and collectively and group commitment to a consensus about organisational goals and means” to be the key components of a structure for moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992, p.158). Moral purpose has since been identified in definitions of school systems leadership (Collarbone & West-Burnham, 2008; Robinson, 2012). Moral leadership requires a knowledge of and commitment to social justice. Social justice engenders a requirement for political insight and an understanding of changing communities. Social justice also has a relevance to action research methodology where there is an aim for change and transformation. Involvement in research processes is ultimately about making a difference, and from that premise develops qualities that are emancipatory (Boog, 2003). The main purpose of school leadership has to be in supporting the children as learners, and with this in mind, leadership encompasses the support and development of the adults in order to be successful in this endeavour. Gronn substantiates this view explaining that “for the purposes of being able to lead learning, school leaders need to be able to demonstrate their capability cognitively, ethically and emotionally” (Gronn, 2010, p.429). However, being that leader is fraught with barriers, interference and challenges. Holding leadership integrity is the greatest challenge when faced with, for example, government policy that can be interpreted to negate this moral purpose (Alexander, 2010).
Sustainability, as a concept to be considered by leaders, was originally considered within systems theory (Senge, 2006). The notion of sustainable leadership has been explored and defined by Fullan (2005), Hargreaves and Fink (2006) and Marshall et al (2011). Therefore the connectivity between systems theory and sustainable leadership theory are interconnected through complexity (Fullan, 2005). Fullan claims: “systems thinking in practice … is the key to sustainability” (ibid, p. 43). The difference between a systems approach to leadership and one that is sustainable is the notion of moral purpose. However, on reading the literature it is difficult to separate the two as the commonalities appear more prevalent rather than the differences. Advocates of a sustainable approach to school leadership state that ‘deep learning’ has to impact positively on both present and future generations (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Whereas theorists for a systems approach, whilst seeking leadership for sustainability, emphasise the need to establish collaborative approaches across organisations, including schools (Robinson, 2012). The strength of Hargreaves and Fink’s theorising, based on fifteen years’ experience of working with schools and school division leaders, is that sustainable leadership has to be active. Five action principles for achieving sustainability in practice are stated: “activism, vigilance, patience, transparency and design” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 256). Marshall et al (2011) advocate leadership for sustainability through an action research approach.

Passionate leadership represents designated leaders’ acknowledgement of the emotional intelligence required to lead a learning organisation. Goleman et al (2002) have influenced understandings of emotional intelligence within educational organisations. Having an awareness of the emotional climate of the organisation enables leaders to be preventative in staff support as opposed to reactive. Hargreaves (2012) focuses on emotional intelligence and perceives passion as one aspect of emotion. Davies and Brighouse’s definition of passionate leadership resonates with the underpinning principles of action research in that the implementation of action research has the requirement to take into account social justice, making a difference and learning to create better ways of working (Davies & Brighouse, 2008). What is apparent here is that there are many shared aims between advocates for the range of leadership styles and types, but with a difference in emphasis. For example with sustainable leadership there is a commitment to a positive impact on ecology whereas in passionate leadership the focus is on emotional intelligence.
The constant striving for improved standards, the pressure to conform and the anxiety created by potential threats to the learning community, including financial matters can drive less appropriate leadership strategies. This manifests itself in how power is applied and perceived within the learning organisation. Aspinwall (1998) argues that power can be both a positive and a negative force. On the one hand a leader may hold ‘expert power’ which benefits the organisation as they develop their specialism. On the other hand, ‘coercive power’ is dependent on negative forces such as threats and punishment (ibid, p.136).

Leadership theory serves its purpose in provoking leaders to reconsider and reflect on their roles and responsibilities. Leadership theory reminds designated leaders that they do not hold the exclusive rights to leadership. Everyone benefits from identifying leaderfulness within a learning organisation. It is evident that different leadership theorists favour specific perspectives on leadership, however what is also evident is that there are many connections and networks to be identified between the theories considered here. Leithwood and Levin devised a framework to illuminate the connectivity between a school leader’s “learning experiences, their practices and their effect on student learning” (Leithwood & Levin, 2004). They maintain that it is not possible to claim an improvement in school development on one aspect of school life such as designated leadership but identified ten variables that have the potential to impact on student learning (Appendix 2). Their theory supports a systemic approach to research in education where these variables are recognised and taken into consideration. Leaders, whether designated or not, have a rich resource to inform, influence and facilitate their leadership learning. To restate within the context of this research project the selected theories that have influenced our praxeological inquiry are pedagogical leadership, andragogical leadership and the notion of a systemic approach to school leadership, and these are explored further.
Pedagogical Leadership

If pedagogy is defined to mean: “professional practice relating to the learning and growth of children” (NCSL, 2004b), it is known that pedagogical leadership will focus on the developmental and learning needs of the children. Whitaker defines pedagogical leadership as: “a continuous engagement with staff in their professional practice” (ibid, 2004b, p.9). However, pedagogical leadership could present something more. Within pedagogical leadership it is possible to include concepts of sustainability, passion, emotion and transformational leadership. All these leadership theories are considered desirable within the context of school leadership (Preedy, 2012). Pedagogical leadership embraces collaboration with professionals working together to implement change for the benefit of the children, their families and communities and therefore transform integrated services and impact on their lives (Whalley et al, 2008).

Whalley and Arnold compare identified pedagogic strategies with effective leadership strategies (Whalley & Arnold, 1997), thus effective pedagogic strategies are aligned with effective leadership strategies. The boundaries between pedagogic strategies and leadership strategies become blurred. So effective leadership embraces effective learning and that in turn impacts on the development of the learning community. Key elements are identified including the notion of the quality of professional relationships formed, and that the designated leader is visible. There is acknowledgement of embedded principles, beliefs and values and of developing each practitioners’ specialisms. The overriding concern is for learning rather than leadership and learning in its many manifestations. Learning is not perceived as the exclusive role of the delegated leaders but is considered as an inclusive organisational necessity (ibid). The essence of this line of inquiry is that leaders develop professional relationships with colleagues that are reflective of the partnership between pedagogue and learner.

Defining Pedagogical Leadership

For the purposes of this action research project, pedagogical leadership is defined to mean leadership that actively supports and develops effective pedagogical strategies and practice through the continuous development of knowledge and understanding of how
children learn, taking due regard of learning theories and research. Pedagogical leadership ensures leadership strategies are directly linked to effective pedagogic strategies. Organisational learning and leadership is informed and enriched by this application of effective pedagogic strategies.

**Andragogical Leadership**

In defining andragogy, John’s concerns are on meeting the needs of the adult learner including their wellbeing and ways of thinking (John, 2011). Attending to andragogy in settings signifies support for adult learners who then support children’s learning and development. Leaders within an organisation are co-learners and co-constructors and therefore engaging in andragogical leadership has the potential to support the development of pedagogy. In schools the focus is on pedagogical strategies to improve the conditions for learning for children. Andragogical strategies could be perceived as neglected within school communities (ibid). School leaders need to attend to adults as learners as well as children and young people as leaders. When adults within the school learning community perceive themselves as learners the development of a professional learning community takes root and becomes sustainable (ibid).

Henschke and Cooper’s published paper details the outcomes of a study of over fifty papers detailing interpretations and theories of the notion of andragogy in relation to human development (Henschke & Cooper, 2004). The practice of andragogy is acknowledged to be wide and diverse fulfilling a range of meanings for different facilitators of adult learning. Their study is driven by the hypothesis that this is a theory that would benefit from a deeper understanding and application to develop practice. They seek an acknowledgement of the connectivity between theory, research and practice.

During the latter part of the twentieth century a concept of andragogy was developed by researchers investigating adult education, but at the same time, dismissed by others as a theory that had no substance (Hanson, 1996). Henschke and Cooper discuss ownership of terminology and seek clarity of definition. There is acknowledgement that
learning as an adult does have different features to the process of learning as a child. There is a recognition of past experience, embedded knowledge and understanding and a range of factors impacting on motivation. The concept of andragogy takes into account the idea of human beings’ engagement in learning as a lifelong process. Andragogical concepts focus on the interactional aspect of adult learning (Brookfield, 1986), of discourse and self-directed learning. What the adult learner expects to learn has to be identified as well as what the facilitator is wanting to teach (Henschke & Cooper, 2004). In the consideration of leadership theories the theory of andragogy is largely limited to the practice of adult learning rather than that of leadership within an education setting. In a primary school the focus is on pedagogical strategies, how adults support and develop the children’s learning as opposed to andragogical strategies to support and develop the adults’ learning to thus impact on outcomes for children.

**Defining Andragogical Leadership**

For the purposes of this action research project andragogical leadership is defined to mean the awareness of and application of andragogical strategies to support and develop adult learning and development within an organisation. An andragogical leader knows it is critical to differentiate in order to meet the developmental needs of the adults within a learning community. The research evidence generated in this research project supports and develops andragogical leadership.

**A Systemic Approach to School Leadership**

Systems theory acknowledges the complexity of the world we live in. It acknowledges the turbulent and dynamic nature of organic processes (Whitaker 2009). In leadership the ability to be aware of what is happening within the learning organisation is developed as well as understanding the impact of what is happening externally. Acknowledging systems theory stimulates inquiry into how a school community interacts with its immediate environment as well as reaching out to other school communities and related organisations. Systems theory tends towards an emphasis on organisational process rather than a description of what an organisation is like. The focus is on the whole and
the characteristics of the whole as opposed to an emphasis on the parts of the whole. To develop the ability to perceive the whole is a challenge. In schools there is a tendency to divide up and apportion. Perceptions of the bigger picture tend to be held by members of the designated leadership team. Whitaker (2009) explains, “Systems Theory takes a view of the world from two key perspectives: The interrelatedness of all phenomena and the interdependence of all phenomena” (ibid, p.3). Systems theory negates aspects of school leadership that focus on isolation.

Capra identifies the need to focus on and understand pattern, structure, and process (Whitaker, 2009).

“Pattern – the configuration of relationships among different components of the system that determine their essential characteristics
Structure – the physical embodiment of the pattern of organisation
Process – the dynamic activity involved in the system and how the variables interact with each other”

(Whitaker, 2009, p.4).

From a learning community’s perspective ‘pattern’ could be defined as communication and relationships, ‘structure’ as organisation and ‘process’ as learning. In making a comparison with definitions of the nature of action research; action research provides the modes of inquiry, the structure and organisation whilst systems theory alerts us to the need to appreciate the interconnectedness as part of the ‘discipline of inquiry’ (2009, p.4). An important dimension to systems theory is that unpredictable and turbulent incidents are acknowledged. Dilemmas and critical incidents are an expectation because it is understood that they occur in systems. A systems approach to leadership acknowledges the interdisciplinary aspect and invites the analysis of how groups within organisations are working together.

In his text The Fifth Discipline, Senge (2006) started by saying that not seeing the whole picture meant the ability to identify the impact and outcomes of actions becomes unmanageable. Wholeness sits well with the holistic view of the child rather than compartmentalisation. To be able to view the whole organisation rather than dwelling
on the parts facilitates and enables everyone to identify connectivity and impact on each other.

Senge’s (2006) premise for a systems approach to organisational learning is that the organisation emerges as a learning organisation. However, Whitaker (2009) claimed that Senge’s theory is over simplistic. Whitaker wrestles with the concept that the adoption of the five identified disciplines would in itself create the effective learning organisation. Frustration is expressed about how systems theory was adopted by the public and private sectors and transformed into initiatives that did not necessarily honour the origins of the theory (ibid). Systems theory has influenced leadership development in the education sector over the last decade (Lillis, 2000; Collarbone & West-Burnham, 2008; Robinson, 2012). However, the motivation has been to seek systematic approaches rather than systemic approaches. There is a continuous search for the leadership model that will work for a number of organisations. However, leadership is dependent on relationships and communication, which are human endeavours that are subject to infinite variables. Leadership learning is in itself complex, difficult and a continuous challenge (Preedy, 2012).

This consideration of the influence of systems theory on the development of leadership learning illuminates the complexities of leadership and organisational learning processes. It acknowledges the transformational potential of taking due regard to process rather than the replication of a leadership model. Systems leadership takes into account the culture of the organisation. It provides a set of ‘component technologies’ (Senge, 2006, p6) that can be referred to in order to shape an organisation. Senge describes organisational learning inclusive of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision and team learning.

Systems theory evolves and influences theories around complexity and chaos (Bruce, 1991). Feedback is advocated as a key process for learning organisations to develop. Personal mastery within the context of Senge’s fifth discipline theory maintains each individual’s ability to develop within their role, including the extent that they develop their specialisms. There is a commitment from each individual to invest in their personal and professional lifelong learning. Personal mastery confirms an organisation’s attention
to professional development and advocates that each individual has their own vision which is integral to the part they play in the organisation’s learning and development. Personal mastery takes into account the need to harness potential, commitment and passion for the work of the organisation. There is connectivity here with the theory of pedagogical leadership (Whalley & Arnold, 1997).

Senge (2006) defines mental models to mean those attitudes, beliefs, values and principles that each individual in an organisation has learnt and developed over time. Therefore in order to take due regard of mental models within a learning organisation each individual needs to be able to look inward and examine their innermost position on the beliefs, values and principles of the learning community to which they are connected and committed.

The concept of having an organisational vision is not new in the education sector. Although initially the notion was for the school leader to communicate their vision rather than create a shared vision (Aspinwall, 1998). In Senge’s theory of the fifth discipline how this vision is created is brought to the fore. It has to be a genuine collaboration and response to the organisational context. However passionate a designated leader is about their personal vision for the learning community, their personal vision will not have sustainable impact on making a difference for individuals without becoming transformed into a part of the whole and taking into account the views and voices of everyone involved in the organisation (ibid, 1998).

Senge (2006) advocated a focus on team learning to impact on organisational development and for improvement to be sustainable. This is about the sum of the parts. When the sum of the parts has the reverse impact on an organisation, that is, the organisation is in decline, it is necessary for all individuals within the organisation to consider their personal mastery and come together to forge a shared organisational vision. Conditions for respectful discourse have to be created and the beginnings of shared understandings become a reality (ibid, p. 10). This is in contrast to the ‘heroic leader’ as described by Gronn (2010).
Fullan critiqued Senge’s notion of systems thinking (Fullan, 2005). Fullan did not dispute a systemic approach to leadership and the requirement for systems thinking. Fullan’s concern was that time spent on theorising does not necessarily impact on action and sustainable improvement in educational organisations. Fullan offered the advice that no solution to sustainability can be advanced without abstract concepts being supported by practical strategies to ensure impact plus moral purpose. Fullan advocated the requirement to increase leadership capacity through the development of collaboratives, for networks of learning organisations to come together. He challenges leaders to facilitate a constant process of shared policy and strategy review. The engagement of others is key: “Complexity theory tells us that if you increase the amount of purposeful interaction and infuse it with the checks and balances of quality knowledge, self-organizing patterns will accrue.” (ibid, p.19). Similarly to Hargreaves and Fink and their ideas of leadership as an active force Fullan proposes “the proliferation of systems thinkers in action” (ibid, p.x). Fullan’s theory of systems thinkers in action supports a praxeological approach to action research where the practitioner/leader researcher strives to make a difference for children through the combined efforts of theory, practice and reflection and notes emergent concerns.

Collarbone and West-Burnham (2008) collate the standards for systems leadership as identified by a group of headteachers and identify three dimensions of leadership: “The knowledge base that is necessary to be able to work effectively, the qualities that inform personal engagement, credibility and sustainability and the behaviours that translate principle into practice” (ibid, p.84). They place the onus on designated leaders to retain and develop the knowledge, qualities and behaviour. Whereas an alternative view and understanding would be that the systemic leader facilitates leadership learning amongst others, supports the specialist knowledge of others and at the same time as developing andragogical strategies. Collarbone and West-Burnham claim that the knowledge required as a systems leader “implies that systems leaders truly understand the system in which they work as a whole” (ibid, p.85). One interpretation is that this is an impossibility and the implication is that the designated leaders continue to hold the knowledge power base and that this notion is not truly emancipatory (Boog, 2003).
Boog’s writing about the emancipatory nature of action research connects action research methodology with systems theory (Boog, 2003). Flood’s work substantiates Boog’s theory and advocates the development of the relationship between action research and systems theory:

“Systemic thinking is not an approach to action research, but a grounding for action research that may broaden action and deepen research. That is, action research carried out with a systemic perspective in mind promises to construct meaning that resonates strongly with our experiences within a profoundly systemic world”

(Flood, 2006, p.127).

**Action Research in Education**

Generally the origins of action research are attributed to Lewin, a social psychologist (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002). However, more recently theorists have extracted the dominant theme of social justice and democratic participation and have identified the origins further back in history with Marx and social change (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). Lewin advocated the notion of action research as a spiral of steps. Each set of steps signifies four stages to plan, act, observe and reflect. Following the fourth stage of reflection the researcher plans for the next spiral. Since 1946 this notion of planning spirals has been revisited and developed in an attempt to add depth and breadth (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002).

Stenhouse has influenced action research in the UK, and McNiff with Whitehead acknowledge his influence and inspiration (2002). He considered action research as a research methodology for developing the school curriculum. Stenhouse’s emphasis was on teachers regarding themselves as researchers (Stenhouse, 1975). However McNiff with Whitehead believed that teachers continued to be regarded as the subject of research and credibility was not given to teachers as researchers (2002). Stenhouse identified three professional characteristics that he claimed were developed through teacher engagement in action research: “The commitment to systematic questioning of one’s own teaching as a basis for development, the commitment and the skills to study one’s own teaching and the concern to question and to test theory in practice by the
use of these skills” (Stenhouse, 1975, p.144). Kemmis, working with Stenhouse based his research continuum on Lewin’s model and demonstrated the movement from one action to another (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002). Kemmis annotates the action research process in order to individualise and reflect a precise line of inquiry. Kemmis and McTaggert note the difference between action research and a practitioner’s daily work practice as: “Action research is more systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence on which to base rigorous group reflection” (Cohen et al, 2011, p.346). Working with Carr, Kemmis brought social justice to the fore within an action research context (ibid). McNiff with Whitehead (2002) identified the dilemma of the horizontal trajectory of the action research, which does not allow for the messiness of life in an educational organisation. This had the potential of constraining the practitioner researcher and not allowing movement away from the original focus as another priority arises.

The development of action research as research methodology for practitioner researchers in education continued with the work of Elliott (1991) who recognised the connectivity with the reflective teacher. He wanted to develop the role of the academic researcher as a collaborator facilitating teachers’ learning to develop a research approach to their professional role. Elliott’s action research diagram continued to refine the research process with a sequence of action-reflection steps within a cyclical process (ibid, p.70). He wanted the freedom for the researcher to shift from the original idea. The reconnaissance phase includes analysis, as well as fact finding, and is perceived as an on-going process. Furthermore, the implementation of an action has to be given sufficient time to embed prior to the evaluation of the effects of that action. To summarise, Elliott described the actions as “Identifying and clarifying the general idea, reconnaissance, constructing the general plan, developing the next action steps and implementing the next action step(s)” (ibid, p.86).

McNiff with Whitehead’s critical discussion on action research processes, which they call ‘schemes’, identifies the limitations of how action research had developed over a sixty-year period (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002). Their critique focuses on the movement away from Lewin’s original intentions, that the schemes tend to be rigid and confusing, there is no mechanism for dealing with the unexpected or as they describe them ‘novel situations’ within the main research focus, and they claim they are ‘not in
themselves educational’. McNiff with Whitehead’s principle critique is that the schemes are prescriptive rather than descriptive, observational rather than explanatory. The focus on the stages can take the researcher away from the ‘what?’ and ‘how?’ The outcome of these deliberations is a research model of spirals spinning off from the original focus spiral. There is an acknowledgement of the messiness of action research within a learning organisation and of dilemma stories that arise from research and reflection processes. Therefore action research provides the structure for engaging in practitioner research but should not negate the action research as a process of living inquiry. The action research process provides the practitioner researcher with an opportunity to focus in greater depth on an aspect of their field, in the hope that improvement or at least clarification of the way forward to future development will result. The research has to be located within a social context with the intention of making a difference and focuses on engagement with others in democratic collaboration and participation (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

Zuber-Skerritt integrates three theories, that of, action research, forcefield and change theory and task alignment in order to create “a model of emancipatory action research for organisational change” (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996, p.68). Through this integration of three change theories, Zuber-Skerritt is able to integrate qualities of leadership such as developing a shared vision, the provision of strong leadership, revitalisation and feedback (ibid). This aligns action research with aspects of systems theory as developed by Senge (2006). Campbell et al, (2004) include in the third stage of their research structure the requirement to ensure “validity, reliability, feasibility, authenticity, representation and ethics” (ibid, pp83-84). They consider the relationship between research and practice and uphold the principle that implementing research in a systematic way is to be questioned. Reason and Bradbury’s definition is also inclusive of emergence, people developing in a nourishing environment but not at the exclusion of the practicalities. This is a participatory act, where each participant is aware of their accountabilities. Reason and Bradbury identify the characteristics of action research to include “An emergent developmental form, human flourishing, practical issues, participation and democracy, and knowledge-in-action” (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p.2).
Leadership Concepts: Strategies for Leadership Development

In this section a review of the leadership concepts of ‘leadership toxins and nutrients’ and ‘critical friendships’ is presented. These concepts have been selected because of their relevance to developing a systemic approach to school leadership.

Leadership Toxins and Nutrients

Whitaker presented the theory of leadership nutrients and leadership toxins (Whitaker, 1998). Leadership nutrients and leadership toxins were explored in the leadership professional development programme led by the Pen Green Research Centre from the late 1990s and throughout the following decade to eventually influence the National Professional Qualification of Integrated Centre Leadership, NPQICL (John, 2011).

Reflections on the nature of leadership lead to unravelling the creation of positive professional relationships and the range of communication skills required by designated leaders. Consciously unravelling the nutritious and toxic elements of an encounter enable leaders to temper their emotional responses and to develop strategies and coping mechanisms that move the dialogue on.

Leadership nutrients and toxins are identified as factors which contribute to feeling either job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction (NCSL, 2004a). When a sense of job satisfaction is sustained it is thought that “commitment, energy, enthusiasm, enterprise, responsibility, collaboration, initiative and confidence” are achieved (ibid, p.28-32). Whereas if “compliance, apathy, lethargy, caution, alienation, cynicism, mistrust and fear” predominate toxic leadership prevails. However, it is important that negativity and conflict are acknowledged and accommodated (John, 2012b). There are risks in negating the existence of these aspects in an organisation.

Within the parameters of this research project leadership nutrients and toxins are relevant to leadership reflections.
“A useful metaphor for these ideas lies in the ecology of effective growth. To thrive, organisms require a nutritious environment. Successful growth is inhibited and damaged when harmful substances, or toxins, are introduced into the environment. While many organisms have the capacity to resist toxins, the cost to the system can be very high, often leaving health and wellbeing seriously impaired and damaged” (NCSL, 2004a, p.29).

This metaphor describes a systemic approach to school leadership where the notion of organic networks has been identified. Egan considers the requirements for developing a nourishing organisation. These include nutritious ideas of supporting individuals’ wellbeing including ideas of warmth and genuiness (Egan, 2010).

**Critical Friendships**

For a learning community, developing a critical friendship has been identified by Bruce as originating from the work of Froebel (Bruce, 1996). Bruce discusses the professional relationship that is required in the creation of an effective critical friendship: that this friendship requires a balance between professional respect, a willingness to listen to critique and to be able to receive this constructive criticism. The relationship is built on a trusting relationship where the participants value each other’s contribution and the relationship values rigour, seeking validity and authenticity. Holman (1983) describes practitioners working with children and other adults in a social care capacity as “resourceful friends” (ibid, p.71). In Holman’s definition the practitioner is a person who is able to access material resources as well as being a gateway to additional services. That is, the role of provider. This enriches the idea of a critical friend as being a person who will support, critique and also give, whether that is either material resources or theoretical resources or the space and time for purposeful reflection.

In the Reggio Emilia early childhood centres in Northern Italy the role of critical friend is facilitated by the *pedagogista* (Rinaldi, 2006). The pedagogue or pedagogista facilitates the theoretical discussion with practitioners in the setting to bring together theory, reflection and practice. At Pen Green critical friendships have been formed both within
the organisation and with external partners (Allen, 2012; Vaggers, 2010). This is exemplified in the PhD Action Learning Group where the tutors are pedagogues within the organisation as well as external partners. In Braga, Portugal a process named, ‘Professional Learning in Companionship’ has been developed where academic pedagogues work with learning communities to develop praxis (NCSL, 2004b). Pedagogical praxis is defined as the consideration of theory and practice together (Freire, 1972). Within these collaboratives all participants consider themselves to be learners. Pedagogical mediation is defined as meaning: “The process of professional learning in collaboration that opens up horizons to historical perspectives and current alternatives and thus supports the reconstruction of pedagogical practice” (NCSL, 2004b, p.34). The objectives of pedagogical mediation are “to develop pedagogical praxis” and “to reconstruct early years’ professionality”. The nature of professionalism is described as being “social, dialogical, interpersonal and intrapersonal” (ibid). The idea of developing a critical friendship means that practitioners with the support of a pedagogue, either internal or external, create the opportunity for theoretical discourse arising from active study within the workplace.

Whitehead describes the relationship she had developed with practitioners at an Early Years Centre in Norfolk (Whitehead, 2000). Whitehead’s relationship included engaging with the children’s families and neighbouring First schools. Whitehead identifies the impact of their critical friendship on the development of a dispositional curriculum. She identifies aspects of her role as a pedagogue including responding to observations of practitioners, the wider community and working with the children. There was a commitment to learn together. On reflection, Whitehead identified that strategies were implemented, including action research methods. She fulfilled the roles of educator, researcher and facilitator. Whitehead acknowledged her developed expertise in children’s language development and therefore the depth and breadth of the expertise she offered. This confirms the notion of a critical friend as a person with identified expertise. At the Early Years Centre, shared principles for critical friendships were identified as a “long term commitment to good practice, debate around issues raised by the centre, openness and reflection, mutual trust and respect and the reciprocal learning from each other” (NCSL, 2004b, p.28 – 29).
Increasingly schools are looking to academics to fulfil the role of critical friend (Watkins, 2005; Charlton et al, 2011). Engagement in action research methodology has meant schools are able to identify their concerns and then engage the support of a critical friend to identify the relevant research and literature. This is not to say school practitioners and leaders do not have the academic skills to access papers; it is a matter of having the time and opportunities to be constantly engaged in academic research.

In Chapter 3 leadership theories have been considered. It has been recognised that the development of a systemic approach to school leadership has the potential to harness features of several leadership theories at the same time as sustaining a focus on learning leadership and leaderful learning as a process. The aspects which inform the later identification of the research themes, are the consideration of leaders as learners and learners as leaders and the relationship between action research and the role of the practitioner/leader. Participatory research, acknowledging the strength of professional relationships required and the value of open interaction, arise from the consideration of leadership toxins and nutrients and critical friendships. In Chapter 4 the literature review is continued with an examination of organisational learning within the context of meeting the needs of the multilingual learner.
Chapter 4: Organisational Learning

“In educational institutions it is perhaps more important to pioneer alternative organisational forms, so that children and young people can have experience of responsibility and leadership from a much earlier age than is currently the case”

(Whitaker, 2009, p.31).

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to recognise the interconnectivity between organisational learning and knowledge of the learning community within the socio-political context of this research project. This invites a focus on the characteristics of multilingual learners and what is meant by anti-discriminatory practice. An explanation is given of how primary schools reported to central government on academic achievement during the period of the action research project. It is necessary to confirm the academic outcomes for children. The literature review concludes with the identification of the four identified key research themes, acknowledging the context of living life as inquiry and theory (Marshall, 1999; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

Defining Organisational Learning

Learning communities and organisational learning are at the heart of this action research project and to the future of leadership development. Defining learning communities and organisational learning involves the recognition of the dynamic influences of pedagogy and andragogy as forces that drive development, in order to learn together, impact and make a difference.

Having considered systems theory in relation to school leadership it is useful to acknowledge the connectivity between a systemic approach to leadership and learning and organisational learning. Organisational learning can be defined as the shared learning that defines that organisation, informs the development of that organisation and is communicated throughout the organisation by all its members. The features of
organisational learning are that it embraces collaboration, participatory and responsive approaches. Finally, organisational learning is tough (Whalley, 1994).

For the purposes of this research project a learning community is defined as a group of people who come together to learn. There is a commitment to participation, a shared context and an expectation of improvement around an agreed theme. A learning community by definition, is engaged in organisational learning. Within the school context, a learning community can be formed when two children come together as 'talk partners', when two teachers come together to plan for the children’s learning for the week ahead and when two designated leaders, such as the headteacher and chair of the governing body come together to discuss the strategic leadership of the school.

Learning communities that impact on the life of a primary school are not limited within the school but reach out beyond. This is an aspect that makes a systemic approach to leadership so desirable. We know that a child’s learning goes beyond the school gate. Effective early years pedagogy has taught us that the child’s parents and carers are the child’s first and most enduring educators (Whalley, 1994; Athey, 2007). As children grow and develop the scope of their learning widens to beyond the home and school environments to include participation with the extended family, community groups, religious groups, sports groups, music groups (Pascal & Bertram, 2009). The media play an ever stronger role in impacting on children’s perceptions, desires and aspirations (Alexander, 2010).

The Multilingual Learner

A priority for our organisational learning is in defining multilingualism. Languages are means of communication; the communication of emotions, needs, ideas, thoughts and theories. Languages are conveyed in many different ways, through dialogue, actions, representations and facial and bodily expressions. From Crystal’s perspective multilingualism should be considered the norm (Crystal, 2006). Yet multilingualism, the ability to interact in several oral languages, is not consistently acknowledged as an asset. The predominance of English being spoken across the globe creates a situation
where people who speak English as their main language do not deem it necessary or even desirable to learn other languages. Socially and politically this creates an arrogance towards other people who do not have a command of the English language. Yet, in some social spheres, for example within the opera-going public, knowledge of Italian is desirable. In the past, discourse either in French or Latin was perceived to be necessary in order to claim educational status. Therefore, it is possible to claim the acquisition of additional languages, other than English, in the past has reflected a person’s class and status. Language acquisition can be deemed as socially motivated (ibid).

Jago claims bilingualism is difficult to define and that it is in itself a process to be viewed along a continuum (Jago, 1999). Difficulties arise because a range of levels of competency are included and it is problematic to assess where a person may be placed. Jago’s view of the “rare ambilingual child” is unsatisfactory because there is an underpinning notion of a deficit model of the child. Alladina’s uncluttered approach is favoured: “A bilingual person knows, understands and uses two or more languages” (Alladina, 1995, p.2). Thus the multilingual learner is able to communicate verbally in more than two spoken languages. The level of communication in this definition is at a social level, which Cummins (2000) describes as at a Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) level.

Within the context of meeting the needs of the multilingual learner, the terminology that is prevalent in education is frequently reduced to the acronym EAL (English as an Additional Language). This in itself generates a deficit view of the potentially multilingual child (Alexander, 2010, p. 118). This is not to deny the challenges faced by learners to acquire English. Wyse and Parker (2012) explain that acknowledging the children’s home languages has the potential to result in better academic outcomes for children. They advocate the recognition of children’s home languages and to build further knowledge and understanding of the languages spoken by each child. Wyse (2012) has identified five ‘linguistic principles’ in supporting and developing a multilingual learning environment.
“Communication of understandable meaning is the driving force of language. Analysis of language in use is the basis for appropriate knowledge for pupils and educators. As a consequence of the natural processes of language change, descriptive accounts of language are more appropriate than prescriptive accounts. ... Language and social status (or power) are inextricably linked”

(Wyse, 2012, p. 36).

Early childhood education is supportive of meeting these learning, developmental and linguistic needs of young emergent multilingual learners (Jago, 1999; Nutbrown, 1996; Parker 2000; Parker, 2001b). Within an early childhood setting there is the potential for practitioners to empathise with the child’s feelings of insecurity and bewilderment. Linguistic diversity can be valued and the child’s linguistic achievements celebrated. Relationships with the child’s parents and family are likely to be positively developed and the child’s learning, in the setting and at home, shared. Practitioners can learn from the significant adults in the child’s life (Whalley, 1994). Children have the opportunity to emerge as multilingual speakers. An atmosphere of inquiry and understanding where children and their families are emancipated can be created and celebrated (Parker, 2000). The implications, of meeting the needs of multilingual learners, for pedagogical practice can be viewed through the recognition of the nature and culture of multilingualism, the implementation of the elements of pedagogical practice and the involvement of parents in the children’s learning (Jago, 1999; Wyse & Parker, 2012).

Anti-Discriminatory Practice

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, we have witnessed ever-increasing tensions across our global communities. Tensions, that have their origins in racism, discrimination and a lack of understanding of people’s ethnicity, culture and religion. Perspectives of social justice and the impact of Islamophobia need to be acknowledged. We are at risk of further social exclusion as entrenched prejudices are openly expressed. In these days of growing suspicion and fear, leaders of integrated centres and settings, including schools, have to acknowledge the impact of these issues on the children and families we are engaged with (Richardson, 2004). It is the intention to further develop ways forward and strategies to challenge discriminatory practice.
Richardson advocates transformational leadership:

“...In a context of overload and uncertainty, of competing proposals, demands and expectations, and of vast geopolitical variety, transformational leadership keeps its head and its heart”

(Richardson, 2004, p.31).

Consideration of meeting the needs of multilingual learners includes how organisations develop knowledge and understanding of the contexts of the diverse communities with which they engage. It has been stated previously that the vast majority of children who attend the primary school are of Pakistani heritage and the predominant faith is Islam. Van Driel (2004) directly challenges the impact of Islamophobia on children and young people in schools across the globe. Islamophobia is the fear of all matters relating to Islam and those who follow Islam. This fear has come to the fore since the acts of aggression against the United States of America in 2001 causing the total destruction of the World Trade Centre’s north and south towers in New York and the partial damage to the Pentagon, Headquarters of the United States Department of Defence, Arlington County, US State of Virginia. Prior to 2001, wars in the Middle East involving US and British troops had created a bias against the Islamic world in the western media (Coles, 2008, p.1). Islamic organisations within Britain have denounced these atrocities and actively pursue positions on interfaith groups with the aim to build peaceful bridges and understanding between communities (ibid, p.3). Revell (2012) claimed that government policies have been ineffectual in representing a balanced view in its fight against terrorism. Government policies give the impression that threats are to be expected exclusively from the Muslim community, and in doing so marginalise all Muslims, denying aggressive acts by far right political groups, as well as minimising the voice of the vast majority of UK Muslims that such acts are anti-Islamic (Sardar, 2008).

Van Driel’s aim has been to bring together expertise from a range of countries where academics and practitioners have variously challenged these concerns (2004). He expresses his fear that sections of society are becoming alienated and mistrusted. Van Driel’s experiences relate to growing immigrant Muslim populations in the Netherlands, however Van Driel seeks expertise from across the world and the text describes situations in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Italy and Israel.
Not only are practitioners in schools and other public services grappling with the impact of growing Islamophobia across the globe, but added to this is the negative perceptions generated concerning immigration. We have a society in England that appears to be increasingly introverted and less likely to be accepting of people of different world heritages (Revell, 2012). It is important to acknowledge that perceptions are very varied and what is projected on the media as the majority view is a challenge to ascertain. There is an opinion that the media has not actively attempted to generate a positive view of immigration and present a bias towards negative views (Sardar, 2008). However, there have been attempts through research to inform the public, for example, that immigrants from European Union countries contribute more to the country’s economy than they take away through benefits (UCL, 2015).

Within the context of this action research project the location of the learning community is in a city in the East of England, the first people of Pakistani heritage arrived sixty years ago. As in many cities in the UK the majority of immigrants from Pakistan came from Azad Kashmir, a region in the north west of Pakistan. This remains a disputed territory between Pakistan and India. Azad Kashmir means ‘Free Kashmir’ and many inhabitants of this part of the world do not recognise either state to this day (Sardar, 2008). Within our city these world events and a growing distrust of Muslim communities has motivated members of the Muslim community to actively communicate alternative perceptions of Islam. As Sardar explains, the spiritual aspects of Islam appear non-existent within the general view of Islam in the UK. Noting and understanding the names of mosques is one way to develop awareness and appreciation of their purpose.

“The largest mosque in Walthamstow is on Lea Bridge Road. It looks like a big, rectangular red-brick office block with two minarets stuck on top. Managed by the Walthamstow Islamic Association, its full name gives the game away: Jamia Masjid Ghausia. ‘Jamia’ means it’s a central neighbourhood mosque where the entire community gathers for Friday prayers. ‘Ghausia’ is a technical term used in Indian mysticism to indicate an exceptionally high spiritual status”

(Sardar, 2008, p.314).
Life for the Muslim child in contemporary Britain is complex. The complexities do not necessarily reveal themselves to the child until they reach the secondary stage of education when interaction with young people from other community groups comes to the fore. This notion of a child’s perception of their community within the local system of communities is a concept explored within the context of this action research project, and pedagogic strategies to develop anti-discriminatory practice are demonstrated.

Anti-discriminatory practice has been developed in schools in England. It was in the nineteen eighties that the idea of multicultural education gained some prominence, especially in English cities where diverse ethnic communities lived (Alexander, 2010). Siraj-Blatchford presents criteria to enable an early years setting to self-evaluate and identify “good and bad practice” (Siraj-Blatchford, 1996, p.30). Application of these ‘six levels of equal opportunities practice’ does provoke practitioners to consider seriously where they sit within anti-discriminatory practice. Twenty years on this self-evaluation tool has a relevance but would benefit from a revisit in acknowledgement of recent research outcomes in children’s perception of race and ethnicity. Elton-Chalcraft (2009) identifies five general categories of stances children took towards diversity issues arising from her research in four schools engaging with Year Five children.

“Same but not identical. Many children, in different ways, expressed the concept of all humans being the same but not identical. People from different cultures may have different outward appearances, different customs and beliefs but nevertheless inside they are still human.

Politically correct. Some children expressed political correct opinions, for example they did not use sexist or racist language or gestures.

White privilege. The general assumption is that white western culture is normal and that all other cultures are different from the norm, thus implying inferiority.

Important to be nice. What was important to many children was whether people are nice, moral, kind etc. This was given far more emphasis than their colour or cultural roots.

Knowledge leads to harmony, ignorance leads to conflict. Numerous children said that they thought it was important to learn about other
cultures: some believed that knowledge is important to dispel fear and ignorance which often led to racist incidents and conflict” (Elton-Chalcraft, 2009, p.81-82).

Within a climate of rising Islamophobia and negativity towards an ever-changing populace, the school learning community actively engaged in a research project to support children in Year Five to articulate their perceptions of place and identity through engagement with a selected literary text. This project, led by critical friends from the University of Cambridge, explored the children’s sense of belonging as well as developing pedagogical strategies in support of anti-discriminatory practice. The aim of the research project was to develop children’s understanding and appreciation of place and identity using the text ‘My Place’ by Nadia Wheatley (2008) to inspire and motivate dialogue and children’s writing. The book tells of the plot of land in Sydney, Australia through history from 1788 to 1988. The book communicates the views of people about their homes, lives and stories. The book was a vehicle for the children to relate their own stories and their perceptions of place, identity and text. A second contrasting school was involved in the project, which was located in a rural area of the East of England. The search was for: “the creation of transcultural meanings through a dialogue of similarities and differences” (Charlton et al, 2011, p.70).

The children’s engagement in the text prompted discussion about their own life stories and sense of identity. Dialogic talk was successfully enhanced and enriched. The themes were contextualized within the children’s perceptions of self, time, place and identity. The project provided the children with a safe and secure context within which to explore their own feelings and relationships towards their own multiple place identities. Some children were challenged by this concept of belonging to more than one place. It was considered that thought-provoking philosophical talk about place and identity could only strengthen a child’s sense of worth and wellbeing.

In response to this meaningful dialogue, the children produced a range of texts including their own timelines, family trees, autobiographical narratives, stories ‘about a place I know’, narratives from the perspective of a tree/animal/person in the past, a reading journal, a predictive chapter and maps of their place. Charlton et al developed knowledge and understanding of the children’s own theories about their identity and was able to
deepen adult questioning, seeking further clarification of the children’s perceptions and ideas (Charlton et al., 2011). This research project demonstrated how the contextualisation of children’s learning, through the engagement with a text that was carefully introduced and then applied to the children’s own concepts of place and identity, facilitated their thinking about the juxtaposition between place, identity and text.

**Academic Outcomes for Children**

Although the presentation of quantitative data is not within the parameters of a praxeological approach to action research (Pascal & Bertram, 2012) it is relevant within the context of this research project. This research project is located in a primary school where quantitative data is submitted for scrutiny. In order to contextualise academic outcomes an explanation of how primary schools in England had to report on academic achievement during the period of this action research project is provided here.

**Reporting on Academic Achievement:**

Primary schools in England reported, through the local authority, to the central government, on children’s levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage One and at the end of Key Stage Two. ‘Levels of attainment’ referred to the child’s academic level of achievement according to National Curriculum assessment levels. In primary schools it was expected for children to achieve at Level 2 by the end of Year Two in reading, writing and mathematics and to achieve at Level 4 by the end of Year Six in reading, writing and mathematics. Each level was sub-divided into three stages, A, B and C. Besides assessment of children’s learning through the application of National Curriculum levels, primary schools took into account the equivalent ‘Average Point Score’ or APS. It was deemed that APS was a more accurate assessment level than, for example, either a Level 2C, Level 2B or Level 2A. Table 1 shows the equivalence between National Curriculum Levels and Average Point Scores.

---

9 Prior to the introduction of ‘Life without levels’, September 2014. SATs outcomes for 2015 are expected in National Curriculum Levels
Table 1: The Equivalence between National Curriculum Levels and Average Point Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Curriculum Level (NCL)</th>
<th>Average Point Scores (APS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working towards NCL 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low 1 (1C)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 1 (1B)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 1 (1A)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low 2 (2C)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 2 (2B)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 2 (2A)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low 3 (3C)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 3 (3B)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 3 (3A)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low 4 (4C)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 4 (4B)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 4 (4A)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low 5 (5C)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 5 (5B)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High 5 (5A)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NC Level</th>
<th>APS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year One</td>
<td>1b – 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td>2c – 2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td>2a – 3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Four</td>
<td>3c – 3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Five</td>
<td>3a – 4c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Six</td>
<td>4c – 4a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was recognised that three APS is the equivalent to one year’s progress in learning.
Attainment and progress together provided a school’s judgement of children’s achievement.

Attainment + Progress = Achievement

**Identification of the Four Research Themes**

Four research themes have been identified having considered the needs of multilingual learners as an aspect of organisational learning combined with the factors identified in Chapter 3 concerning leading learners and the impact of action research methodology on educational research. Each theme is preceded with the phrase ‘Living Life as…’ (Marshall, 1999). The first theme is ‘Living Life as a Teller of Tales’, the second theme is ‘Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader’, the third theme is ‘Living Life as a Global Learner’ and the fourth theme is ‘Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher.’ Each theme is justified and explained further in the research methodology.

To conclude, the literature review that underpins this action research project has identified, presented, examined, explained leadership theory, a systemic approach to school leadership and organisational learning within the context of meeting the needs of multilingual learners. The literature review has informed the identification of the research methodology, the development of the thematic framework for data analysis, the research methods applied, the identification of research limitations, and the consideration of ethics. These are now presented in Chapter 5, which forms Part 3 of this thesis, the Research Methodology.
Part 3: Research Methodology
Chapter 5: Research Methodology, Research Methods, Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations

“Human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action”

(Freire, 1970, p.106).

The purpose of this chapter is to place this research project, ‘Leadership Narratives’, within the ethnographic action research paradigm, to further clarify and explain the research methodology and the research methods identified, applied and developed.

The research study process was designed to investigate school leadership and to find out how leadership can be made visible within the school’s learning community with the children as the ultimate beneficiaries. Positionality is explored in order to clarify the relationships between the practitioner/leader researcher and the co-researchers and participants. A further consideration of inquiry explains the decision to engage in action research methodology with a praxeological approach. This leads into a description of question types (Reason & Bradbury, 2006) which enabled the development of research methods that are valid and ensure quality throughout the research process. The development of the thematic framework for data analysis is presented inclusive of the four research themes. The research limitations and ethical considerations within this practitioner-led action research are presented. Finally, how selected research methods created the fieldwork data is explained and confirmed.

Research Methodology

This research project falls within the qualitative ethnographic research paradigm. The justification for co-constructing research methods of a qualitative nature is that in order
to consider the research line of inquiry and to achieve the stated research aims, it was recognised that an interpretative approach allowed the lead researcher and co-researchers to investigate the social aspects of primary school life.

The research methods that have been co-constructed in order to carry out the investigation are interpretative, specific, small scale and have resulted in individual perspectives and constructs. There is an element of the research methods that are auto-ethnographic in nature. That is, the processes of journalling, freefall writing and considering lines of inquiry through self-evaluation have generated text for the purposes of recording, interpretation, analysis, integration and applying the question ‘So what?’ To confirm, the research methods were action learning sets, leadership narratives, journalling, freefall writing, self-evaluation processes, semi-structured interviews and visualisations.

Although this research predominantly embraces qualitative methods and methodology, in this thesis, there is some presentation of quantitative data in order to demonstrate and confirm the impact of action research on pupil progress and attainment outcomes. The demands on schools to present quantitative data, to local and national bodies, is therefore acknowledged (Robson, 2011). Although it is not possible to claim that the overall picture of sustainable school improvement is solely due to this action research project, it is possible to claim that the climate of positive change generated, the higher expectations of multilingual learners and the transformation of leadership was influenced by the action research processes described.

Within this domain of ethnographic action research study there is an emphasis on the methodology of ‘inquiry’. The research methodology favours a consideration of evaluative and emergent research.
**Positionality**

The title of this research study, ‘Leadership Narratives’ is an indication of my intention to present leadership stories and journeys. This intent in itself demands that I consider my relationship with colleague co-researchers, participants and children as researchers. Later in this chapter I clarify the research limitations and the ethical considerations that had to be identified, adhered to and revisited throughout the research process.

Positionality within the qualitative research paradigm is the consideration of the complex relationships between researcher and research participants (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, pp. 24 – 25). In chapter 2 I explain my dilemma when considering the multiple roles I held within the context of this research study, that is, that of practitioner, leader and researcher. Being conscious of role has been important and at times troubling. Awareness of my close working relationship with colleagues has meant that I have been keen to revisit draft versions of the thesis and receive comments as feedback from members of the school community, the PhD action learning set and the headteachers’ learning group.

O’Reilly and Kiyimba describe the necessity for the researcher to be considerate of the research participants’ cultural and language heritages (O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015, p. 57). This consideration is part of the process of reflexivity that is necessary in qualitative research. In explaining the research purpose I have declared my position in terms of wanting to engage and research with the Pakistani heritage community as a reflection of my personal experience and motivation. Although sensitivity is demanded of the researcher, I recognise that there were times of respectful challenge. Meeting the needs of multilingual learners is an important research element that is highlighted in all three leadership narratives that are presented in this thesis. Therefore recognition of my knowledge and understanding of pedagogical strategies influences my positionality in my engagement with the teaching assistants, members of the school learning community and the Girls’ Chat Group.

At the outset of this research project I had not considered children as co-researchers to the extent that emerged. Therefore it was necessary to show care and attention to requests for permission, verbalise my actions as researcher and not make assumptions.
that as the headteacher I had any right to the children’s spoken and written words (Aubrey et al, 2000). I honoured two of the girls by not using their reflective journals. I had not been given permission to do so (Appendix 7).

Co-operative, Action Research, and Praxeological Approaches to Inquiry

To restate, the nature of inquiry has been extensively discussed in the opening chapters and literature review. ‘Inquiry’ is defined to mean the process of the formulation of questions in order to make sense of what is happening. Inquiry takes into account the interconnectivity of our personal and professional lives. It is through inquiry that our leadership narratives and stories are created. Storytelling is becoming increasingly accepted in the world of educational research (Cohen et al, 2011). It is considered to be a rich source of data, although potentially problematic because of its subjective nature, however, with thorough processes for systematic analysis, stories are a legitimate research data source. Therefore narrative inquiry is defined to mean the consideration of identified lines of inquiry within research theme to motivate storytelling, reflection, consideration and meaning making (ibid, 2011).

Making the Comparison

Cooperative and appreciative inquiry, action research and praxeological research are complementary as models of school-based participatory research. The cooperative inquiry process reflects an action research model that is mindful of “human interpersonal and emotional development” (Reason, 1988, p.32). From Reason’s perspective it is this concern with the human condition and emotional context that makes cooperative inquiry a unique approach to research. Likewise Stringer’s description of community-based action research embraces the idea that research projects should be making a difference for people (Stringer, 1999). A concern with Stringer’s model is the focus on deficit models and the identification of problems and issues. These are important considerations. However, this can be to the exclusion of what is good, what is working and what is successful. Appreciative inquiry takes a view that by exploring what is successful about an organisation can provide the answers for improvement (Torbert, 2006). Stringer’s description provides a model for a collaborative approach to inquiry
(Stringer, 1999). We need to add the love and concern. Through the process of this research project, the task of interpretation is considered. It is through this interpretivist (ibid) approach that we derive explanations that inform our leadership theories. The McNiff and Whitehead (2011, p. 90) action plan is a series of questions or lines of inquiry. This version is favoured because co-researchers respond positively to this format, and the ensuing discourse generates confidence and ideas. There is a commonality in all models around giving time to the initial phases of information gathering and analysis before developing strategies for action. Researchers spend time to gain knowledge of the context, and within a praxeological methodology, this is within a systemic framework. It is important to recognise that a praxeological approach to research is a recent development that has emerged from action research methodology (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012). A Praxeological approach to action research further strengthens and deepens the notion of the emergent possibilities of research. Table 2 summarises this view of a comparison between notions of inquiry and action research in an endeavour to create a suitable plan for this research project.
Table 2: The comparison between research and inquiry approaches: Comparing notions of cooperative, action research praxeological inquiry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the questions to be researched</td>
<td>Look Gather relevant information (Gather data) Build a picture: Describe the situation (Define and describe)</td>
<td>Defining the problem</td>
<td>What is my concern? Why am I concerned?</td>
<td>Description of the context Researcher declares their ethical considerations, interests, values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a more explicit model of practice</td>
<td>Think Explore and analyse: What is happening here? (Analyse) Interpret and explain: How/why are things as they are? (Theorise)</td>
<td>Exploring its context Analysing its component parts</td>
<td>What kinds of data can I gather to show why I am concerned?</td>
<td>Researcher as inquiry tool. Identify a change problem and connected questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting this model into practice</td>
<td>Act Plan (Report) Implement</td>
<td>Developing strategies for its resolution Planning activities and strategies Implementing</td>
<td>What can I do about it? What will I do about it?</td>
<td>Allow for a flexible, evolving and emergent approach: Case study, life story, grounded theory study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording what happens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple techniques for data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on this experience</td>
<td>Act Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluating effectiveness</td>
<td>How will I test the validity of my claim/s to knowledge? How will I ensure that any conclusions I reach are reasonable fair and accurate?</td>
<td>Reviews are a priority and are a means to create new knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sense of the whole venture</td>
<td>Act Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluating effectiveness Reviewing goals and procedures</td>
<td>How will I modify my concerns, ideas and practice in light of my evaluation?</td>
<td>Case study, life story, grounded theory study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer of new knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason and Bradbury’s ‘questions for validity and quality in inquiry’ move my discourse on in terms of the nature of an inquiry approach to research (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p. 12). They acknowledge the participatory and emergent aspects of action research and from this acknowledgement have identified five question types that have a relevance to action research validity and quality. Figure 1 shows the diagrammatic formulation of their ideas. I shall consider each question type in turn and consider its significance to this research project.
Firstly Reason and Bradbury (ibid) identify ‘questions of emergence and enduring consequence.’ These questions sit within the lines of inquiry that emerged and recurred through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis. The purpose of the framework, which is explained in more detail later, was to ensure the qualitative nature of the research process was supported rigorously through an attention to detail within the research line of inquiry. This first question type embodies the participatory nature of research, acknowledges the range of participants and their relationships with each other as well as the requirement for research that has impact over time. Research participant checking had to take place in order to ensure that the identified themes and lines of inquiry were relevant, valid, authentic and representative of adult and child voices. This member checking is evidenced in the overview of the leadership narratives, the research timeline and within each of the three Leadership Narratives presented in this thesis.
Leading into the second question type of ‘questions of outcomes and practice’, a requirement of action research is that identified outcomes impact on future practice. Reflecting on the impact of actions the limitations and variables are taken into account. Some actions were identified as workable and replicable but some were not. It is the learning from the project that informs future practice rather than the repetition of specific actions. In this research project engagement with the learning community was open and transparent in order to check that conclusions and recommendations were reflective not only of my learning but also that of the co-researchers. This is evidenced in the reflective dialogues that are presented in the fieldwork.

The third question type turns my attention to the validity of the ways of knowing that inform the research process and the identification of outcomes, ‘questions of plural ways of knowing’. There has to be a recognition of the multi-vocal aspect of the action research process, the complexity of the range of narratives and as the author I have to identify the bias and limitations I bring to the research process. My bias is evident in the focus on meeting the needs of the Pakistani heritage community. I have already described this as my passion. One purpose of the reflective journalling was to provide time and space for the passion and emotion to flow as evidenced in my free flow writing. This bias influences my ways of knowing in my combined roles of school leader, researcher and author. I am drawn to what interests me and therefore have to ensure that I take other viewpoints into account. This was achieved through my engagement with the PhD action learning group, the headteachers’ learning group and the school learning community. Validity is further considered in the research limitations and ethics section.

The fourth question type ‘questions of relational practice’ extend the idea of participatory qualitative research and notions of power. I have declared my interest in terms of the power I held as the headteacher of the school (Boog, 2003). The significance of this research project in terms of power is exemplified in the three leadership narratives. They evidence the power shift from myself as the lead practitioner/leader researcher to the three children in the Girls’ Chat Group. The children take on the mantle of social justice and the implementation of change within the school learning community. They had the power to create the micro view of sustainable school development.
The fifth and final question type is that of ‘questions of significance’. To quote Reason and Bradbury “at a wider level these questions invite us to connect our work to questions of spirituality, beauty – and whether we have created an inquiry process which is truly worthy of human aspiration” (ibid). This question type is exemplified in the identified research themes, ‘Living life as a teller of tales’ and ‘Living life as a global learner’.

The Development of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis

Identification of the Four Research Themes

For the purposes of this research project ‘Living Life as …’ (Marshall, 1999) is defined as meaning the acknowledgement of ‘the interconnectivity of our personal and professional lives.’ The identified key research themes illuminate the interconnectivity between inquiry, research and leadership within the context of the learning community and the processes within which we develop our discourse. The research themes fit the stated aims of this action research project and the consequent research questions. In these ways, this action research project contributes to the epistemology of primary school leadership and learning, through the outcomes, impact and meaning making of praxeological research within a context that embraces diversity and difference.

The research themes are:

- Living Life as a teller of tales.
- Living Life as a learning leader and leading learner
- Living Life as a global learner
- Living Life as a practitioner/leader researcher.
What follows is the rationale for the inclusion of each theme and the identification of the research sub-themes.

**Living Life as a Teller of Tales**

Researchers and leaders identify stories to illustrate and exemplify their learning (Marshall, 1999; Rosen, 1998; Westley et al, 2007). Telling stories is how we operate as human beings (Rosen, 1998, p. 6). We tell stories and we listen to stories. Story-telling is an integral part of our daily lives. Whether it is telling a tale of the day's events or recalling a film, a television programme, or the details of an incident that has intrigued, informed, troubled or amused us. A glorious feature of story-telling is that it is a process that has the potential to connect cultures. Leadership narratives as academic discourse could be problematic, could be perceived as overly subjective and dependent on memory. It is proposed that the richness of storytelling within an academic framework has the potential to contribute to qualitative research. This is not about making 'it' up, it is about making sense of the reality that either supports or confounds practitioners in their leadership and learning endeavours (Marshall et al, 2011). First-person and second-person inquiry (ibid, p.31-34) present the researcher on the one hand with a range of qualitative possibilities and on the other hand potential limitations.

The sub-theme ‘collaboration’ acknowledges narration as a social event. It invites collaborative and responsive approaches to a learning community's theorising (Reason & Bradbury, 2006).

**Living Life as a Learning Leader and Leading Learner**

This research theme honours the potential of all members of a learning community to learn and to lead. It recognises the interconnectivity and interrelatedness of leadership and learning. Building stronger learning communities holds contemporary significance in a world that can feel increasingly threatening (Whalley, 1994). The creation and development of strong learning communities that can support a better future for children who attend the school where I am the learning leader (Westley et al, 2007) represents a key element to ‘Living Life as …’ (Marshall, 1999).
Organisational learning within a learning community is the sub-theme (Lambert, 1998; Lambert et al, 2002; Boog, 2003). Throughout the action research process the impact of research outcomes on organisational learning is a continuous thread.

**Living Life as a Global Learner**

This research theme consolidates the justification for pursuing a systemic approach to primary school leadership. To develop a systemic approach a worldview is necessary. In learning leadership and leading learner roles it is essential to build a picture of the socio-economic, political and historic context of our learning communities and how that features within local, national and international perceptions and viewpoints (Freire, 1970; Shratz & Walker, 1995).

Therefore systems consciousness is the identified sub-theme within this research theme (Whitaker, 2009).

**Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher**

The terms ‘practitioner’, ‘leader’ and ‘researcher’ have been previously discussed. Living life as inquiry and theory (Marshall, 1999; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) are concepts that support this research theme and its inclusion. It conveys the dilemmas faced by designated school leaders in their pursuit of more fitting ways to educate people (Lillis, 2000).

Action Research, enriched by a praxeological approach to inquiry, as a method for sustainable school improvement constitutes the sub-theme (Lillis, 2000).
The Interconnectivity between the Research Aims, the Research Questions and the Research Themes

Table 3 shows the relationship between the research aims, the research questions and the research themes. The presentation of the research fieldwork and the consequent research analysis within the thematic framework provide the responses to the research aims and questions and the evidence of the research outcomes.

Table 3: The interconnectivity between the research aims, the research questions and the research themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Research Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on and further develop notions of leadership as a dynamic and creative learning process from both a personal and learning community perspective, with the prime purpose of impacting on children’s lives.</td>
<td>How can learning communities investigate and influence leadership as a dynamic and creative process to impact on children’s lives?</td>
<td>Living Life as a Teller of Tales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How can learning communities, including children, make their learning and leadership visible?</td>
<td>Living Life as a Learning Leader and Leading Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate and identify how collaborative and responsive inquiry can influence, shape and transform children’s learning and school leadership.</td>
<td>How can collaborative inquiry facilitate the shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?</td>
<td>Living Life as a Global Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish the value of action research as a method for sustainable school development and improvement through the presentation of evidence of impact that makes a difference for children.</td>
<td>How can action research support sustainable school improvement to impact on outcomes for children in primary schools?</td>
<td>Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four research themes have been identified during the first phase of this action research project. The thematic framework for data analysis, which follows, provides the
process for demonstrating clarity, relevance, authenticity, validity, honesty, reliability and integrity.

**The Thematic Framework for Data Analysis: Its Purpose**

The creation of a thematic framework for data analysis provides the means to make sense of the fieldwork data and identify the relevance of the findings. It is necessary to demonstrate the ‘reflexive turn’ (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p.480) in data analysis. A framework was required to sustain the focus on the research purpose, aims and questions. The development of this thematic framework validates the identified research themes. If the research themes did not relate to the emergent and recurring themes identified within the fieldwork and consequent lines of inquiry the final theory making would have to be reassessed in terms of relevance and inclusion. The theories and experiences that underpin the research themes have been explored and explained. The presentation of the research fieldwork and the consequent research analysis within the thematic framework provide the responses to the research line of inquiry, aims and questions.

Central to these research themes and sub-themes, there is consideration of pedagogical leadership, andragogical leadership and wellbeing. Table 4 presents the thematic framework for data analysis, inclusive of pedagogical leadership, andragogical leadership and wellbeing. It has been explained and acknowledged that in order to facilitate and honour the role of practitioner/leader researcher, recognition of what nourishes the person in that role impacts on and contributes to their wellbeing, their capacity to fulfil this multidisciplinary role, and enriches both their personal and professional life.

Throughout the research process I sustained my wellbeing through my interaction with the creative arts. My passion for music was shared with members of the school learning community and PhD action learning set. I collated two Compacts Discs which I gave to each member of the PhD action learning set. This was in recognition of the nourishment I had gained from listening to a range of musical genres (Appendix 14).
Discourse with co-researchers at school has provided the co-construction and validation for the thematic framework for data analysis. To facilitate the application of the thematic framework for data analysis, the themes and sub-themes have been colour coded. The purpose of the colour coding is to facilitate the data analysis process. By highlighting journal scripts, interview transcriptions and school development evaluations the fieldwork has been interrogated and analysed (Appendix 13). This physical and visual process has supported the identification of emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry. Table 5 illustrates the colour coding.

### Table 4: Thematic Framework for Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Teller of Tales</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader</td>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Global Learner</td>
<td>Systems Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: The Thematic Framework for Data Analysis with Colour Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Teller of Tales</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader</td>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Global Learner</td>
<td>Systems Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e.g., THE CREATIVE ARTS)
Throughout the process the identified themes have been revisited. It is apparent that the themes are interchangeable and it is not a matter of hierarchy where each theme and sub-theme is placed. This is a device that has been created to examine the data, to learn from the data and to arrive at conclusions, meaning making and theory making. Each sub-theme has an equal relevance to each theme. The complexity of the research process has to be acknowledged. This thematic framework is not static, it is dynamic.

The application of this thematic framework represents the ‘reflexive turn’ (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p.480). The four levels of reflection identified in the NPQICL ‘Journalling’ paper provide a clearly defined process (Pen Green, 2006). An additional fifth level ‘So What? What difference has it made?’ facilitates the acknowledgement of the purpose of the research. The five levels of reflection are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: The five levels of reflection and their location and relevance within the research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Reflection</th>
<th>Location within the Research Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recording</td>
<td>• Dated extracts from journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Semi-structured interview transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School development evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpreting</td>
<td>Asking the questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do I/we make of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do I/we see, hear and feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What limitations do I/we identify?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analysing</td>
<td>Identification of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergent themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recurring themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison of data with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Existing theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integrating</td>
<td>Identification of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lines of inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. So What?</td>
<td>Consideration of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What difference does it make?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What difference will my/our future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>actions make?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the process of analysis of the fieldwork data, which consists of research journals, transcription of one semi-formal interview, journals written by co-researchers and leadership narratives, additional strands that are relevant to the thematic framework for data analysis have been identified. Shared experiences, dialogue and conceptualising
sits within McKinnon’s identification of the features of an ‘emancipatory action learning group’ (2009). McKinnon identified the following features: equality among members, respectful interactions, being contributory, complementarity, collaborative, supportive, rigorous, taking risks, being committed, stating a clarity of purpose, being empathetic and reflective. McKinnon’s identification of features that characterise an emancipatory action learning group have been integrated within the thematic framework as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: The inter-connectivity between the identified characteristic features of an ‘emancipatory action research learning group/set’ (McKinnon, 2009) and the thematic framework for data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Themes</th>
<th>Research Sub-themes</th>
<th>Emancipatory Characteristics of an Action Research Learning Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Living Life as a Teller of Tales</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Contributory Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Living Life as a Lead Learner and Learning Leader</td>
<td>Organisational Learning</td>
<td>Respectful interactions Supportive Clarity of Purpose Reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Living Life as a Global Learner</td>
<td>Systems Consciousness</td>
<td>Equality among members Empathetic Committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
<td>Risk-taking Complementarity Rigorous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Process of Data Analysis

Research journals, transcriptions and self-evaluation documents have been colour coded through the consideration of the four research themes. The next stage of the process of analysis was to create a template for each research theme using the headings for reflection as described above (Pen Green, 2006) and as illustrated in Table 8.
Table 9: Application of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis: Living Life as a Teller of Tales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the story of the questions?</td>
<td>We are intrigued about the origins of our thoughts and are lines of inquiry.</td>
<td>Marshall, 1999.</td>
<td>Contextualisation influences our conceptualisation of dilemmas and concerns.</td>
<td>The relevance of this statement is that we have to have the contextual knowledge to understand how and why we act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to consider aspects of voice.</td>
<td>When I am in the PhD Action Learning Group I contain my voice.</td>
<td>Boog, 2003.</td>
<td>As a practitioner/leader researcher my enthusiasm and passion can drown my co-researchers’ voices.</td>
<td>The “so what?” is an action. To further develop my self-awareness and impact on others in terms of asserting power through the dominant force of ‘my voice.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we sit in our group and give ourselves the luxury of time, time to relate our stories.</td>
<td>That to create the time and space for active dialogue is a luxury rather than a prerequisite of our professional lives.</td>
<td>We are hard on ourselves as carers and educators. We do not necessarily value the time for active dialogue, not sufficiently to create the spaces. Watkins, 2005.</td>
<td>Imagine the implications for creating this time and space for professional active dialogue. This isn’t about ‘Planning, preparation and assessment time,’ this is about allocating time for research and deep thinking.</td>
<td>What can be done within our organisations to create time for active professional learning dialogue? <strong>This is a significant outcome of our research project.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories are not only professional and academic but also personal.</td>
<td>This is acknowledgement of what living life as theory feels like. This is an acknowledgement of the reality of these life processes.</td>
<td>Marshall, 1999.</td>
<td>The implications are that our professional, academic and personal lives can be enriched through the acknowledgement of their connectivity and how they interrelate.</td>
<td>The impact on my learning as a practitioner/leader researcher has been on my wellbeing. Once I recognised that I cannot separate my three lives I have felt better about myself. I cherish the fact that all three are interrelated. I am enthused by the connectivity of my</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I sense that it is this engagement that carries me through until our next encounter.

Are we in such a state in the world of education that having time to reflect and consider is deemed a luxury?

I have no doubt this is true of other professional worlds.

I imagine the implications for everyone if we created more time for deep thinking.

The creation of time and space would energise public services and our local and national political lives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through participation in this learning community I am finding the strength to keep hold of my integrity.</td>
<td>This statement acknowledges the pressures on designated leaders. Pressures so great that they impact on decision making and strategic thinking.</td>
<td>Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006; Hargreaves, 2003.</td>
<td>We all have a need to belong. The sense of belonging provides the security to hold onto our integrity and make the best decisions we can and create the most effective strategy for development.</td>
<td>Connecting learning communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure those quieter voices in the learning community are captured and heard.</td>
<td>How to ignite those quieter voices? How to create greater confidence amongst adults and children?</td>
<td>John, 2012b.</td>
<td>The implications are that leaders have a better understanding of their organisations. We/I can acknowledge that we/I do not have all the answers.</td>
<td>Find different ways to capture voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a chance for a richer and deeper pedagogy to transform lives?</td>
<td>The purpose of my research study is to show how school development through action research methodology will enrich our pedagogy and andragogy in our endeavour to improve children’s lives and life chances.</td>
<td>Westley et al, 2007.</td>
<td>What is our core business? In integrated centres and schools we have to not only hold onto our integrity but also our will to transform the lives of future generations.</td>
<td>There has to be a chance for a richer deeper pedagogy to transform lives in spite of influences and interference that we are unable to control. Isn’t it our duty as practitioner/leader researchers to aim for these higher order ideals? Therefore these aspirations have to be firmly established in our growth mindset.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Methods

The research questions have been investigated through the following research methods and processes:

- Action Learning Sets
- Leadership Narratives
- Journalling
- Freefall Writing
- Self-Evaluation Processes
- Semi-Structured Interview
- Visualisations

Action Learning Sets

In order to define what an action learning group is it is necessary to consider the notion of action learning. Stark (2006) explains that action learning is the process by which a group of practitioners seeks to solve an identified issue and to bring about organisational change. Stark researched action learning groups within two different professional domains, nursing and education. Stark claims that the action learning model, “rests on the premise that individuals develop ‘questioning insights’ based on experiences at work, to find solutions to work related problems” (ibid, pp.24-25). This form of action learning describes the PhD Action Learning Group and the action learning groups within the school community.

Health care professionals identified action learning sets as a way of improving practice and implementing organisational change (ibid). When the learning and implementation of change was led by practitioners themselves it was more effective and sustainable. Reflecting on participatory action research it is evident that action learning groups are groups that may choose to apply participatory action research methodology in order to support and advance their learning (Cohen et al, 2011). Campbell (2004) confirms that action learning sets or groups in schools, leading research, are increasingly established with specifically funded projects (p.195). It is affirmed that collaborative approaches to
improving practice are complementary to schools networking and participating in partnerships (Hargreaves, 2012).

Stark (2006) explains that action learning is a defined process within action research study. A distinction between action learners and action researchers is perceived (ibid). There is a recognition that action learners and action researchers do have some of the same values including the “principle of learning from experience”, “co-operative inquiry” (Heron, 1996; Reason, 1988) and apply the “same learning cycle.” Stark explains that action learning is a process, and action research is a method.

“Research may not be the primary aim of action learning, or involve formal research at all. Action learning undertakes a process of learning that is essentially a group process … The action researcher can be an independent researcher that involves others in a project”

(Stark, 2006, p.25).

Reason and Bradbury (2006) describe “participatory action research” (p.75) as that which is planned, implemented and evaluated by the people who are directly involved in the concern. They propose the notion of participatory research as follows: “While participatory research often starts with the importance of indigenous or popular knowledge, such knowledge is deepened through a dialectical process of people acting, with others, upon reality in order to change and understand it” (ibid, p.75).

**Leadership Narratives**

Through the research process the term ‘leadership narrative’ has evolved. It was important to present the stories of our research as narratives and to recognise our conceptualisation of school leadership. By combining the two words ‘leadership’ and ‘narrative’ two significant strands of theorising are honoured. The source of our leadership narratives is generated from the research fieldwork documented in journals, freefall writing, self-evaluation processes, and visualisations.
A ‘leadership narrative’, for the purposes of this research project is therefore defined as the telling of either a leadership story or leadership journey. It is characterised by the exemplification of aspects of leadership including the identified research themes and the development of our thinking about taking a lead (Lambert, 2003). This research project is a series of leadership narratives that are created specifically with the purpose of making leadership visible. The evidence types are the recorded stories, the interpretation of those stories and the analysis of those stories through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis.

The purpose of relating our leadership narratives was to create the time and space to tell and interpret our stories, to ask ‘What do I make of what I see, hear and feel?’ The analysis of meaning has been achieved through the identification of emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry. The integration of leadership learning, identification of the implications and clarification of what needs to be done next are included in each of the leadership narratives presented. A leadership narrative develops through these processes of analysis and integration and therefore has resonance with theory, practice, reflection and learning. It was necessary to ask the ‘so what?’ question in order to imagine the implications of the findings, that is, the identified conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions are reached as to the extent to which action research methodology and methods have contributed to respectful and sustainable school development and improvement.

Our leadership narratives were a vehicle for making sense of leadership and learning and their connectivity. They provided a mode for the co-construction of events. From my perspective as the practitioner/leader researcher this meaning-making process gave me the confidence to continue in my complex and diverse role. Marshall (1999) presents story-telling as a key strategy for finding voice and acknowledging the research journey as living life as inquiry. For the purposes of this research project leadership narratives are the research device applied to present the data.

Formosinho and Oliveira-Formoshino explain.

“The reason why the natural sciences paradigm is not adequate to conduct research in social sciences is that the object of the research is not an inert
raw material; it is a subject with cognition, sentiments and will; it is a social actor with agency; it is a person with a specific life story and singular projects. Many of the variables which influence the cause-effect relationship described above are process variables dependent on the agency of the persons involved and the life learning stories”

(Formosinho and Oliveira-Formoshino 2012, p.594).

The notion of ‘learning stories’ has a specific meaning in early childhood as defined by Carr and Lee (2012).

“Learning Stories can capture the intermingling of expertise and disposition, the connections with the local environment that provide cues for further planning, the positioning of the assessment inside a learning journey, and the interdependence of the social, cognitive and affective dimensions of learning experiences. At the same time Learning Stories enable children and students to develop capacities for self-assessment and for reflecting on their learning. They are literally artefacts too”

(Carr and Lee, 2012, p.131).

Carr and Lee’s deep commitment to community, culture and the learners’ autonomy with the learning process has resonance. The purpose of this action research was to specifically identify leadership learning through the telling of stories.

In this research project a total of 12 leadership narratives were created. Table 10 illustrates how each leadership narrative sits within the research plan. As well as the full length leadership narratives, shorter reflective dialogues were created. These have been included in this overview.
Table 10: Overview of the Twelve Leadership Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Research Phases and Timeline</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: PhD Action Learning Group</td>
<td>Phases 1 – 9 February 2008 – May 2014</td>
<td>6 PhD students and 3 tutors formed an action learning group. The purpose of this group was to support, extend, interrogate and validate our research projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reflective Dialogue: My Leadership Journey</td>
<td>Phases 1-9 February 2008 – July 2015</td>
<td>In my role as author I reflected on my leadership journey to investigate primary school leadership and identify emergent leadership theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Are you a Global Learner?</td>
<td>Phase 1 April 2009</td>
<td>Teachers and Teaching Assistants engaged in a half day Professional Development Session to reflect on what is meant by ‘Being a Global Learner.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Active Dialogue</td>
<td>Phase 2 January – June 2010</td>
<td>Professional Development programme engaging the Teaching Assistant team in reflection on the needs of the multilingual learner and the identification of pedagogical strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Connecting Communities</td>
<td>Phases 1 &amp; 2 June – July 2010</td>
<td>The author, a teaching assistant and an artist worked together with children and their parents to investigate the school’s locality and the idea of ‘community’. 4 sessions were planned, implemented and evaluated by the facilitators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Headteachers’ Learning Group</td>
<td>Phases 1, 2 &amp; 7 December 2009 – December 2012</td>
<td>8 headteachers met once every half term. A range of leadership themes were discussed. The recurring themes were collated and a paper was shared and discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reflective Dialogue: Designated Leaders</td>
<td>Phases 3, 4 &amp; 5 September 2010 – July 2012</td>
<td>Members of the designated leadership team received reflective journals. These journals were brought to leadership meetings and time was allocated for reflection and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: The School Council</td>
<td>Phases 3, 4 &amp; 5 November 2010 – July 2013</td>
<td>The School Council was one of the action learning sets. Through their meetings they had impact on different aspects of school life. The Girls’ Chat Group joined the School Council in developing the One World project. Successive School Councils engaged in the research process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Raising Girls’ Achievement</td>
<td>Phases 3, 4 &amp; 5 November 2010 – July 2012</td>
<td>The Raising Girls’ Achievement Learning Set documented their action research project and identified pedagogical strategies that had a positive impact on the girls’ achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative: Girls’ Chat Group</td>
<td>Phase 5 October 2011 – July 2012</td>
<td>The Girls’ Chat Group emerged as a response to a racist incident involving three girls who initiated the incident. Shazia’s story is presented integral to this leadership narrative. This leadership narrative is central to this project. It reflects the four research themes and had a significant impact on members of the school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reflective Dialogues</td>
<td>Phases 7 &amp; 8 February 2014 – July 2014</td>
<td>Members of the learning community were invited to reflect on the research process, the research outcomes and the leadership development web.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the explanation of the visualisations the leadership narratives are presented in a graphic form.

**Selection of the Leadership Narratives**

The quantity of data generated became unwieldy and together with my co-researchers I had to make a decision about which leadership narratives to present in the final thesis. This decision making was managed by presenting an overview of the whole work to the learning and teaching team (teachers and teaching assistants) and listening to their feedback in terms of where our learning and co-construction of leadership development were best illustrated. Selection was also determined by ensuring the leadership narratives presented were illustrative of the phased approach to the research design. Therefore ‘Active Dialogue’ was selected because it evidenced Phase 2, ‘Belonging’ was selected because it evidenced Phases 3 and 4 and ‘Girls’ Chat Group’ was selected because it evidenced research Phase 5. All three leadership narratives contributed to Phases 6 to 9. Further explanation of the selection process follows.

**Active Dialogue**

In my role as the practitioner/leader researcher this leadership narrative enriched my professional relationship with the teaching assistant team. ‘Active Dialogue’ presents a specific focus on the teaching assistants’ voices. Taking into account recent research that to some extent undermines the worth of teaching assistants as professionals (EEF, 2014) ‘Active Dialogue’ makes a positive contribution to the debate. Our conclusion was that investment in professional development and respect for all school professionals creates positive relationships and a more confident and capable team that in turn is increasingly effective in supporting children in their care, development and learning.

**Belonging**

The leadership narrative ‘Belonging’ is central to this research project. It explains the implementation of the action research project plan through the creation and on-going evaluation of the School Vision and School Development Plan (Appendix 16). It
evidences a systemic approach to school improvement which is of current interest and relevance to primary school leadership (Collarbone & West-Burnham, 2008; Robinson, 2012). The naming of this leadership narrative emerged from the collation of emergent and recurring themes through the research analysis process. Co-researchers were influenced by previous research that had been implemented at the school (Charlton et al, 2011; Wyse et al. 2010).

**Girls’ Chat Group**

At the beginning of this research process it was known that the action research model was to be implemented as a strategy for potentially effective school development. It was unknown that ‘pupil voice’ would become a dominant emergent theme. It is this emergent quality that has convinced me that taking a praxeological stance is powerful as a research paradigm. This leadership narrative was devised as a response to a racist incident. There was a change of focus because it was deemed necessary to create a more profound response to an event that had disturbed the learning community. It would have been too comfortable to ignore and pass over. Therefore, the decision to include the ‘Girls’ Chat Group’ leadership narrative was in recognition of the impact of this leadership journey on work colleagues and the children themselves. The school’s Literacy Subject Lead read through a draft version of the leadership narrative. She advised that, “Everyone needs to read this.” From her perspective this leadership narrative exemplified the value of focussing on the theme of social justice and how children demonstrate school leadership. As the girls gained in confidence and made decisions about their thoughts, theories and lives so they began to lead in a whole school initiative. The girls’ voices dominate and the adult voices diminish.

Table 11 is an overview of the three selected leadership narratives presented in this thesis and how each leadership narrative met the criteria for inclusion.
Table I I: An Overview of the Three Leadership Narratives Presented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>How the criteria are met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Active Dialogue</td>
<td>Professional learning within a collaborative context is presented. Tells the teaching assistants’ story in how they developed their understanding of meeting the needs of multilingual learners. The exploration of the research context informed school leadership and the research planning. All four research themes were identified through the data analysis process. Organisational learning had particular relevance. It was evident that the research participants were leading learning with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Reports on the school community’s leadership journey through the research process. The implementation and evaluation of the research project plan is described. The voices of many created the School Vision and the School Development Plan, an indication of making leadership visible to all engaged in the process. Emergence and establishment of the theme of ‘Belonging’ is verified and relates to the research theme, ‘Living life as a global learner’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Girls’ Chat Group</td>
<td>This was representative of the emergent quality of the action research project. The need to investigate social justice in more depth was identified. Learning of the emergent nature of this action research project was deepened. The value and power of a child’s perspective, perceptions and potential as a school leader was acknowledged. All the research themes were identified to have a relevance and resonance. Shazia’s story confirms that ‘Living life as a teller of tales’ enabled her to reflect deeply on her words and actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To restate, in this action research project, our school community’s learning is presented as a series of leadership narratives, from both child and adult leading learners. It is a co-construction of our learning leadership journey over a five-year period.

**Journalling**

In this research project the value and power of journalling and freefall writing, as creative methods of developing and strengthening leadership, impact on the development of leadership theory. Thus, journalling and freefall writing (Marshall, 2007) as processes for deep reflection, are a key element of the action research methodology. As a reflective practitioner the process of journalling enabled me to document what happened during the research process. Documentation was both chronological, thus keeping a record of actions and outcomes, and of a more theoretical nature, where thoughts were unravelled, analysed and set within the context of research literature. Whitaker describes ‘personal history’ as a valid and significant data resource (Whitaker, 2003). Sharp describes the value of reflection and developing the ability “to evaluate your own emotional literacy” (Sharp, 2001, p.90).

“If we accept the challenge that promoting our own emotional literacy makes us fit for the purpose of helping others to promote their emotional literacy, then the really hard choice is about whether or not we commit to action…. to work on our self”

(Sharp, 2001, p.90).

In my role as an education practitioner journalling has activated my practitioner reflections and learning. From the start of my formal career in 1980 I have documented my observations and evaluations of child learning and my learning as an adult practitioner. I was appointed as the deputy headteacher of a nursery school in 1997 and it was from this time that I journalled with the purpose of unravelling leadership dilemma stories (NCSL, 2004a). From the point of my first headship in 1999 this leadership journalling became increasingly a necessity for my professional and personal wellbeing.
Journalling has been generated by members of the school community, including children. Journalling created research fieldwork, which in turn has been interpreted, analysed, integrated and considered in terms of ‘So What?’ to create the research data.

There were ethical protocols to adhere to in terms of how the researcher engaged with research journals that belonged to research participants. In my role as practitioner/leader researcher I was also aware of my power as headteacher of the school learning community. Therefore, although journals were requested, they were not all shared as in the case of two of the girls in the chat group. The designated school leaders were presented with reflective journals in September 2010 but there was no expectation that these would be shared. This enabled school leaders to off load their concerns and reflect deeply without the worry that a colleague would be reading their writing.

The reflective dialogues that are presented in this thesis were offered by the authors during the final phases of the research project. They were an outcome of a series of 3 meetings held to create the opportunity for reflection on school leadership. Textbox 1 shows the series of prompts that were shared in my quest for responses.
Textbox 1: Prompts for members of the school learning community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What have we learnt through this process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Our Leadership Saga: Developing a Systemic Approach to School Leadership**

**Prompts for our discussion**

The purpose this discussion is to capture your voice as co-researcher in the process of school development over the last five years.

Before we meet please could you spend some time reflecting on the following:

- Describe what has happened at the School since our Vision Day on the 1st November 2010.
  - What has been achieved for children?
  - What has been achieved for families?
  - What has been achieved for the staff team, including the governing body?
  - What has been achieved for the community?
  - How have the above been achieved?

- Describe your perception of school leadership over this time period.

- What should our priorities be now?
  - What should we hold onto?
  - What should we let go of?
  - Even better if? …

- How can we ensure every member of our school team is accountable for making a difference for children?

Thank you
Christine
In my role as school leader and researcher I completed a number of journals for different purposes. These consisted of 1 research journal, 2 PhD action learning set journals, 1 headteachers’ learning group journal and 1 leadership reflective journal. The designated school leaders had reflective journals. The teaching assistants completed an on-going ‘learning log’ which provided the time and space for reflection. The girls belonging to the Girls’ Chat Group had a journal each which they wrote in on a weekly basis. The content informed our discussions at our meetings. Ethical protocols were followed and the girls read self-selected extracts from their journals. Members of the school learning community were invited to reflect on the whole research process and as an outcomes of these discussions wrote up their reflective dialogues. Table 12 confirms the number of journals.

### Table 12: The number of journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journals</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s journals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>257 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD action learning set journals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>208 pages &amp; 94 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headteachers’ learning group journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders’ reflective journals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistants’ learning logs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Chat Group journals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Dialogues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Journals, Learning Logs and Reflective Dialogues</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The journals and learning logs, as identified above, were either collated or not, if deemed inappropriate. The researcher’s journals and PhD action learning set journals were typed up. The headteachers’ learning group journal was transcribed as a series of textboxes.
The school leaders’ reflective journals were not collated as explained above. The teaching assistants’ learning logs were typed up. One of the Girls’ Chat Group journals was typed up.

Journals and learning logs were revisited by the author through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis. Appendix 13 illustrates these processes. The research data that was created was then the source for the series of papers that were presented to the different research groups. The headteachers received a paper that described the shared process of the meetings and my reflections. Appendix 11 is an overview of the headteachers’ learning group meetings and the themes that were our focus. Each teaching assistant received individual feedback on their reflections from the author. They were also provided with drafts of the leadership narrative that has been written for this thesis. The three members of the Girls’ Chat Group and the member of staff involved were also able to read drafts of the Leadership Narrative 3 to verify the content.

**Freefall Writing**

“Invoke the writer in you and your direct voice, whatever shape it takes”  
(Marshall, 2001, p.11).

In Marshall’s piece entitled, ‘Finding Form in Writing for Action Research’, writing for action research is about finding voice: finding your own voice as a researcher and locating and projecting the voices of your co-researchers and research participants. Marshall finds her voice in this paper through her reflection on the writings of Virginia Woolf. She calls this “Learning from Woolf: Working with Intent” (Marshall, 2007, p.5). I am enamoured by and engaged in this crossing over of the arts and academia approach. It strengthens thoughts around life as researcher/leader and how I am influenced by aspects of the creative arts. Freefall writing sits well within the idea of being a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). It provides a non-judgemental place that is safe. It enables the articulation of thoughts, to test out before they are shared with others. It is the sharing with others that is so frightening. Within the context of this research project freefall writing is defined to mean a technique to enable the writer to access and respond to thought
processes in a way that is free and is not limited by formal writing conventions. Freefall writing has been critical to the research methodology for this action research project. It has released me, enabled me and provided the confidence I needed as a researcher to write.

The Self-Evaluation Process

Whitaker developed strategies to support schools in professional communication and advocated a method for gathering feedback within professional dialogue (Whitaker, 1993). The aim of this method was to clarify an individual’s success and achievements as well as the identification of problems and difficulties (ibid). The lines of inquiry demonstrate the origins of the self-evaluation methods chosen for the purposes of this action research project: “To confirm success and achievements: a) What have they done well, b) How they did it, c) The successful consequences. To help overcome problems and difficulties: a) What have they done, b) How they did it, c) The problem encountered” (ibid, p.23). Within the NPQICL materials similar lines of inquiry were advocated as integral to the group evaluation process (NCSL, 2004a).

My engagement in the leadership programme for leaders of Early Excellence Centres and completion of the Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management embedded practice to support organisational self-evaluation. The starting point for evaluation through the consideration of three lines of inquiry has provoked responses and developed the learning community’s ability to identify strategies and actions that have made a difference and those that have been less successful. The lines of inquiry are: What went well? What did not go so well? Even better if? This is the process the learning community adopted to co-construct the evaluation process.

In one of the later phases of the research (Phase 7), ‘reflection and making sense of the fieldwork’, to engage co-researchers in reflection, three additional lines of inquiry were identified to facilitate the self-evaluation process. A pro-forma was created for consideration prior to dialogue. The first line of inquiry focused on what had been
achieved for children, families, the staff team including the governing body and the local community. The second line of inquiry invited co-researchers to consider their perception of school leadership over this time period. Finally, the third line of inquiry invited a consideration of what future priorities should be identified and the notion of accountability and making a difference for children. Kieran’s Story is created from his responses to these three lines of inquiry and is presented in Chapter 9.

Semi-Structured Interview

Most of the work of this action research project has been through the learning of the action learning groups, the subsequent creation of the leadership narratives and the collation of fieldwork through the self-evaluation process. It was as an outcome of the Girls’ Chat Group that a semi-structured interview (Robson, 2011) was identified as the research method that would enable the three girls to further investigate their line of inquiry, ‘What is racism?’

The semi-structured interview was organised by the three girls and they invited a member of the school team to be interviewed. The nature of their investigation was that they wanted to know if she had been a victim of racism at school. The semi-structured interview was audio-recorded and a full transcription enabled the analysis of the discourse that took place. The lead practitioner/leader researcher was present.

All participants were made aware that there was an audio-recording device in the meeting room. It was turned on at the beginning of the semi-structured interview and recorded throughout the session. The practitioner/leader researcher transcribed the interview by repeatedly listening to the audio-recording and typing up the script. The script was structured to show the timeline of the interview at half minute intervals, who was speaking and any actions were recorded, for example, on one occasion the researcher left the room and the audio-recorder continued to record. In the transcription of the semi-structured interview all participants’ names were indicated by an initial letter. Pauses were shown with an ellipses and responses such as laughter were
recorded. Tone of voice was recorded, for example, when a participant whispered. All the participants were given a copy of the script to ensure it was a consistent and valid document in order to negate research limitations. It was agreed that the transcription document was fit for purpose. Figure 2 shows an extract from the transcription.

Figure 2: An extract from the transcription of the audio-recorded semi-structured interview.

In this extract the researcher has left the room and the three girls and staff member have been talking about Children in Need and the staff member’s plaited hair. This is a 30 second extract.

02.00
A: It was even recording ‘I’ll be one second’. (Laughs)
Mrs F: Laughs … I’ll have to get my daughter to draw spots on me tomorrow … Nice … Don’t you plait your hair?
A and Z: Sometimes.
Mrs F: But you put big plaits in. You don’t put as many in as I’ve got.
Z: When it’s weddings we do little little French plaits.
A: I know how to plait my own hair.
Mrs F: It’s difficult isn’t it?
Z: Yeah.
2.30

The practitioner/leader researcher studied the transcription through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis. The purpose of this process was to identify the significance of the four research themes and the contribution the semi-structured interview made to organisational learning. The transcription was highlighted applying the
colour coding that has been explained previously.

The transcript was then tabulated in order to identify and clarify learning. The researcher wrote up the findings and these were given to the staff member, the members of the girls’ chat group and members of the school learning community for verification and feedback. Figure 3 presents the findings in the tabulated format.

Figure 3: Extract from the research findings in the tabulated format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aamina (A), Shazia (S) Zahra (Z) Mrs F and Mrs P’s Dialogue Recording</th>
<th>Emerging/Recurring Themes</th>
<th>Identification of Lines of Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs F: Laughs ... I’ll have to get my daughter to draw spots on me tomorrow ... Nice ... Don’t you plait your hair?</td>
<td>Mrs P leaves the room and the discourse continues. Aamina takes over in Mrs P’s absence.</td>
<td>This extract sits within the domain of ‘living life as a global learner’ alongside ‘living life as a teller of tales’. The girls want to know Mrs F’s story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A and Z: Sometimes. Mrs F: But you put big plaits in. You don’t put as many in as I’ve got. Z: When it’s weddings we do little little French plaits. A: I know how to plait my own hair. Mrs F: It’s difficult isn’t it? Z: Yeah.</td>
<td>Mrs F’s hair is braided. Aamina wants to know the details about how this is done. Zahra makes the connection between Mrs F, her hairstyle and how her own community dresses up for weddings.</td>
<td>The creation of the space to ask what we genuinely want to ask reflects the personal and the social (Formosinho &amp; Formosinho, 2010). The interconnectivity between communities is evident here. When we find the connections we can have discourse. There is an interconnectivity between notions of social justice and notions of heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.00</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This process of audio-recording, transcription, data analysis and tabulation of findings...
was repeated for the audio-recorded meeting entitled ‘What is Racism?’

Visualisation of the Research Process

Throughout this research quest images have been sought to make the research process visual. In this endeavour it has been important to recognise the influence of the predominant culture represented in our school learning community. From my perspective engagement with the Pakistani heritage community and their culture has personal as well as professional resonance.

Figures 5 to 10 are the components of a representation of our research process applying the rich pattern-making prevalent in the Pakistani heritage community. The ‘boteh’ or ‘paisley’ design originates from Iran and symbolises the tree of life (Edwards, 2009). It travelled to India in the eighteenth century and became popular in Regency England and Scotland. The name change originated from the Scottish town of Paisley where fine woollen and silk fabrics were produced. The paisley design has a contemporary resonance as it is a popular design for both eastern and western designers. The boteh design is recognisable in the mehndi patterns, which are temporary designs drawn on the woman’s feet and hands during Islamic, Hindu and Sikh marriage and religious ceremonies. Girls attending one of the school’s chat groups have taught me how to draw one design which has enabled me to incorporate the visualisation of the research process (Appendix 1). I have asked myself if I am making my ‘theory making’ fit lines, shapes, patterns and constructs because I want to make them fit, or do they truly make sense of the theory and connected processes. It is my opinion that these configurations illuminate and enrich our theory making.

There is resonance with other global heritages that have taken symbolic representations to facilitate visualisation. For example in the Te Whariki Early Childhood Curriculum in New Zealand the principles and strands of the curriculum are demonstrated through the application of the Maori woven mat (Ministry of Education, New Zealand, 1996). The boteh or paisley design has been used in this action research project to invite responses from peers during the process of research outcomes dissemination as a
symbol of the Pakistani heritage community but at the same time acknowledging that the design has a rich global dimension. We start with the learning spiral, as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: The Learning Spiral**

![Learning Spiral Diagram](image)

Below in Figure 5 are the ‘bumps’, which can be representative of groups of action learners, research themes and aspects of leadership.

**Figure 5: The Bumps: Representing either the action learning groups, or research themes or aspects of leadership.**

![Bumps Diagram](image)

Next in Figure 6 we have the ‘petals’ representing our learning, our lines of inquiry, our emergent themes and our recurring themes and our new theories. The petals are the botehs.
Figure 6: The ‘Petals’: Representing our learning.

The boteh can be elaborated further, as depicted in Figure 7 to visualise our leadership learning.

Figure 7: The Boteh is elaborated to visualise leadership learning.
Our discursive learning generates our plans for new directions, new learning and ways to strengthen our learning community, this is represented by new spirals that are added in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: New Spirals represent new directions and new learning**

![New Spirals](image)

The value of this visualisation is that every piece is unique and different. There is no one model or design. It engages us in and facilitates the sense of the theory making.

Figure 9 illustrates the emergence of the 12 leadership narratives and reflective dialogues. The first spiral represents the leadership narrative, the ‘PhD Action Learning Group’. The bumps signify the participants and from one flows the second spiral. This is the beginning of my reflective dialogue ‘My Leadership Journey’ from which emerges one bump to show my intention to engage in research. The single botah signifies the beginning stage of formulating the research purpose, the line of inquiry and the research questions. Two spirals emanate, one shows the leadership narratives that were initiated during the first two phases of the research process, ‘Global Learners’, ‘Active Dialogue’ and ‘Connecting Communities’. The second spiral represents the second external learning group I belonged to, the ‘Headteachers’ Learning Group’. The spirals created through the learning community’s engagement with the research process combine, firstly in appreciation of the designated leaders’ reflective dialogues and secondly to inform the planning and implementation of the ‘Belonging’ leadership narrative. 3 bumps become
visible, ‘The School Council’, ‘Girls’ Achievement’ and the ‘Action Learning Sets’. The final spiral depicts the Girls’ Chat group; each bump representing the 3 child and 2 adult participants.
Figure 9: The emergence of the 12 leadership narratives and reflective dialogues.
Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The consideration of research limitations and ethics is an essential requirement for practitioner/leader research. Through this process the research outcomes are given the rigour and validity required to claim an evidenced contribution to leadership learning theory. The consideration and definition of research limitations is presented prior to a consideration of the research ethics applicable to this action research project. Table 11 summarises the research limitations and ethical considerations for this action research project.

Research Limitations

The characteristics of ethnographic qualitative research are such that it is necessary to identify the research limitations in order to ensure sufficient measures have been placed to secure a robust, rigorous and valid action research study. The consideration of ethical concerns plays a significant part in this process of diminishing the impact of limitations alongside the researcher’s declaration of reflexivity in terms of their perspectives, motivations, positionality and previous experience and knowledge base (Malterud, 2001).

Academic debate around the subject of proving ‘quality’ in qualitative research has been contested and resulted in variances in academic viewpoints (Malterud, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Tracy, 2010; O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). The rise in prominence of qualitative research within the medical sciences is of interest when taking a multidisciplinary stance as a researcher (Malterud, 2001). Malterud argues that quantitative and qualitative research methodologies need to be perceived as complimentary rather than oppositional. Both have a relevance in terms of developing academic understanding of different professional fields (ibid). Reason & Bradbury (2006) present a case for the consideration of quality through inquiry. I have considered their five questions for validity and quality in inquiry in this chapter. Furthermore they develop their ideas to create ‘issues as choice-points and questions for quality in action research’ (ibid, p. 350). Their theory of assuring quality in action research is therefore, not to have a set of criteria to prove quality but to challenge yourself through the questions you
apply to your research as researcher. Tracy provides seemingly useful criteria, called an ‘eight-point conceptualisation’ to apply to the research process (Tracy, 2010), namely, those of i) worthy topic, ii) rich rigour, iii) sincerity, iv) credibility, v) resonance, vi) significant contribution, vii) ethical and viii) meaningful coherence. Tracy’s idea of an eight-point conceptualisation aims to provide qualitative researchers with a set of criteria to consider that have a relevance across professional disciplines. This is supportive of a multi-agency perspective. Tracy claims:

“Qualitative researchers will continue to face stakeholder audiences that require rationale for the goodness of our work. In demonstrating methodological excellence, we need to take care of ourselves in the process of taking care of others. The most successful researchers are willingly self-critical, viewing their own actions through the eyes of others while also maintaining resilience and energy through acute sensitivity to their own well-being” (Tracy, 2010, p.849).

However, O’Reilly and Kiyimba propose that it is a strength of the research if the researcher creates criteria to ensure and embed quality (O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). I decided to identify the criteria for quality and therefore to ensure research limitations have been identified and considered. It is important to state that a research limitation can be viewed both as a potential toxin as well as a source of nourishment for the researcher. For example, in considering positionality and reflexivity within the idea of validity, my life experiences have created my drive and motivation to work with the Pakistani heritage community to improve outcomes for multilingual children. However, these life experiences can also be regarded as a bias that could influence my perceptions of what is happening within the learning community. Therefore the involvement of co-researchers, checking in with research participants and the dissemination of findings have all been necessary to acknowledge the multi-vocality nature of this research study.

The next step in this consideration of research limitations is to define what the limitations are and how they will be addressed in order to safeguard the validation of research outcomes.
Defining Research Limitations

It was helpful to consider Tracy’s (2010) criteria in conjunction with Malterud’s ‘guidelines’ (2001) and Reason & Bradbury’s choice-points and questions (2006). From these considerations I decided on my own set of criteria for quality and to minimise the impact of identified research limitations (O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). These are integrated within my table for ethical considerations.

I have paid attention to:

i) clarity and accuracy,
ii) relevance,
iii) validity,
iv) reliability, integrity and confidentiality,
v) authenticity and originality and
vi) making a valid contribution to school leadership learning.

All contribute to the quality assurance of the action research methodology and methods applied. It is useful to acknowledge Reason and Bradbury’s influence in formulating questions to ask of myself as a researcher (2006). My lines of inquiry to secure quality are:

i) Is this research project clear in terms of its purpose, line of inquiry aims and research questions? Has the fieldwork been conducted ethically and data recorded accurately?
ii) Is this research project relevant within the domain of primary school leadership?
iii) Is validity considered in sufficient depth in terms of researcher reflexivity?
iv) Is there evidence that the action research is reliable, has integrity and have matters of confidentiality been consistently considered?
v) Is this action research project authentic and original?
vi) Does this action research project make a valid contribution to school leadership learning?
Further reflection on validity has emerged.

**Validity**

The validity of a qualitative research project is key to the significance of the research outcomes on the field of study (Cohen et al, 2011). If aspects of researcher bias are not addressed sufficiently then the research will be viewed as invalid and of no worth. In this research study, my multifaceted role can be viewed as both a hindrance to showing validity and a strength. It has been necessary, therefore, throughout this research process to declare my research and leadership interests at every opportunity.

Amongst the ‘bases of validity in qualitative research’ Cohen, Manion and Morrison (ibid, p. 182) identify ideas of ‘uniqueness, emergence, unpredictability and context-boundness’ which apply to this research project. There is a unique quality because it is a recount of what happened in one school community. The emergent element has been described and explained as a strength of the research process. In my role as researcher I have actively listened to the voices of my co-researchers and provided them with the time and space to lead the direction of research travel, for example, the members of the Girls’ Chat Group. The transcription of the semi-structured interview evidences the unpredictability of the research outcomes. The adults were shocked by what the children said, their perceptions of ethnicity were difficult to comprehend. Context-boundness connects with the idea of uniqueness. This research study was an investigation into school leadership through the research lens of one school community.

Cohen et al (2011) recognise that there is an emphasis on description, inference and explanation which defines the purpose of the thematic framework for data analysis to guide the investigation of the fieldwork, make sense of and make meaning. To safeguard dependability continuous member checking had to be a feature of the each action research phase. Reference to the research timeline in Appendix 12 shows when self-evaluation processes were implemented to check in with the school learning community as well as sharing of transcripts and papers. Appendix 15 evidences the
overview of sessions with the teaching assistants where continuous discourse facilitated member checking. I acknowledge the participants learning as well as times when they felt fearful of the process. Other features identified (ibid) include purposive sampling which is explained later when I clarify who the research participants were.

Finally I presented papers to external groups to check the validity of this research project which also evidenced the transferability (ibid) of this research study. The feedback received from student groups primarily focused on what was possible through systemic leadership within the primary school context.

Practitioner research traditionally focuses on one aspect of practice and creates a limitation by insufficiently having due regard to the complexities and actualities of the bigger picture. Within the context of this action research project the notion of a systemic approach in itself is a recognition of the complexities of organisational learning and leadership. The application of research methods is not in itself sufficient to guarantee academic rigour. It is with this concern in mind that in this action research project I have been robust in seeking academic discourse and responses from co-researchers, colleague headteachers, fellow PhD students and tutors and students studying at first degree and Masters levels. These engagements are evidenced in the overview of leadership narratives, the research timeline and Appendix 11.

It is claimed that within this action research project due regard has been given to reflective and critical actions. The collaborative and responsive nature of this research project ensures that I have not been acting in isolation but have implemented research methods in an open and transparent fashion. It has been my concern to contribute to leadership learning knowledge and theory within a collaborative and responsive approach.

As the facilitating practitioner/leader researcher for this research project I acknowledge that I am nourished through my engagement with the Creative Arts. This in turn is a statement of my bias towards a particular discipline. I have to ensure that this bias does not deter from the focus of the research but that I do not deny its existence. I confirm
that I have an interest in the needs of multilingual learners of Pakistani heritage. This interest has been influenced by my past professional and personal experience of living and working in Pakistan. Malterud states that “contemporary theory of knowledge acknowledges the effect of a researcher’s position and perspectives, and disputes the belief of a neutral observer” (Malterud, 2001, p.484). The researcher’s knowledge and bias is therefore taken into account.

**Ethical Considerations**

As a practitioner/leader researcher I take this opportunity to describe my role as a practitioner/leader who is mindful of our learning organisation’s policies and procedures and their relevance to ethics and confidentiality. Ethical considerations are integral to our daily work. In our school we adhere to several policies that have a relevance here, the ‘Safeguarding: Safer Care Code of Conduct Policy’, ‘Safeguarding: Data Protection Policy’ and the ‘Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme’ (School 2012a; School 2012b; School 2012c).

During the process of formulation of this action research project, it became clear that in many respects the recruitment and selection of research participants had to include work colleagues. Therefore, throughout the action research project process I have declared my intention to include aspects of our learning as a school community in my doctoral studies. For example, in leading continuing professional development for teaching assistants towards developing the quality of dialogue between adults and children, I ensured each participant was aware of my intention to use participant feedback for research data. In facilitating leadership team meetings I have made reference to lines of leadership inquiry concerning the use of reflective journals and evaluative tools such as: ‘What went well? What didn’t go so well? And, Even better if’. In the engagement of the school community in developing our vision for the school I have communicated my intention of including elements of this process in this action research project. I have been consistently mindful of my intentions and therefore have been robust in informing others. The engagement of children as participant researchers requires additional care in ensuring accuracy in the expression of their concerns and views (Aubrey et al, 2000; Pascal & Bertram, 2009).
The research participants of this study include the children, their parents and the staff of the school, as well as external partners. I have sought consent from the research participants providing an explanation of what I am doing and why (Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). I have explained their right to non-participation. My paper entitled, 'In what ways can co-operative inquiry facilitate shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools' (Parker, 2010) was made available to all work colleagues. The safeguards, that have been implemented in order to ensure the content of this thesis is anonymised, are that there is no direct reference to either the school or its location and all names have been changed. Appendices 3 to 8 evidence the range of permission letters that were written and given to research participants. Permission was also sought and given by the Local Authority.

**The PhD Action Learning Group**

For the purposes of this research study the action learning group is defined to be a group of practitioner/leaders engaged in shared action research learning. Each participant contributed to the development of praxeology through dialogue, inquiry and action in order to unravel identified concerns.

Underpinning this action research project is the knowledge base, support and encouragement of our PhD learning community. Consisting of tutors and students, our meetings have sustained my leadership research journey. The Learning Community Contract was agreed at the first meeting (Appendix 9). Throughout our shared research process participants were mindful to share thoughts and reflections and to prompt each other of ethical concerns. As a practitioner/leader researcher these ethical engagements contributed strength and purpose to my personal action research experience. Research data from the PhD Action Learning Group has been collated and analysed through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis (Appendices 13.3, 13.4 & 13.5). Although not included in the core of this thesis, this research data informed the qualitative research methodology and methods applied. As well as shared thoughts and notes, imagery (inclusive of the boteh/paisley design), mapping, community songs, poetry,
the music we love and the music that accompanies our research leadership\textsuperscript{10} journeys have been shared and debated.

Mumford (1996) claims that a learning action set should create their own ‘list’ of ‘learning behaviours’ which identify group members’ expectations of self and others. When the learning community contract and the document ‘how we want to work together’ are compared with Mumford’s collation of action learning group behaviours, similarities of intent can be identified. For example, the provision of respectful time to share, listen and respond, allowing each member of our learning group space and time to express ourselves in our own voice. It was ensured that support, challenge and encouragement were provided to each member of the group. The opportunity was provided to enrich knowledge, share perspectives and reflect together. We were prepared to take risks in our learning and actions, and we honoured our responsibilities as reflective learners. Mumford offers a guide rather than a non-negotiable framework. We have provided theoretical underpinning that has ensured academic rigour and originality. We have nourished our leadership research journeys with laughter, tears, anguish, warmth and friendship (McKinnon, 2009; McKinnon, 2014; Vaggers, 2010).

**Power and Ethics**

From the beginning of this thesis, I have acknowledged the ideas of powerful and ethical constructs. In the introductory chapter I state my understanding of the powerful position I hold as practitioner, leader and researcher. I grapple with these concepts in Chapter 2. Marshall’s work has been influential when identifying the research themes in terms of living life as inquiry and remaining conscious of making political decisions that have the potential to change the lives of others (Marshall, 1999). In the literature review Aspinwall’s ideas of positive and negative power within school organisations are considered (Aspinwall, 1998). If action research is to be considered as emancipatory then shifts in power need to be acknowledged (Boog, 2003).

\textsuperscript{10} I deliberately interchange the words ‘learning’ and ‘leadership’ because as I progress on my journey I find it harder to separate the two.
Previously in this methodology chapter I have described how leadership power transferred from adults to children.

In my position as headteacher and researcher there were complexities to be acknowledged when seeking clarity with regard to the connectivity between power and ethics. On the one hand my overarching premise is that opportunities to enrich learning and development for all children, need to be supported by all participants in a learning community: - a learning community consisting of a range of action learning sets. However, do all research participants hold the same value base and belief system? There is a risk that in my dual role I make assumptions about the viewpoints of others whether they are children or adults. The research project evidences that children hold theories, ideas and beliefs that are very diverse and in this context they were shocking to the adult participants.

All research participants were engaged in respectful, and at times challenging, discourse. We set groundrules to help us in this endeavour. I hold the belief that participants have to have agreed together the way forward for enabling children to be strong citizens, ready to make a positive contribution. Participants need to be prepared not to accept discriminatory practice and be committed to ensuring children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential. But I am not in a position to force my beliefs upon others, although I may work hard to convince. Force through words would be a misapplication of power and in itself unethical and undesirable.

**Sampling Strategy**

In describing the sampling strategy for this research project I apply Robson’s definition, “A sample is a selection from the population” (Robson, 2011). In this research context the population is defined to mean the population of the school. Mixed methods have been applied and required a strategy of non-probability sampling (Cohen et al, 2011), and therefore the sample groups sit within what is described as “non-probability samples” (ibid, p.155). These are samples that are small and do not necessarily represent a wider population.
Within Phase 2 of the research project the teaching assistants were selected as a representative body within the learning community. They represented a non-probability, purposive sample because they were targeted as a specific sub-group within the learning community. The purpose was to engage the group in professional development and in doing so to gain insight into their understanding and knowledge of meeting the needs of multilingual learners.

Engaging and co-researching with the whole school population, as represented in Leadership Narrative 2, is again considered to be non-probability sampling. This sample of the whole school population was to support the research line of inquiry that collaborative action research is a sustainable approach to school improvement. Through the self-evaluation process the view of members of the school community were captured, working within their defined learning sets.

Leadership Narrative 3, ‘The Girls’ Chat Group’ was an exclusive distinct group that arose from a specific incident. This was purposive sampling, where a discrete group was selected for the purpose of investigating an emergent dilemma that was identified as relevant to the research themes. The research methods were to generate data with no specific limit on the quantity in order to explore leadership theory.

The five members of the designated school leadership group were a non-probability purposive sample. The purpose of this action learning set was to create time and space for leadership reflection.

Finally, the members of the school learning community who reflected on school leadership were a non-probability sample because they were selected as an evident group within the learning community. The purpose of this sample group was to gather a range of viewpoints as well as to check out the detail of the emerging leadership development web and visualisations.
The numbers of research participants are confirmed in chronological order:

i) Thirty-one teaching assistants were directly involved in the research project ‘Active Dialogue’.

ii) Eighteen research participants were involved in the ‘Connecting Communities: Art Project Group’; one artist, ten children, five parents and two members of school staff.

iii) Twenty-four members of the learning community, including two governors, acted as Vision Day facilitators and facilitated the ten action learning groups. Twenty-seven children were involved in this Vision Day project, including members of the School Council.


v) Five members of the school leadership team were directly involved as co-researchers.

vi) Four members of the school learning community reflected on leadership.

External co-researchers were:

vii) The Pen Green PhD Action Learning Group consisting of three tutors and four fellow students.

viii) The eight members of the headteachers’ learning group.

In addition to the core research participants there was additional data collated from the responses of members of the school learning community. This action research project grew in size as progress was made through the phases of the research plan. It has not been possible to present each project as a leadership narrative and decisions have had to be made with regard to inclusion. Discussion with tutors has endorsed this process.

The emergent quality of this action research project resulted in specific ethical issues. Not all research participants were identified and invited to participate at the beginning of the formal doctoral research process and therefore consent has had to be sought throughout. One example is the Girls’ Chat Group. The group met once a week for one school year to discuss the meaning of racism and bullying. These discussions were audio recorded and the pupils gave their consent for this to happen and read the transcript
prior to the analysis of the research data.

Previously Marsh’s framework as a guide through the consideration of ethical issues had been adapted and applied (Marsh, 2000; Parker, 2001a). This framework is revisited with new adaptations. The adaptations take into consideration the identified research themes and the principle research methods. Table 13 summarises the framework for presenting the research limitations and ethical considerations for this action research study.

**Table 13: Framework to Present the Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations for this Action Research Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects and Processes Identified in the Action Research Project</th>
<th>Research Limitations and Ethical Considerations</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life as a teller of tales</td>
<td>Clarity and Accuracy</td>
<td>Feedback from the Pen Green PhD Action Learning Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Feedback from work colleagues, children and headteachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authenticity and Originality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life as a learning leader and leading learner</td>
<td>Involvement of colleagues and children, respecting a range of opinions, perspectives, views and ideas</td>
<td>Reference to school policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in the Pen Green PhD Action Learning Set and the Headteachers’ Learning Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking support from critical friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life as a reflection of the world we live in</td>
<td>Who are the primary beneficiaries?</td>
<td>Literature review supports emancipatory aspects of research in the social sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections on aspects of Social Justice</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of the socio-political context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life as a practitioner/leader researcher</td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Literature review ensures relevant and valid knowledge and understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>Reference to code of ethics (AARE 2005, John, K. 2012a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Reference to school policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability, Integrity and Confidentiality</td>
<td>Dissemination of findings to coresearchers, practitioners, children, headteachers and academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a valid contribution to school leadership learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner led research</td>
<td>Reliability, Integrity and Confidentiality</td>
<td>Self-moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Research participant consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Checking-in with research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From as early as the first phase of this praxeological action research plan, the praxeological inquiry, research papers have been disseminated to academics, peers, and the learning community, including the children. This dissemination and provocation to elicit responses have ensured concerns with regard to research limitations and ethical considerations have been addressed.
Summary of How Identified Research Methods Created Fieldwork Data

The research plan clarifies the leadership narratives and research methods that were relevant to each research phase.

Phase 1: Praxeological Inquiry

A rich picture provided a visualisation of the practitioner/leader researcher’s emergent perspective on systemic leadership. A parent’s narrative gave insight into how the community was viewed. The research methods implemented were journalling, freefall writing and visualisation.

Phase 2: Exploration of the Research Context

Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue.

The exploration of the research context was enhanced through collaborative professional learning through inquiry as represented in this first leadership narrative. Identification of emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry within the context of the thematic framework for data analysis created research evidence to inform future research planning. The research methods implemented were action learning groups, journalling and self-evaluation processes.

Phase 3: Research Project Plan and Implementation

Leadership Narrative Two: Belonging

The third project phase saw the further development of collaborative action research by the whole school community through action learning groups within the context of an emergent notion of belonging. Research methods were action learning groups, self-evaluation processes and journalling.
Phase 4: Evaluation and Plan Next Steps

Leadership Narrative Two: Belonging

The action learning groups engaged in the evaluation process as evidenced in Appendix 15. The first occasion was in February 2011, followed by July 2011. Each time next steps were planned following each evaluation. The Ofsted inspection in November 2011 interrupted this flow of evaluations and planning, however, the plans were embedded sufficiently to continue to impact on the research outcomes.

Phase 5: The Emergent Phase

Leadership Narrative Three: The Girls’ Chat Group

The 5th phase is representative of collaborative action learning initiated to investigate social justice in the pursuit of restorative justice. The research methods applied were action learning group, journalling and semi-structured interview. An individual’s story exemplified the value and power of journalling to support insight and learning.

Phase 6: Documentation and Impact of Theoretical Underpinning

Research fieldwork was recorded, interpreted, analysed, integrated and implementation of the line of inquiry ‘So What?’ ‘What difference have we made?’ The analytical process demanded a comparison with existing theories and other research. Freefall writing and visualisation as research methods supported the processes of recording, interpretation, analysis and integration.

Phase 7: Reflection and Making Sense of the Fieldwork

Reflective practice as a process to inquire into the past, make comparisons with the present and consider recurring and resonating themes was to the fore. Research methods were journalling and self-evaluation process. There was professional learning taken from the collaborative to inform reflections on practice, learning and leadership. Research methods were journalling, self-evaluation processes, freefall writing and
Phase 8: Transference of New Knowledge and Research Dissemination

Our collaborative and responsive professional learning informed reflections on learning and leadership and the transference of new knowledge and research dissemination. Research methods were self-evaluation processes, journalling, freefall writing and visualisation.

Phase 9: Impact of the Research Project on our Learning Community

Collaborative and responsive professional reflections on learning and leadership informed the recognition, consideration and acknowledgement of the impact of the action research project on the learning community. Research methods applied were self-evaluation processes, journalling, freefall writing and visualisation.

Prior to the presentation of the research fieldwork, it is important to clarify how the identified research methods created the data for analysis. In order to achieve this aim each research question is stated alongside the identified methods.

How can learning communities investigate and influence leadership as a dynamic and creative process to impact on children’s lives?

This research question has been considered through the visualisation of the school leadership role, journalling and engagement with action learning groups within the school’s learning community. Engagement with action learning sets external to the immediate school’s learning community, that is, the PhD Action Learning Group and a group of headteachers was recorded through freefall writing, journalling and the processes of recording, interpretation, analysis, integration and asking ‘So What’? The
collation of data was followed by the analysis of the fieldwork data within the context of the Thematic Framework for data analysis.

**How can learning communities, including children, make their learning and leadership visible?**

This research question has been investigated through the development of the learning community’s vision and the implementation of the School Development Plan 2010-2012. Engagement with action learning groups within the school’s learning community, opportunities for sharing leadership stories, through reflection and challenge, including the identification of next steps and actions, have all contributed to this inquiry. Fieldwork has been generated though self-evaluation processes and journalling. Checking-in and feeding back to the PhD Action Learning Group has challenged and clarified thinking. Finally the data analysis of the fieldwork has confirmed learning within the context of this research question.

**How can collaborative inquiry facilitate the shared and responsive leadership of children's learning in primary schools?**

This research question has been studied through the implementation of the research plan, the recognition and collation of emergent and recurring themes and the recognition and collation of the lines of inquiry. Data has been collated from freefall writing and journalling. Confirmation of the outcomes, impact of the actions and the visualisation of school leadership has arisen from the work of the school’s learning community inclusive of projects led by the action learning sets and the telling of “our stories” through the leadership narratives.

**How can action research support sustainable school improvement to impact on outcomes for children in primary schools?**

This research question has been examined through the implementation of the research plan. The design of a data analysis framework though the identification of key themes and aspects, with reference to the literature review, informed this research process and provided orientation points in the creation of emergent theory. Journalling, freefall writing, engagement with action learning sets, including planned sessions (e.g., the facilitation of the development of the School Development Plan 2010 – 2012) and one
semi-structured interview that was led by a group of 10 to 11-year old children have generated research data to enable the research question to be answered. The telling of our stories through the leadership narratives, to confirm the outcomes and impact of actions, has contributed to the consideration of this research question.

Engagement with and review of the related research and theoretical literature has enabled the identification of ethnographic action research, influenced by praxeological theory and practice, to be appropriate to investigate the research aims and find answers to the research questions. Within this domain an emphasis on the methodology of ‘inquiry’, action learning sets and presenting outcomes in the form of leadership narratives have been identified as processes that are not only fit for purpose but allow for a reflective and active approach to organisational learning.

In Chapter 5 the research methodology for this research project has been explained and justified. The research methods have been constructed in order to investigate the research line of inquiry, fulfil the research aims and seek answers to the research questions.
Part 4: Research Fieldwork, Data Analysis and the Generation of Research Evidence
Chapter 6: Communities of Learning Leaders and Leading Learners

Research Phases 1 and 2

Chapter 6 begins with the lead practitioner/leader researcher’s consideration of the school learning community that is the subject of this action research project. To provide a different perspective of the community, the views of one parent are presented. This is representative of the first two phases of the research process, praxeological inquiry and the exploration of the research context. This is followed by the first leadership narrative, ‘Active Dialogue’. This leadership narrative also falls into the first two phases of the research project. Leadership Narrative 1 was one of three preliminary projects prior to the third research phase: research project plan and implementation. As confirmed in the methodology, a decision was made to focus on the leadership narrative that emphasises the learning and leadership of an identified staff team, the teaching assistants.

The Learning Community

The learning community that is central to this action research project has been introduced in Chapter 1. The aim of this second focus is to provide further information and to illuminate my perceptions as the lead practitioner/leader researcher. Figure 10 is a rich picture\(^1\) of my role as practitioner/leader researcher. In addition to identifying the learning communities I engage with, it illustrates the interconnectivity of those learning communities, theory, the arts, inquiry and life stories. Its heart is in the

---

\(^1\) “Rich pictures are a compilation of drawings, pictures, symbols and text that represent a particular situation or issue from the viewpoint(s) of the person or people who drew them.”

community within which our school is located, which is shown by the illustration. The illustration combines school building, church and mosque.

In the centre ‘A Community of Learners’ is defined as two separate groups; ‘children’ and ‘adults’. Alongside ‘A Community of Learners’ the children’s centre and linking schools are shown. Within the community of children as learners, there are clubs, home, preschool, school, college and university. Home is inclusive of the airport, country of heritage, mosque and madrasah, church and playground and park. All represent a learning community. There is acknowledgement of the Muslim community through the references to heritage and places of worship, the mosque and madrasah. In our learning community children of Pakistani heritage are able generally to communicate effectively in a social situation in a local language of the region of Pakistan from which their family originates, for example, Punjabi, Pushto, Dari, Hinko or Urdu (Cummins, 2000). They acquire English either at home before starting school or at preschool or at school. At the local Madrasah the children learn the Koran in Arabic. At school, children are acquiring more languages including those that are defined as Modern Foreign Languages. Radiating out from school I identify ‘children who seek you out’, the School Council, the Girls’ Chat Group, Year Four and Early Years. These were the groups of children I had most contact with at this time.

Within the community of adults as learners, there are staff teams, families, governors, community and linking schools. Staff teams include the office team, year group teams, the leadership team, Early Years Foundation Stage, the School Development Plan action learning groups. I highlight the special relationship with governors. From the word community I have identified the Portuguese community, the Eastern European community and the Latvian Community, the Local Authority, community groups, the church and the mosque. From my perspective as the headteacher of a primary school in England, I value the role of the governing body as critical friends to myself and the school. Governors provide the support and challenge required to ensure legal responsibilities are met through school leadership. It was therefore imperative that governors were actively engaged in the school’s creation of a shared vision. This rich picture is illustrative of a systemic view of school leadership (Senge, 2006). There is recognition of systems consciousness in that the different networks are identified and the notion of developing
personal mastery through the recognition of the need for the practitioner/leader to make reference to literature. The themes of this thesis emerge alongside the acknowledgement of the 'life stories' or research through narrative.

This rich picture is the recording of ideas and connections. The interpretation serves as a description. The analysis is the comparison made with theories of a systemic approach to leadership. The integration of this rich picture is in creating a contribution to leadership and learning theory. The implications are that recording the whole picture enables the practitioner/leader researcher to identify the different facets that contribute to that whole at the same time as maintaining a sense of the whole system. What difference does this make to this action research project? The rich picture is an aid to contextualising the whole project and who it is intended to impact on, that is the ‘community of learners’ that are central to the whole piece. It informed the process of creating Figure 28: ‘Framework to illustrate the connectivity of a ‘Community of Learners” (Leithwood & Levin, 2004). This rich picture represented my perception of my role as practitioner/leader researcher at a given moment in time. It provides a reference point for this thesis. It is illustrative of a process of reflection, identification and acknowledgement of the value of a systemic approach to school leadership.

Figure 10: Rich Picture of my role as practitioner/leader researcher.
Engagement with the children’s families has enabled a deepening of understanding and knowledge of life in the locality. Asma, the mother of one of the girls in the Girls’ Chat Group told her story about the significance of her old front door key. Asma’s story is presented in Textbox 2. All participants’ names have been anonymised and signed permission was acquired for the inclusion of the photograph and image.

**Textbox 2: Asma’s Story**

A Local Authority funded project, ‘Connecting Communities’ was implemented in the summer of 2010. An exploration of the locality was facilitated by an Art tutor, Husnain and supported by a teaching assistant, Robina. The participants were five families represented by six parents and ten children from Years One and Six. In one session facilitators and participants brought physical props to support their dialogue about their ideas of community and belonging. Asma was one of the mothers involved. Asma’s daughters Nafeesa and Aleesha were keen to show their items. Nafeesa had brought a pair of sunglasses that she had bought in Pakistan. Asma explained, “It was the first time she went and she really liked it. She went with my mum.” Aleesha had brought her baby blanket. She was confident to tell us, “This is my blanket. My mum told me she wrapped me in this.”

Asma held up a door key and said: “This is the key to my old house – it’s ten years of memories. It’s in this area – it’s the people – it’s the environment. I’ll never get the same neighbours, local mosque, shops and school. We got a new gas cooker, we’re getting rid of the old one… everything is fading away. It’s like when they (my children) change classes – I feel for Aleesha”.

125
Asma’s expression of her emotional connection with the neighbourhood, where she no longer lives, demonstrated to us all, the strength of her feelings and how this project had given voice to her loves and concerns. If we could capture more of these ‘joyous’ moments, what would be the future possibilities?
Robina reflected on Asma’s contribution, as follows: “In my opinion Asma fully understood what was important in her drawings. Firstly, she felt her children’s education was important. Secondly, in her neighbourhood she portrayed different ethnic minorities. Finally, she felt that her neighbourhood consisted of terraced houses that these ethnic minorities live in. Each person leads a different life in their home. Lastly in her drawing she does not like the neighbourhood because of vandalism, violence and drugs.”

From our shared interpretation and analysis of the Connecting Communities project it was recognised that our sense of belonging contributed to our ideas of identity and culture (Charlton et al, 2011). Parents had powerful stories to tell and more could have been done to capture these. The inclusion of children who are siblings created an opportunity for their parents to learn with and alongside two of their children. However, some siblings were excluded from this opportunity because they were not in either Year One or Year Six. This created future tensions for some children, which resurfaced in the Girls’ Chat Group.

The ‘Connecting Communities’ project influenced the future planning of the action research and the development of a praxeological approach. The facilitators had gained an understanding the context of the research project. It was evident that more opportunities for parents and children to fulfil the role of co-researcher were desirable. This would develop collaborative and responsive approaches, with learning as a multi-faceted participatory process.

**Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue**

In our learning community attention was paid to the multilingual learner’s use of talk, their active dialogue. The learning community had a tradition of supporting children’s language development through drama. Drama strategies such as, hot seating and the conscious wall were planned and acknowledged to actively support the children’s English acquisition as well as developing thinking skills. Pedagogical strategies were further developed through ‘Talk for Writing’ (Palmer & Corbett, 2003) and ‘Talk Partners’ (Kotler et al, 2002). The team of support teachers, employed specifically to ensure every multilingual child is provided with individual support and guidance to become a fluent
English speaker, renamed themselves the ‘English Access Specialist Team’ (EAST). The team developed systems in order for the staff team to support the assessment of children’s speaking and listening in English (DfES, 2006a). Knowledge and understanding of ‘Assessing Pupil Progress’ (APP) in Speaking and Listening (DfCSF, 2010) was developed. The need to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in supporting and extending the children’s own dialogue and increasing sophistication in how they speak in English was being positively promoted. This leadership narrative focuses on a professional development programme that was developed for the teaching assistants.

**Description of the Process**

In January 2010 four professional development sessions for teaching assistants were facilitated, organised into two groups. The teaching assistants were informed that this would contribute to the fieldwork for the research project. The permission letter is presented in Appendix 5. The lead practitioner/leader researcher was the facilitator and the teaching assistants were research participants. A total of thirty-one teaching assistants participated in the programme. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator observed the four sessions. Appendix 15 is an overview of the active dialogue sessions including the interim professional development tasks.

The focus was on active dialogue; the development of analytical skills and improving adult responses to support and extend the child’s learning. Participants developed observational skills and the intention was to impact on the application of improved pedagogical strategies. To support and develop reflective practice the teaching assistants wrote in a ‘Learning Log’. Their learning logs together with the feedback created by the researcher generated the research fieldwork. The participants were presented with lines of inquiry to consider, listed in Table 14. The purpose of the lines of inquiry were to facilitate professional reflection and discourse. The aim was to heighten the adults’ awareness of the value of dialogue and impact on children’s learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wyse & Parker, 2012).
Table 14: Leadership Narrative One: Lines of Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Why is it important to focus on children’s speaking and listening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 How do young children use talk to support their learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 What strategies were used to support and extend the children’s speaking and listening? (Participants had a text to read, (Parker, 2001b).)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 What pedagogical strategies could you use in your practice? (Parker, 2001b).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5 Narrative Observation of a Child  
  What was the child doing?  
  How was the child using talk?  
  What would further support the child in their speaking and listening?  
  What would further support the child in their learning?  
  What have you learnt from doing this observation? |
| 6 This is what I have learnt about children’s active dialogue. |
| 7 This is what I need to do to extend children’s active dialogue. |
| 8 Develop your interactions with children and note what you have done. |

Each research participant undertook their own review of the literature. Written feedback was offered to provide encouragement, support, additional lines of inquiry and recommendations. The written feedback was collated and has informed the interpretation and analysis of the teaching assistants’ responses.

In the following series of textboxes a collation of teaching assistant responses exemplify their learning through this research process. These are followed by a focus on two teaching assistants’ journey through the sessions. Textbox 3 presents responses to the first line of inquiry.

**Textbox 3: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Line of Inquiry One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is it important for us to focus on children’s speaking and listening?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to know that they have understood what they have learnt. At what stage their learning is at. To show that their ideas are valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important for us to focus on the children’s speaking and listening to help them develop their understanding.

**Reflection Three**
To enable children to express their ideas and feelings. To give them confidence to express themselves. You enable them to solve problems and conflicts verbally.

**Reflection Four**
Giving children a sense of worth. What they say is valued, that we are willing to listen to them and being able to express their views and opinions.

**Reflection Five**
Speaking and listening is important to focus on because all that we teach our children in class will show in how the child communicates it all back to us. It will show the understanding of what they have learnt, accurately supporting their learning.

**Reflection Six**
To develop their confidence, independence and development. To develop, share, express their ideas, show understanding of other subject matter.

**Interpretation and Analysis**
The research participants demonstrated their depth of understanding about the needs of children and the requirement to value the children’s discourse. There was confirmation that children’s dialogue is an essential aspect to children’s learning. That an adult’s understanding of a child’s skill and knowledge acquisition enables the adult to value the child’s achievements and to support future learning. Two lines of inquiry were identified. The first was ‘Is Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) on your reading list?’ Which was specifically for a research participant accessing a higher qualification. The second ‘How does the process of speaking and listening support English acquisition?’ Textbox 4 presents responses to the next line of inquiry.
Textbox 4: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Line of Inquiry Two

How do young children use talk to support their learning?

**Reflection One**
When young children first start to talk they try to use speech to convey their needs and even when they do not know or understand they will mimic adults talking by babbling. It’s when they start to understand that the speech improves, so speaking supports their learning.

**Reflection Two**
Talking through their actions children reflect on what they are doing and formulating ideas, for example, during role-play they are imagining situations, asking questions, working things out for themselves, having conversations with others.

**Reflection Three**
By mimicking children will expand their vocabulary. They will learn by talking themselves through tasks and by giving other children and adults instructions.

**Reflection Four**
The children use talk to support their learning by asking lots of questions and talking constantly to people who they know quite well. The children are listening to instructions that they are being given. They are using language to ask for assistance and using more vocabulary when they play imaginatively.

**Reflection Five**
Children talk about their ideas, pictures, role play, directing each other and talk about the activity as they work.

**Reflection Six**
Children use talk to express their opinions, show understanding, to answer and ask questions.

**Interpretation and Analysis**
The adult’s role in supporting children’s learning was recognised. It was acknowledged that children have to talk through their actions and thoughts to support the learning process and that this is key to their learning and understanding. In the feedback it was acknowledged that to ensure all children are provided the opportunity to talk through their ideas, thinking and learning was our challenge. One line of inquiry was identified, ‘How can we support children to articulate how they have been successful in their learning?’
The purpose of the third and fourth lines of inquiry, ‘What strategies were used to support and extend the children’s speaking and listening?’ and ‘Was things in this extract that you could use in your practice?’ was to provoke a response from the teaching assistants, having read a text from the literature review and to consider potential impact on their own practice (Parker, 2001b). The text described the impact of one nursery teacher’s visit to Reggio Emilia in 1999. The context was a nursery school in Bradford where the vast majority of children were of Pakistani heritage and were acquiring English as an additional language. The nursery school was located in an area of high deprivation and initially the nursery teacher struggled with the contrast in resourcing when compared with that of the Reggio Emilia early childhood centres. Her focus became the quality of discourse between adults and children and the notion of revisiting graphic representations and re-proposing the children’s dialogue. Textbox 5 presents responses to the third and fourth lines of inquiry.

Textbox 5: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Lines of Inquiry Three and Four

| What strategies were used to support and extend the children’s speaking and listening? (Parker, 2001b) |
| Collation of Responses |
| Christine told the children she was travelling to Italy and showed them where Italy is on the globe. By doing so she was allowing the children to share their own experiences of where they have been i.e. Pakistan and encourage them to speak about their journeys, experiences, on the aeroplane or in the country. The children were helped to identify what would be needed on the journey. This would increase their understanding of what they should take on a journey i.e. clothes, toilet bag. There was potential to develop their listening skills. |
| The children were informed about Italy, the language and the vocabulary you would need to know in Italy. By doing this it encourages the children to speak by asking questions about Italy. The children explored the travel bag, before and after the journey so that they understood what they would need before a journey and after it i.e. tickets, luggage label. The visual of bringing a travel bag made the travelling concept seem more real and will automatically evoke questions and thoughts. |
Anticipation had been created with the packing, preparing to go, building excitement about the trip and then Christine’s return. The Italy trip was revisited when Christine returned to reinforce what the children had learned. The travel bag contained extra items from the trip to extend the children’s vocabulary. The children were able to ask about the journey and test their knowledge. The children thought about questions with Mrs Salman to ask Christine about her trip (modelling). The children got to ask their own questions as well as working with an adult.

Strategies used were familiar to the children because of their experiences of travelling abroad e.g. packing bag, tickets, aeroplanes, airport, letting them look in the bag, packing and repacking, making models of aeroplanes. This was the application of a concept that the children were familiar with but changing the context slightly. The project developed the children’s existing knowledge – children were already aware of air travel, although they currently only link it to Pakistan.

A new language had been introduced and this was a new exciting concept for them and gave them a chance to practice speaking new words in Italian and listen to new sounds and pronunciation.

Parents had been informed, so they could support children at home by extending the conversation.

**What pedagogical strategies could you use in your practice?**

**Collation of Responses**

The theory of using real life experiences and situations within the learning environment is a useful tool. It provides a reason and justification for learning something if the children feel they can relate to it or in some cases they don’t realise they are learning by simply introducing a new concept like travel or music, languages, theatre. You could inspire a few children and provoke intrigue. Use concepts children can readily identify with when starting conversations; helping the children to be more descriptive and open to asking more questions. And as in the end with
Shohaib that children are allowed to find explanations and test theories by asking questions. It is important to revisit lessons.

From experience of children who are from different cultures and traditions it would be beneficial to make play areas that children can relate to; house area, clothes and encourage them to ask questions so you in return ask them relevant questions and your rapport with children can be extended and they will feel confident in speaking. Provide objects to stimulate role-play, such as the travel bag and other visual aids to help explain concepts, such as pictures and the globe used in the extract to show where Italy is in relation to a familiar place, e.g., England and Pakistan. The use of props is important as it allows even children with limited English to access the curriculum and take part in lessons. Educate children about different countries and what words you should know if you were there. Adults can use own experiences as a learning exercise for the children i.e. when I go on holiday and ask the children about their own experiences.

**Interpretation and Analysis**

There was agreement that the provision of real objects, real life experiences and visual prompts, as a pedagogical strategy, were essential to support learners. Three lines of inquiry were identified. The first was, ‘How could we be more consistent in our provision of real objects, real life experiences, role play and visual prompts?’ The second one was, ‘Explain how you have encouraged children to listen to each other?’ and finally, ‘How can we implement the pedagogical strategy of providing opportunities for children to explain and test their theories through questioning?’ (Rinaldi, 2006). The notion of provoking intrigue and that not all learning is predetermined evidenced the depth of the research participants’ thinking.

Four narrative observations are presented in Textbox 6. During this process of professional development the teaching assistants became increasingly confident in observing and recording child observations. They interpreted what they had observed and considered what would benefit the child/ren next in their learning and development.
Textbox 6: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Four Narrative Observations

**Narrative Observation One**

**Context:** Two children in Year One discuss one child’s recent visit to Pakistan

**OBSERVATION**

Aisha talking to Leya about her trip to Pakistan. Aisha said the following, “I went to Pakistan, it was my sister’s wedding. It was really nice. It was very hot. There was lots of people giving sweets out to all the children. I bought new clothes. I was princess dress and I had a magic wand and a crown.”

Leya asked a question, “Was the dress pink?”

Aisha answered, “No, it was red. I had 20 pounds and I paid it to the people who were giving out sweets. The sweets were very chilli. I went to Pakistan with my mum and my brother. There was lovely songs at the wedding. My favourite song was ‘Imran Khan’. The song finished and we all clapped.”

Leya asked a question, “Did you go in the aeroplane to Pakistan?”

“Yes, first we went in the car, to the airport, we all sat in 2 aeroplanes, then we got on to a bus, and took us to our home in Pakistan. We had chappatis and rice and I was very tired. I made new friends in Pakistan and I was very happy.”

**Interpretation of the Observation**

The child was talking about what they did in the holidays. The child was being descriptive about what happened in her holidays. The child was learning how to listen to a question and give a detailed and descriptive answer relating to the question.

**What would further support the child in their learning?** What I would do is talk to pupils about anything and everything. I would show the pupils what I am talking about, e.g., using real objects, situations, pictures, books and other visual or audio aids. I would use straightforward sentences with words appropriate to the pupils’ level of understanding and development; avoid over-simplifying language.

**Narrative Observation Two**

**Context:** A Year Three child discusses a reading text about sharks with the adult.

The child is orally composing sentences and preparing to write an information text on the differences between two types of sharks.

**OBSERVATION**

- Great White Sharks eat people.
- Great White Sharks can eat people, but Basking Sharks don’t.
- When Great White Sharks get full up they don’t eat people.
- Great White Sharks have sharp teeth, and they could bite hard. People are scared of sharks because they eat people.
- (Adult explains misconceptions – Basking Sharks are often mistaken for Great White Sharks but are harmless).
- People are scared of sharks but when they see them …
- But they shouldn’t be afraid of Basking Sharks because they don’t eat people.
- They really shouldn’t be because Basking Sharks eat normal food.
- People think all sharks eat people but they don’t. Basking Sharks eat normal food.

**Interpretation of the Observation**

The child is reporting on information found in a text. The subject was discussed within a group. The child was reflecting that they knew that Great White Sharks have sharp teeth (from book) and the child was reflecting that the sharks would bite hard, also that people would be scared of that. The child was verbalising ideas and theories e.g. that people would find a shark frightening because of its teeth.

The child was comparing two types of shark and listening to others about how to put their ideas across whilst taking into consideration other people’s ideas.

**What would further support the child in their learning?** Modelling good use of language, for example, sentence structures and questioning would support the child’s language development. The child needs more opportunities to compose sentences orally before writing them down.

**Narrative Observation Three**

**Context:** Year Four were learning about the life of Jesus Christ. The lesson was about Easter and its importance to Christians

**OBSERVATION**

Jose is from Portugal, he is a bright, confident child, even though English is his second language. He has a very mature way of speaking and good command in English. We watched a film of a Greek Orthodox boy who showed us how they celebrate Easter. When it finished I expected Jose to be very confident and eager to tell us how they celebrated Easter. When asked by the teacher to tell us he came out with an abrupt, ‘No!’ I thought it was strange that he did not want to tell us. After the teacher spoke to the children and
asked them what they thought of the story, he then told us something about what he did at home for Easter. I think he felt that he would be laughed at and lost his confidence.

**Interpretation**

Jose was watching a video on the TV about his religion Christianity. He used talk when other children started answering questions from the knowledge they had of the religion e.g. “We don’t boil eggs, my parents buy me a chocolate one.” “We don’t cover Jesus pictures in our church.”

**What would further support the child in their learning?** Jose was learning that his religion was known by his friends and gained confidence to tell them about it. He would benefit from encouragement and support and seeing his culture and religion being discussed in the lesson; helping him to be proud enough to talk about his religion and culture confidently.

**What have you learnt from doing this observation?** I have learnt when you are a minority you tend to not bring your difference to the attention of everybody, to highlight you are not the same as everyone else, even if you have an excellent command of the language.

**Narrative Observation Four**

**Context:** A Year Two child, Adil, is involved in constructing a puzzle on the floor with his friends in the classroom during independent play and learning.

**Observation**

Three pupils Adil, Haseeb and Kristian were involved in the activity of constructing the puzzle using a large full sized poster picture. Initially the children debated and discussed how to start, whilst trying to match random parts together independently. Children made suggestions and came up with some ideas. For example, “It will slip if we do it on the top of the picture, then we can clearly see what bits are missing.”

Adil was slightly hesitant and frustrated saying “Come on” to the other boy. He then changed his tone, very quickly saying “Look, I found it Haseeb.” Here Adil was clearly using talk to seek some sort of recognition and praise from a classmate. At one point it was hard to see if Adil was interacting with the others or not as he never made eye contact. All children remained on their knees on the carpet, heads down, facing the puzzle and its pieces. Nevertheless he made little comments like “The sky bits are easier.” Neither child responded. Towards the end of the observation Adil praised Kristian and encouraged him to join in, “Yes, good idea, Kristian is better than us at this.”
Interpretation

Adil was playing with two other children on the carpet. Together they were trying to construct a puzzle of a playground. The children sat together. Adil was at the end and had initiated the activity. He occasionally conversed with the others but began by working independently.

Adil used talk to debate with others trying to find the best way to solve this problem. He would confront and argue, he said “You’re a cheater.” Adil made suggestions, for example, “Why don’t you do that side first?” He made discoveries, thinking aloud, “The sky bits are easier.” Adil gave praise and encouragement, he commented, “Yes, good idea Kristian.”

Adil was learning how to work as a member of a team, to share an activity and how to construct the puzzle using the full sized picture. He learnt how to apply his problem solving skills through trial and error. He worked out how to get the puzzle finished in the quickest way and he knew which pieces to focus on first. Adil learnt how to involve other children in an activity.

Adil did not ask too many questions but interacted with others cooperatively. It was interesting to see how he tried to encourage another pupil, with a much lower attainment level and who barely speaks English, to join in with the activity. This pupil was very able with puzzles as it did not involve any reading or writing of words or direct speaking.

**What would further support the child in their learning?** To develop Adil’s speaking and listening. Support the children to talk through how they are problem solving, allow the other children to do the same thing. They must listen and share techniques and maybe talk about which one works the best. Involve more children and split pair work. Each pair must explain how they constructed the puzzle, what it looks like. I would find a harder puzzle or a more challenging activity. Adil occasionally took charge of the activity. It would be interesting to give him a role of responsibility and allow him to teach something to the class. This would support and reinforce his learning and understanding.

Interpretation and Analysis

Some participants fed back that they felt that they had been given insufficient guidance prior to implementing the narrative observation task. The comment was made that written tasks were considered threatening. One participant had implemented a second
observation because she was not satisfied with her first attempt. This feedback relates to how power is held within organisations (Boog, 2003; John, 2012b). It was the participants' headteacher who was facilitating the professional development sessions and it was inevitable that teaching assistants would want to please alongside feelings of anxiety and possibly emotions related to being judged.

Participants valued the opportunities we give to children for independent learning and to select resources to support children’s self-initiated learning. Clarke’s ‘Formative Assessment in Action’ (Clarke, 2005) was referenced. Clarke offers the theory that when a child teaches another child a skill, concept or fact they are progressing to a deeper level of learning. Research participant interpretations about children’s talk were reflected in Clarke’s writing. One research participant acknowledged a high attaining child’s appreciation of another child’s skill. The importance of the contextualisation of the child’s learning was identified, for example, the text about sharks motivated the child’s engagement in the learning. One research participant articulated how a child had acquired new vocabulary in one lesson and had had the confidence to use the newly acquired scientific terminology. Research participants had identified relevant next steps for supporting and extending children’s learning. Some research participants did not identify their own learning. Two lines of inquiry were identified, ‘How can we ensure we are grammatically accurate in our own discourse?’ and ‘How can we support the children effectively to be grammatically accurate?’

The lines of inquiry that are illustrated in Textboxes 7 and 8 invited the teaching assistants to revisit the original first two lines of inquiry, ‘Why is it important for us to focus on children’s speaking and listening?’ and ‘How do young children use talk to support their learning?’ The aim was to acknowledge the participants’ learning during this professional development process.
Textbox 7: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Line of Inquiry Six

This is what I have learnt about children’s active dialogue.

Reflection One
I learnt that you can gain an insight of the child by listening to them talking and letting them talk which is difficult sometimes because I tend to finish their sentence before they have time to say it all.

Reflection Two
Successful speaking and listening activities are based on subjects that the children have some experience of previously. It is not helpful to make assumptions about what pupils already know or their personality e.g. if a child is giggly/shy when speaking, why is this? Don’t assume they are being silly, understand a child’s personality.

Reflection Three
I had never previously thought about the ways children use talk. I think that I had taken it for granted that speaking was just speaking and had not considered that it usually has different purposes. Often adults and children are not really listening to what is being said to them. Listening properly is an activity in itself. Ownership of a child’s response (speech) can be taken away by over correction or by being given the answer. Children use speech to test and check out their theories and ideas. Most of these strategies I knew but I have looked at them in a different way since the course.

Reflection Four
Children are able to communicate with each other and use a wide range of vocabulary while using this speaking and listening technique the children are building their confidence and self-esteem.

Reflection Five
It is important not to take for granted what you think children may know. We need to always be asking questions to find out what they are learning. Talk more about theirs and own experiences when relevant. Have high expectations and take time to do some observations.

Reflection Six
A child’s ability in speaking and listening is really affected and dependent upon their confidence. They need to be given the opportunity with a task that is relevant to
them. Some children are not able to express themselves because of more dominating people in the group. Children are more willing to speak rather than listen.

**Interpretation and Analysis**

The teaching assistants demonstrated more confidence in the pedagogic strategies that were required to support the children’s active dialogue in English. The line of inquiry identified was ‘Have you shared your learning with the class teacher?’ It was agreed that having knowledge of the children is essential that is, knowing the whole child, including the child’s family context. The teaching assistants concluded that discourse was a key element to every individual’s learning. It was noted that to make assumptions about children’s capabilities was inappropriate and undesirable. For example, the teaching assistants discovered that children who were higher attaining academically are not always the most effective listeners; whereas some children who were attaining at a lower level were shown to be good listeners but that they lacked confidence in speaking. The conclusion was that narrative observation improved the practitioner’s understanding of a child and their learning and development. Concerns about children’s learning was not just about dialogue, an holistic approach was identified as being essential. To clarify, the teaching assistants identified the requirement to develop their knowledge and understanding of a child’s well-being, their levels of engagement, the child’s family and cultural contexts and strengths in learning in order to be more effective in their support for multilingual learners. The identification of the need for adults to pay attention to children’s discourse was further acknowledged. A research participant’s honesty in articulating that they had not done this before evidences her development as a practitioner.

**Textbox 8: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Line of Inquiry Seven**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is what I need to do to extend children’s active dialogue.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection One</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk to the children in a small group and ask questions of them that will reflect their culture and traditions. Sometimes if the child is confident, a one to one talk is beneficial but most of the time a small group is better because they try and compete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with their peers and they are comfortable to mention things that they would not mention to an adult.

Reflection Two
Have high expectations of all pupils. Develop my skills as a questioner in order to draw out children’s feelings, opinions or ideas. Generate and develop friendly conversation with pupils on topics they are interested in. Model good speech and ‘active listening’.

Reflection Three
I need to make sure I am fully engaged in listening when they are speaking to me (not easy all of the time). Try not to over correct when answering. Encourage children to listen and speak to others in a more appropriate way. Give more opportunities for good speaking and listening.

Reflection Four
What I would do is talk to pupils about anything and everything. I would show the pupils what I am talking about e.g. using real objects and situations, pictures, books and other visual or audio aids. I would use straightforward sentences with words appropriate to the pupils’ level of understanding and development, avoid over simplifying language. I would use repetition to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary and ideas. I would not make pupils repeat things over and over as this confuses the child. When talking to a child I would copy the pupil’s sounds and words and include any extensions or corrections to positively reinforce and extend the pupils’ vocabulary sentence structures. When talking to a child I would take it in turns to exchange language I would ask questions to stimulate pupil responses and to exchange speech.

Reflection Five
I need to be more aware of how individuals are using talk. Question so I know what they are learning. Promote speaking and listening when in groups.

Reflection Six
Offer more opportunities that the children find stimulating to encourage speaking. Choose speaking and listening groups carefully so that the more dominant children are in one group or use them to encourage and help the more shy children. Assess listening skills by asking pupils to report back on what others have said.
Interpretation and Analysis

The teaching assistants were able to articulate the needs of the children, their active dialogue and suggest pedagogic strategies to support and extend children’s learning and development. These pedagogic strategies included the value of having high expectations of the learners and giving children the attention they required. Adults have to give children the time and opportunity to lead conversations which in turn develops the children’s confidence and sense of self-worth. The teaching assistants identified creating more opportunities for active dialogue, including when on playground duty, as a future development. They recognised that adults should scaffold the learners’ approach to the task (Daniels et al, 2007). Adults have to value talk between children and remember to praise. Adults need to be aware of their own use of language and pronunciation. Children benefit from learning with different partners and that learning in pairs has to become more collaborative (Clarke, 2005).

The final collation, presented in Textbox 9, focuses on the teaching assistants’ reflections on the pedagogic strategies they started to implement since the beginning of the professional development sessions. This research evidence provides confirmation of the impact of the participants’ engagement.

Textbox 9: Teaching Assistant Reflections: Line of Inquiry Eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the quality of interactions between adults and child was developed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have had more conversations with the children whilst on playground duty. We have asked the children to use my full name when talking to me, not to just say ‘Miss’. More speaking and listening takes place during group work. We have to let everybody have a chance to speak. The children are encouraged and supported to listen to whoever is speaking, to respect what they have to say.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One teaching assistant recorded, “When I take a group for guided reading or when I work one to one, I try to develop interaction by talking about other things that may not relate to the task in hand, so they gain confidence knowing that they have talked to me and I have understood. I also sometimes ask them to repeat a sentence or explanation in their mother tongue which gives you an insight on how much they have understood. In my opinion switching from English to Punjabi or another
Language helps children gain confidence and expertise in interpreting English into their own language. It makes them more fluent.”

We listen carefully and model good and correct speech. We observe and encourage the children. We read back to the children, praise for good speaking and listening and correct while allowing the child to retain ownership of speech. Children read back their own work and then we talk about what more is needed. We provide more one to one time. We try to ask more open-ended questions to encourage speaking. We take time to explain a word if the children have never come across it at all. We could learn some words in their language, the children are always keen to teach them. We could talk about our own real-life experiences e.g. my pets and then promote conversation.

Some children responded well when given a specific task and responsibility. This was particularly useful for a child who wasn’t finding the task either very stimulating or challenging. One participant noted, “Recently I have noticed that a lot of the children are interacting and speaking negatively to one another, fussing and telling tales. On the other hand I have heard some positive influence of role-models (teachers and assistants). Some children have started to repeat what we say, for example, “Please can you.”

Finally, one teaching assistant reflected on how she had supported one child. She wrote, “There is a child named Zulekha, she is hyperactive. I’ve been observing her, just getting to know what things she likes doing and the rewards she likes to get. If she doesn’t listen or pay attention she won’t get the reward she enjoys such as going on the computers when it is independent play. She is determined to listen and learn at the same time. During discussion time I get Zulekha to sit with me so she is not distracting the other children from their learning. I give her step by step instructions. I praise her constantly and encourage her to learn, this makes her more motivated to learn. Once I know what the lesson is I then know how to interact with Zulekha. Myself and Zulekha interact effectively with each other and also interact well with the other children.”
Interpretation and Analysis

The facilitator applied a range of andragogical strategies to support the teaching assistants’ learning. The facilitator appreciated and acknowledged the clarity and quality of the contributions made by the research participants. The facilitator positively encouraged and supported the research participants to continue with modelling English for the learners and raising their expectations. The research participants were learning about the value of observation as a method for learning about the child and what they know. In summary our reflections led to insights and practice changes. The technique of revisiting was acknowledged, in respect of both the children’s learning and the adult’s learning, an acknowledgement of both pedagogical and andragogical strategies. One research participant acknowledged that she had a tendency to finish sentences for the children. It was declared that ‘We need to be patient and let the children speak.’ It was acknowledged that more research participants were encouraging and supporting good listening and respectful conversation. The line of inquiry identified was, ‘How do we ensure that adult interaction is making a difference?’

To further evidence the impact of the professional development sessions, ‘Active Dialogue’ the specific outcomes for two teaching assistants, Delia and Kim are presented.

Delia’s narrative exemplified the need for a two way communication process between the research participant and the facilitator and the praxeology of action learning. Her responses to the lines of inquiry enabled the facilitator to confirm developments in Delia’s pedagogical strategies, for example, the provision of more photographs and references to real-life experiences. A shared concern about the challenge of enriching a multilingual learner’s vocabulary was shared. Delia developed her theories about the learners she worked with. She recorded, ‘Aneeka has enjoyed pretending to be ‘Mrs Jackson’ and I have been Aneeka. This has developed Aneeka’s confidence to direct and her understanding of what the activity requires.’ Delia acknowledged the diversity of learners and their diversity of needs to support their learning. She wrote, “I need to provide more opportunities for children to speak and listen both with adults and amongst their peers. The provision of visual and practical strategies will extend children’s dialogue and will also support the needs of our bi-lingual learners and children with communication difficulties and special educational needs.” Delia supported collaborative approaches to organisational learning and demonstrated that she was a leader of team
inquiry and learning. For example she identified her partnership working with the class teacher. “In phonics sessions with Mrs Martin we have noticed there are many words good for learning phonic sounds but the children did not understand their meaning or what either the object or animal was, e.g., ‘chimpanzee’. The use of photographs and real objects has been valuable in improving these sessions.” Delia was proactive in developing her personal mastery (Senge, 2006). She confirmed that she needed to apply the pedagogical strategies identified to “help explain the learning to small groups of children during lessons and to help to modify work for children requiring one to one support.”

Kim’s story exemplified her ability to articulate her perceptions, her learning and her understanding of children. Her narrative confirmed a multidisciplinary approach to leadership within the context of a primary school. Kim demonstrated her learning from her observation of children engaged in their learning, that is, her personal mastery (Senge, 2006). Her attention to detail exemplified her notion of particularity (Whitaker, 2009). She was fully engaged in the active dialogue project, which exemplified team inquiry and learning. Kim had deep understandings, which were valid to share with others. For example, she demonstrated her insight into the needs of children, their learning and understanding. Kim engaged in providing feedback and received feedback, a process that embeds systemic and praxeological approaches to leadership.

Figure 11 illustrates the emergent themes following the processes of recording, interpreting, analysing, integrating and asking ‘So What?’ These themes are scribed in and around the Paisleys. Each Paisley represents one of the four research themes.
The andragogical processes the teaching assistants were engaged in were inquiry, observation, dialogue, reflections, deduction and feedback. Our Leadership Narrative: 

Active Dialogue supports aspects of learning communities engaged in organisational and collaborative learning as well as aspects of systems consciousness and the value of feedback between engaged members of the learning community.

Chapter 6 has been a presentation of the first two phases of this research project. These phases extended over a period of nearly three years before the implementation of Phases 3 and 4. Our learning from the first and second phases, inclusive of the recording of fieldwork data, the interpretation, analysis and integration processes, informed the
research processes that were implemented in the third and fourth phases. Chapter 7 is an account of research phases three and four.
Chapter 7: Belonging

Research Phases 3 and 4

The leadership narrative presented here is entitled ‘Belonging’. The account of the Vision Day and the creation of the School Development Plan (Appendix 16) represents the development of a systemic approach to school leadership. This systemic approach to school leadership recognises and promotes systems consciousness, a collective sense of wellbeing, aspects of social justice, pedagogical leadership, andragogical leadership and organisational learning.

The leadership narrative begins with a description of the process: what happened on the Vision Day in 2010, where the themes for the action learning groups are presented, followed by the confirmation of the School Vision. The School Vision is revisited and analysed through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis. This represents Phase 4 of the research plan. The School Vision is revisited for a second time and the feedback outcomes from the learning community are extensive. Academic outcomes for children are presented as quantitative data and evidence the improvement in both progress made and in levels of attainment over the course of the research project.

Phase 3: Research Project Plan and Implementation

Leadership Narrative Two: Belonging

Description of the Process

The Vision Day was planned for November 2010. The practitioner/leader researcher facilitated the day and selected the invited speakers. Dominic Wyse and Emma Charlton from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, had been involved in a project in the school during the school year 2009 – 2010, the school community needed to be
informed of the project and the project outcomes (Charlton et al, 2011; Wyse et al, 2010). The timing was right for the research findings to be presented. The day started with a presentation of the purpose of the day, the ground rules and an overview of our position statement. This was followed by a presentation from our “critical friends” from the University of Cambridge. This preceded a session for reflection ‘What matters for children?’ Time was then allocated for the action learning groups to explore and develop their themes. Finally each action learning group fed back to all the participants.

The purposes of the day were to plan for the future of the children, to investigate different aspects of school life, identify the challenges we faced in improving academic outcomes for children and to consider what we already did well and to identify short, medium and long-term goals. It was recognised that we all had responsibilities and in the future we needed to work together in a shared endeavour.

What were our concerns?
The greatest concern identified was that although children made good progress during the time they were at school, many still left attaining below national expectations. The identified barriers to meeting this challenge were that on entry to school the children were achieving well below national expectations and that some children were not fluent in their home language, a barrier to English acquisition. When the school implemented a small scale research project to find out which language the children felt most confident to use in dialogue, it was found out that by the time children were in Key Stage Two, that is, seven-years old plus, a significant number were losing their home language. They felt most confident in speaking English. Some children voiced a concern that they could not speak to their own father. There were a small number of children who had difficulty communicating with their mothers because they had not sustained their Mirpuri Punjabi.

Many children had few experiences outside of the locality, although they would have travelled abroad to see family. One concern was how should the school work in partnership with parents so that the children’s families were able to fully appreciate and understand their child’s learning, within an educational context they could be unfamiliar with and how they, as parents, could positively impact on their child’s learning and development. A recurring concern was that the vast majority of pupils identified as ‘able,
gifted and talented’ (DfES, 2006b) were boys and girls were underrepresented. ‘Parental involvement’, ‘aspects of equality’ and the needs of ‘multilingual learners’ were emphasised as themes that needed to be addressed within each action learning group theme. It is noteworthy that as the lead practitioner/leader researcher I had not identified the school culture, and more specifically adults’ low expectations of multilingual learners, as a barrier.

**Action Learning Groups**

Previous school development plans had not engaged all stakeholders. The time was right to create an opportunity for greater involvement of both internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholders were defined to mean all children and adults who had a part to play in the present and future of the school. The stakeholders were the children, their families, the staff team, the governing body, local authority consultants and advisers, children’s centre staff, pre-school practitioners, representatives from the local madrasahs, link schools and the City Council.

Several themes had evolved with regard to the school development process. The themes concerned both operational and strategic matters. Within the operational domain they were; the organisation of activities at break times\(^{12}\), the development as an eco-school, and the development of the school library. The identified strategic matters were concerns regarding girls’ achievement, the development of the School Council as school leaders and the school’s contribution to community cohesion (Local Government Association, 2002). Additional themes were identified in consultation with colleagues and ten focus areas were identified.

**Operational Matters**

**Break Times:** Break times needed to be a positive time for all children. There was an identified need to provide opportunities and space for children to be active as well as being able to be quiet and calm. The action learning group were asking: “How could our playground space be better organised in zones so that it is very clear to children and

---

\(^{12}\) Break times are the periods of time during the school day when children have free time and staff have a supervision role.
adults what type of games/activities can be played where?” “How can we be proactive in teaching children a wider variety of games and ensure that the large space is not dominated by the few?”

**Communicating Beyond the Office:** Communication was identified as an important aspect of the school’s office and administration team’s role. It included a consideration of how to best meet everyone’s administration requirements. What should the team’s priorities be for the future, in the short and medium and long term?

**Eco School:** The school was registered to work towards Eco School Status. The school wanted to be proactive in reducing its carbon footprint with the full engagement of children, staff, families, governors and the local community.

**Lunchtimes:** Lunchtimes had improved. Children had been provided with more opportunities for play. The concern was that children were not always engaged in positive play and sporting activities. Parents had a negative perception of what happened at lunchtime and this needed to change.

**The Library:** An enhancement to the school library had been developed. It needed to be used to its full potential. A clear vision was required about how it would be used, so that it got the maximum use and it was of maximum benefit to all the children in the school. This was the opportunity to put together a proposal for the future development and management of the library.

**Strategic Matters**

**Community Cohesion:** The role of the school within the local community and beyond was central to ensuring children are able to develop their sense of identity and self-worth. Many of the children did not travel beyond the locality with their families, unless they were travelling abroad. A child’s real life experiences needed to be rich and varied to become successful learners. The children made a positive contribution to the wider community, yet for some, transition to secondary school could be bewildering. “What could we do over the next two years to secure and embed what we already do and to further develop and improve this important part of school life?”
Developing Links with the Pre-schools: Children started school attaining well below national expectations. The vast majority of children had attended one of six local pre-schools. Good partnership working had been developed however, these links needed to be developed further. How could links be developed with local pre-schools and transition arrangements to the benefit of the children and families?

Girls’ Achievement: In some year groups girls’ achievement had fallen behind that of boys. It was a concern that girls were not achieving their full potential and that at times were dominated by the boys. This was impacting on the girls’ confidence and academic achievement.

The Enriched Curriculum: The school wanted to further develop its enriched curriculum with the knowledge that children would benefit greatly from learning opportunities that they perceive as relevant and meaningful. Theme launches inspired and celebrations acknowledged achievement. Attention had been paid to children’s ability to talk about their learning and to use and apply skills learnt in literacy across other aspects of the curriculum. The action learning group were reflecting on the line of inquiry, ‘How can we organise the primary curriculum to encompass all these strands without losing the important teaching of technical and specialist skills and language?’

The School Council: The School Council played an important role in the life of our school. This was the place where the children could have their say and ensure their voice was heard. The children on the School Council learnt to be designated leaders at a young age. They took their responsibilities very seriously and were active in finding out the views of their friends. Their lines of inquiry were ‘How could we give the School Council a higher profile?’ and ‘How could we develop the children’s leadership skills further?’

Some facilitators had already expressed their interest in taking a lead for specific themes; whereas for ‘The School Council’ the identified facilitators had been invited to take the lead on the Vision Day. A series of prompts were prepared to guide each group (Table 15). The intention was that each group would have time to consider what had already been achieved in their theme area, what their vision was for their specific focus, where they would want to be in two years’ time, what they wanted to achieve by 18th February 2011, at the follow-up session and who would be responsible for identified actions.
Table 15: Leadership Narrative Two: Lines of Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  What do we do already? What has been achieved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  What is our vision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Where do we want to be in two years' time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  How are we going to get there? What do we need to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Who is going to do what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  What will be achieved by 18th February 2011?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerns had been identified (McNiff with Whitehead, 2002). Each theme’s context provided a summary of the reasons why each theme had been identified. As a collective of action learning groups, we were identifying where we wanted to be and how we were going to get there, in the short and long term.

Having described the iterative process of research planning, the outcomes are presented. Firstly the focus is on the creation of the School Vision and secondly the focus is on the School Development Plan 2010 – 2012.

**Our School Vision**

The School Vision was a collation of the feedback from every action learning group. The school learning community had created a vision statement that represented the wishes, views and ideas of many voices rather than the few. It immediately had more resonance and value. The School Vision is presented in Textbox 10.

**Textbox 10: The School Vision**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Vision for Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2010 – 2012</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 1st November 2010, members of the School Council stated their vision:

“We want our school to be a school where all children progress in their learning.”

The following is a collation of the adult responses to the line of inquiry, ‘What is your vision for the children at our school?’
We want to raise standards of attainment across the whole school. We want to ensure our priorities will support this goal. We especially want to ensure that girls do not fall behind boys and continue to gain confidence in their learning and have high aspirations for the future. We strive for equality in attainment and achievement across all groups of learners. We want all children to be confident, have high self-esteem and to be willing to take risks in their learning.

We want to keep and further develop the creativity of an experienced-based curriculum, without losing the teaching of key skills. We want to ensure we respond to the children’s interests and talents, their learning and developmental needs by providing the spaces, time and adult support to ensure progression, high expectations and time to practise without overload. We want to acknowledge the personal interests and specialisms of adults in school to further enrich the curriculum we offer children.

We want to continue to strive for mutual respect and understanding amongst children and adults, in every part of the school day, both in school and beyond, including the schools we link with. We want to create opportunities for all children to participate in a range of activities with the wider city community. We want to develop on-going relationships as well as enjoy exciting one-off events.

We want to enable all parents, carers and families to support their children in benefitting from a wider range of experiences and to understand why this is so important. We want to build on our opportunities to involve parents, carers and families in the children’s learning.

We want to develop our sense of respect in terms of the world we live in and our duty towards our environment. We want to achieve this by reducing our carbon footprint. We want everyone at our school to be active in achieving this challenging goal.
We want to create an inviting and inspirational learning environment both inside and out; to include a well-resourced library and information hub, a welcoming atmosphere, safe places to experience risk and great play outside. We want to further develop the children’s independence in, ownership of and understanding of their learning in all aspects of school life and beyond. We want the way we work with external partners to enhance and nourish this work.

We want both children and adults to enjoy breaktimes and lunchtimes. We want to provide a wide range of interesting activities for the children. We want to have clearly zoned areas of the playground, we want to see girls having the same opportunities for sports activities as boys and we want all children to benefit from places and spaces for quiet reflection and thinking. We want everyone to be clear about expectations, ensuring all children respect other children’s space, play and games.

We want to ensure we communicate and celebrate our successes beyond the school. We want others to know and understand our achievements and growing success in raising standards across the school. We want this to include our developing partnerships with the pre-schools that feed our school, the clusters of schools we work with, the local madrasahs that our children attend after school and with schools in other countries of the world.

We will strive to continue to develop as an active learning community with staff, children, families, governors and partners working together to overcome any barriers to achieving our vision for the future for the pupils.

December 2010

The Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge’s research project influenced developments in the school learning community, for example, in the creation of the School Vision, the school development planning, especially within the context of the enriched curriculum, the creation of ‘Belonging Groups’ and the development of the ‘Belonging’ theme across the whole school (Charlton et al, 2011; Wyse et al, 2010). The two lead researchers engaged in two of the action learning groups.
Extracts from the School Development Plan (2010 – 2012) evidence how each of the action learning groups took charge of their own planning, actions and evaluation processes (Appendix 16).

Phase 4: Evaluation and Plan Next Steps

The School Vision Revisited

The School Vision was revisited on two occasions. The first time was just three months after its creation. The second time was two years later.

School Vision: Revisit One

The session on the 18th February 2011 provided the opportunity for the action learning groups to evaluate progress made and to clarify future actions. The School Council had an important task to reinterpret the Vision in their own words and therefore to communicate the meaning more effectively to children. The children worked hard to create a document that was a transcription of the original yet was in their voice. (Appendix 17).

Living Life as …

The School Vision has been interpreted, analysed and integrated applying the thematic framework for data analysis. This evidences the relevance of the School Vision to the aims of this research project. There are four sections presented headed by each of the research themes.

Living Life as a Teller of Tales

Interpretation

The children demonstrated a collaborative approach to their vision and perceived their learning to extend beyond the school. They showed a loyalty and pride in the school. They had a good understanding of what they should expect from the adults in school, including the bigger picture and their micro view of school and what needs to be
improved. They wanted everyone to know about the school and be impressed by the school.

**Analysis**
The identified theme was respect with an emphasis on gender equality. The creation of a warm and welcoming learning environment supported the themes of enjoyment and nourishment. The theme of perceptions of expectations included how the school was perceived by others.

**Integration**
The identified line of inquiry was: ‘How does the children’s view connect with the views of children as evidenced in other research projects?’ The implication was that children and their voice have to be constantly and consistently heard.

**Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader**

**Interpretation**
The children perceived themselves as having responsibilities for their own learning. They presented themselves as being aspirational. The children wanted to access diverse and rich learning opportunities and experiences. They wanted to establish long term relationships with both adults and children within the school learning community, with linking schools, including schools in other countries. The children recognised that their own families have responsibilities too. The children identified what supports them in their learning, for example they liked to be given stickers and also praise. They recognised the value of play. They articulated the conditions required for learning especially time and space. The children wanted more adults to support them in their learning, including adults from external agencies. They recognised the positive impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

**Analysis**
The identified themes included perceptions and aspirations. The children were strong in identifying the role of adults in their lives to embrace their ambitions. The learning environment and conditions for learning, including enriched learning opportunities and experiences, were identified as instrumental to the children’s future achievements.
Responsibilities, expectations and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were articulated. The children grasped a systemic view, how to link with others and therefore the notion of interconnectivity.

**Integration**
The identified line of inquiry was: ‘How do we create a learning environment that will offer all that the children want?’

**Living Life as a Global Learner**

**Interpretation**
The children articulated in a strong voice their concerns about girls’ achievement. They wanted the girls to assert themselves. The children were systemic thinkers and identified the need to think beyond yourself and your locality. The children wanted to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They had an awareness of children’s safety and safeguarding. The children demonstrated an understanding of the relationship between wellbeing and learning.

**Analysis**
Equality and respect were recurring themes. The children wanted to develop these themes through links with other people outside their own locality and in other countries. Their visionary theme was the creation of a learning environment containing different spaces for a range of purposes in order to strengthen the interconnectivity between wellbeing and learning.

**Integration**
Six lines of inquiry were identified: ‘Do girls have equal chances?’, ‘If not, how do we ensure they do?’, ‘Why don’t girls achieve as well as boys?’, ‘How do we connect with other communities, including linking schools?’ ‘How do we create the learning environment we want for all children?’, ‘How do we ensure all children are safe and confident?’ and ‘How can the School Council have impact?’
Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher

Interpretation
A strong pupil voice was communicated with regards to equality. The school council wanted to be pragmatic: to act and have impact. The children wanted to know more about their learning in school: about the context for their learning, including the reasons why they are expected to learn specific skills and acquire certain bodies of knowledge. The children stated their viewpoint with clarity. They wanted to know the context, purpose and meaning of their learning.

Analysis
The identified themes were equality and justice, the need for action, understanding the context of the learning, that is, contextualisation and how to further develop our learning community.

Integration
There were ten identified lines of inquiry. ‘Why don’t girls achieve better outcomes?’, ‘What is happening for girls?’, ‘What is happening for boys?’, ‘How can the school council have more impact?’, ‘What does the school council need to be doing?’, ‘What is the learning context?’, ‘What is the learning purpose?’, ‘What does it mean?’, ‘What are we learning?’ and ‘Why are we learning this?’

This analysis of the children’s version of the School Vision evidences the relevance of the research themes and the contribution the children made to this action research process.

School Vision: Revisit Two
In January 2013 six aspects of the School Vision were evaluated by the staff members of the school learning community in terms of progress made towards achieving the vision. The vision statements were taken from the children’s own version. The children’s voice provided strength and challenge to the adults’ perception of what children expect and want, e.g., ‘to work harder and push yourself’.
The ten teams who provided feedback were the senior leaders, the six teams representing each year group, Years One to Six, the School Council, the Office and Administration Team and the Midday Supervision Team.

Feedback Outcomes

The feedback outcomes are collated and presented in Appendix 18. The feedback outcomes provide evidence of the extent to which co-researchers were engaged in the school improvements indicated in the School Development Plan (2010 – 2012). For example, when reflecting on the first statement ‘We want our school to be a school where all children progress in their learning’ there are thirteen statements confirming how the school supported children in their learning. Alongside this recognition of improvements made are the ideas for further development, in this instance thirteen suggestions are given. Child and parental ownership were indicators of the co-researchers acknowledging the developing systemic approach to school leadership. This is a contributing factor to supporting the research line of inquiry: that collaborative action research is a sustainable approach to school improvement.

Self-Evaluation Process Outcomes

The self-evaluation process provides evidence of how aspects of the School Vision had been embedded in the learning community’s ethos and practice. For example, there was consistency within the feedback that raised expectations of children’s potential had been achieved. Equally seven out of the ten teams identified that the next step was for children to have a better understanding of what was expected of them in their learning and the learning process; creating an increased ownership of the learning process. Fourteen different pedagogical strategies were identified to support and extend girls’ confidence to learn. The implementation of more exciting opportunities for children to extend their learning were identified, alongside the identification of how these ideas could be developed further. The teams identified the strategies that had been developed to promote anti-discriminatory practice and respect, for example, the One World project, the Belonging groups and the increase in opportunities for children to discuss difficult issues, such as racism. It was recognised that child and adult interactions had increased, while previously a quiet classroom had been deemed effective practice for children’s
learning. The increase in the opportunities for parents to be positively engaged in their children’s learning was recognised, especially the Family Trips on Saturdays. Thirteen more ideas were suggested as next steps. It was evident that the learning community had developed a positive perspective on the parents’ role in supporting their children and that this was a partnership that had to be respected and developed further. The teams were able to identify twelve strategies that had been implemented to develop the learning community as an eco-conscious organisation. One team had identified the significance of the personal, social, moral, cultural and spiritual aspects of school life which is relevant to systems consciousness. From the perspective of the practitioner/leader researcher the most significant outcome was the value of involving everyone in a participatory process, which supports the notion of a systemic approach to school leadership.

Quantitative School Data

The quantitative school data shows the percentage of children attaining at or above national expectations over a four year period from 2010 to 2013, the period of this action research project. It is evident that the implementation of the work of the action learning groups did result in an increasingly collaborative and responsive approach to school improvement (Leithwood et al, 2006) and therefore contributed to raising school standards. This outcome is verified by school leaders in Chapter 9. The school leaders identified the enriched and active participation of members of the school’s learning community, the sharpened focus on school improvement and everyone’s contribution towards this endeavour as contributory factors.

The quantitative school data, as graphically illustrated in Figure 12, shows the number and percentages of children in Years One to Six achieving either at or above national expectations in their learning. The validity of the school data is secure. During this period all school data was monitored and moderated by the Local Authority and was therefore subject to external validation. From 2010 to 2013 the improvement was 21% in reading, 29% in writing and 24% in maths. In 2013 the government verified that an increase of 15% in attainment was significant (RAISE, 2013). These improvements in attainment were not only during the period of the School Development Plan it extended to the following
year, 2013, and therefore contributed to a sustainable improvement in school standards. To explain further, in reading, over this four year period, 101 more children achieved at or above national expectations; in writing 126 more children achieved at or above national expectations and in maths 113 more children achieved at or above national expectations. All judgements were externally verified by the Local Authority. As a school performing below the national averages, the learning community was under termly scrutiny and therefore data was constantly moderated.

**Figure 12:** To show the percentage of pupils at age related expectations and above in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Figure 13 shows the visualisations of Leadership Narrative Two. The emergent themes have been extracted following the data analysis processes.
Figure 13: Visualisation to illustrate Leadership Narrative Two
Chapter 8: Themes of Social Justice

“Both research and assessments, in trying to ‘make sense’ of data and turn in a plausible story, always run the risk of over-simplification: losing the rich and often ambiguous complexity of young children’s behaviour”

(Carr, 2001, p.13).

Research Phase 5: The Emergent Phase

In Chapter 8 the child’s voice is brought to the fore and is representative of the fifth research phase, the emergent phase. This phase provided the practitioner/leader researcher the opportunity to pursue a line of inquiry that had not been predicted at the beginning of the research process. ‘The Girls’ Chat Group’ leadership narrative presents an action learning set that confronted difficult questions relating to the development of anti-discriminatory practice and the theme of social justice. ‘Shazia’s Story’ deepens understanding of how one child reflected on and perceived her own actions.

Leadership Narrative Three: The Girls’ Chat Group

The original purpose of the Girls’ Chat Group was to facilitate dialogue and inquiry, discuss any subject the girls chose and follow identified lines of inquiry. This initiative arose from the identified concern about the progress girls made in their learning and their levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage Two. This leadership narrative has a direct connection with leadership narrative two where the creation of the School Development Plan (2010 – 2012) is described. One Action Learning Group focussed on ‘Raising Girls’ Achievement’, which is reported in Chapter 7. All research participants in this leadership narrative have given their permission for the presentation of this action learning project. All participants’ names have been anonymised.

During the Autumn Term of 2011 three girls, Aamina, Zarah and Shazia were involved in a racist incident. They were the initiators. The victim was an adult employed in a partner organisation. It was necessary to take serious action and discuss the incident
with the girls’ parents. The girls were given time out of class to reflect on their actions and were then carefully reintroduced to the normal school day. They wrote letters of apology and personally apologised to the adult they had offended.

Having reflected on what had occurred, the Assistant Headteacher and I made the decision that it was not enough to reprimand the girls and continue with school life as normal. The actions had been so concerning that it was decided that Aamina, Zarah and Shazia would become members of an additional Girls’ Chat Group. They would be expected to meet once every week, during a lunchtime, to discuss and reflect on what racism means and its connection with bullying. Restorative justice for young children is important if the child is to understand that behaving in a way that is unacceptable is not made right by merely saying ‘sorry’ (Richardson & Miles, 2008). Two teaching assistants had attended a course, ‘The National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance’ and had researched incorporating restorative approaches into our school practice.

The Girls’ Chat Group met regularly throughout the school year, 2011 to 2012. To tell this leadership narrative the use of reflective journals, the inquiry into ‘What is racism?’, a semi-structured interview between the girls and a member of staff, and the actions that were a direct outcome of the meetings are described. Shazia gave permission for her journal to be used as fieldwork data and to interweave her story. She wrote in her journal daily and extracts from Shazia’s journal are presented to illustrate the process and outcomes.

The Girls’ Chat Group was an action learning set where the participants stated their concerns, said why they were concerned, identified future actions to make a difference and evaluated the impact of their actions. The outcomes were that the children developed as leaders and made a difference for others.
Use of Reflective Journals

At the first meeting each girl was given a reflective journal. It was explained that they could write whatever they liked in their journals and could bring them to the meetings to support the process of reflection. The reflective journals provided a place where the girls could write with honesty and candour and this is evidenced in Shazia’s story. Tears were shed as they reflected on their own actions and the impact of their words.

At the end of the summer term 2012 the three girls were asked if they would give permission for their reflective journal to be used as research data. Their response was mixed and only Shazia gave permission. This is evidence of the ethical imperative and respect given to the children as co-researchers.

The Girls’ Chat Group

The Girls’ Chat Group leadership narrative is presented in three parts. The first part is based on the fieldwork generated from their discussion to unravel ‘What is racism?’ The second part represents an outcome from the discourse where the girls interviewed a member of the school team to ask her if she, as a black woman, had been either bullied or subjected to racism. The third and final part tells Shazia’s Story evidenced from her reflective journal. The original format of the fieldwork data is the transcriptions of the audio-recorded second meeting and one audio-recorded semi-structured interview. These have been analysed through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis. The outcomes of this research analysis process are presented in a narrative form. Direct quotations from the transcriptions provide the evidence for the resulting integration, that is imagining the implications and for responding to the line of inquiry ‘So What?’

Following the first meeting of the Girls’ Chat Group and listening to extracts from their reflective journals, the conclusion was that girls needed to consider the line of inquiry, ‘What is racism?’ in a space where they would not be judged and they could articulate their ideas freely.
Second Meeting: ‘What is Racism?’

At the second Girls’ Chat Group meeting the girls were invited to define ‘What is racism?’ The question was written in the centre of their poster. Their task was to consider and interpret this line of inquiry in their own words. The following narrative provides evidence of the girls’ thinking and perceptions with regard to racism and bullying. They included ‘bullying’ in their definition. Definitions of racism and bullying are difficult to separate and therefore their reasoning makes sense.

The record of the first seven minutes of the discourse confirmed that Aamina, Shazia and Zahra engaged in active and critical dialogue. The children revealed their perceptions. Aamina, Shazia and Zahra identified how people are different from one another. The identification of differences provides the opportunity to tease or bully and has the potential to evolve into racism (Richardson & Miles, 2008). Their ideas ranged from concepts of nationality and religion to individual traits including physical features such as hair colour.

Aamina: “Or when you make fun of different sizes or do voice racism. When you make fun of their accents.
Zahra: Or how fat they are or skinny
Shazia: People who come from a different country?
Zahra: Country or different religion and you laugh at something
Aamina: Yeah, religion
Zahra: Um next one
Shazia: Do you need help?
Aamina: Yes please, I …when you make fun of them
Zahra: When you…
Shazia: Hair colour?”

The value of creating time for discourse about subjects of social justice and anti-discriminatory practice is evidenced. Aamina was concerned about people being teased if they had, what she described as, “life problems.” Aamina’s engagement in active discourse supported her learning and her interpretations of actions. There is an indication that the three girls started to consider themselves as potential victims. The discourse was:
Aamina: “You have problems. Life problems. When people make fun of your life problems.
Shazia: Maybe when they don’t understand something and people laugh.
Zahra: Yeah like they don’t respect you.”

It is evident that allowing the time for the discourse was important. The adult was listening without speaking during this seven minute period. Therefore the dialogic process is honoured. The adult’s role was to identify the children’s theories about their perceptions of racism and bullying. The girls’ dialogue provided evidence of their collaborative approach. They supported each other to formulate their ideas and theories. They co-constructed meaning together. For example:

Aamina: “Yeah, that is kind of right but why don’t we do this one when some people are playing in the park and they are a different colour or race and you say you’re not allowed to come in.
Zahra: Their relation …
Shazia: Relationship with someone?”

In this second example of the girls co-constructing meaning Zahra has adapted Aamina’s phrase ‘life problems’ to ‘family problems’.

Zahra: “Yeah….that…like family problems like they go telling a friend to keep it a secret and they say that … ‘my mum had a fight yesterday.’
Aamina: I don’t think that is racism.
Aamina: They’d be like more …
Shazia: Teasing.
Aamina: Teasing or …mocking?

During the next three minutes of discourse the girls continued to co-construct meaning concerning perceptions of personal weaknesses. They recognised that some people struggle with aspects of literacy. The girls were clear that they did not want to consider what they perceived as an intellectual failing. They said, “We wouldn’t want to write someone is not clever enough.” During this discourse Aamina took the lead in creating a pause and a moment of reflection. She identified a dilemma in that they had difficulty in identifying the appropriate terminology. She said, “We get the ideas right but we need
to think about how to word them.” Zahra brought their focus back to a consideration of ‘race’. At this point the adult took her cue from the children and steered them towards differentiating between racism and bullying.

So far the dialogue had been led by the children. With the refocus back to the diagram the next three minute dialogue was task oriented. The girls decided to colour code their statements to differentiate between ‘What is racism?’ and ‘What is bullying?’ The adult considered the definitions aloud, modelling the use of talk to articulate thoughts, for example, “They’re all bullying. Aren’t they?” The three girls worked in a systematic way considering each of their statements in turn and whether it was an example of either bullying or racism. The following quote provides the evidence of this discourse.

Shazia: “We should first think of …
Zahra: When you make fun of someone’s …
Aamina: Habits.
Shazia and Zahra speak simultaneously: That’s more like bullying.
Zahra: That’s not racism. What you are and how you are that’s your …
Aamina: Your background and …
Zahra: But this is like their house. It’s not to do with … Yeah…yeah…so … That’s bullying.”

The process of discourse allowed the girls to revisit their definition. This narrative evidences the value of revisiting our meanings and theories; that is the co-construction of meaning.

What will happen to the end product became important to Zahra. She asked, “After we’ve done this, where’s it gonna go?” This was the first time it was considered that the girls’ findings would be shared. At this point the adult suggested a board outside the school offices but expressed the concern that it would only be seen by staff members. This identification of the need to communicate the girls’ ideas to a wider audience indicated an awareness of systems consciousness and the need to make a contribution to organisational learning.

The adult decided to find out if the three girls could apply their reflections on racism to their historical learning and make a connection between what they have learnt about the
past with their understanding of social justice in the present. In Year Five they had learnt about the Second World War and the life for Jews in Europe. The discussion focussed on a definition of ‘ghetto’. Zahra connected her knowledge and understanding. She said, “I think it is like a little place, a place where Ann Frank went to hide in.” The children’s reading text had been ‘Anne Frank’s Diary’ (Frank, 1997). Zahra suggested ‘ghetto’ was the name of a place, “It’s another village in a country.” When the adult explained, “It’s an area where the poor and people of one ethnicity live.” Zahra intervened with “So it’s near Africa.” She connected poverty with living in Africa. Aamina continued the discourse by asking “Are there any ghettos in London and Bradford?” The adult made an instant connection with the riots in English cities in the summer of 2010. However it could be deemed doubtful whether this helped the children with their understanding. The adult proceeded to recount what had happened. This discourse marked the end of the session.

The racist incident had been directed at a woman of Black Afro-Caribbean heritage. However the notion of ‘being black’ was not identified as a potential target for racism in this discourse between the three girls and the adult although reference had been made to skin colour. It was suggested that the girls invited a member of the office team who is of Black Afro-Caribbean heritage, to one of the Girls’ Chat Group sessions. It was considered reasonable that the team member would be able to respond to any question the girls would ask.

At the beginning of the discourse Aamina, Shazia and Zahra applied broad terminology, for example, ‘race’ and ‘religion’ and did not consider the implications for different heritage and ethnic groups. In Elton-Chalcraft’s study (2009, p.92) a child of African heritage is described. She considered her heritage to hold a privilege status. The identified implication from this discourse is that opportunities for open, honest and trusting dialogue and discussion is an essential requirement in terms of developing shared understandings about ethnicity, heritage and culture.
An interview between the members of the Girls’ Chat Group and a member of staff

The purpose of this interview was for Aamina, Shazia and Zahra to find out about one member of staff’s past experiences as a child. The member of staff is a black woman and her family’s heritage is Jamaican. The girls wanted to know more about her perceptions of racism in relation to her personal experiences. From the researcher’s perspective the purpose of the meeting was to develop the girls’ insight and therefore their systems consciousness. The attendees were the lead practitioner/leader researcher who is identified as Mrs Porter in the written quotations, Mrs Fisher, the invitee and the three girls, Aamina, Shazia and Zahra.

Mrs Fisher expressed pleasure at being invited and made immediate reference to one of the girls’ lines of inquiry ‘Were you bullied at school?’ Mrs Fisher explained, “I wasn’t bullied at school.” Mrs Porter continued by providing Aamina with the opportunity to introduce the theme for discussion. Aamina said, “We’ve been doing work on racism and bullying and we wanted to ask you some questions.” Mrs Porter had to leave the room for a period of a few minutes. The conversation continued to be audio-recorded and during Mrs Porter’s absence the conversation focused on Mrs Fisher’s hair which was braided. Zahra made the connection with Mrs Fisher, her hairstyle and how her own community dresses up for weddings. This sits within the domain of ‘living life as a global learner’ alongside ‘living life as a teller of tales.’ The girls wanted to hear Mrs Fisher’s story.

On Mrs Porter’s return Shazia naturally brought the group back to the original question. She led the discourse and this evidences the respect of the two adults in acknowledging children in leadership roles. Shazia said, “I think that Mrs Fisher already answered our question when she said that nobody bullied her.”

When it was suggested that the girls could ask another question Mrs Fisher reflected on the original line of inquiry saying, “Well I didn’t think I was being bullied, put it that way. Bullying takes many different forms, doesn’t it? It’s something people when they’re being bullied don’t make it obvious that it’s bullying …sneaky isn’t it? Sly. But I don’t think, thinking back I don’t think I was bullied.” Mrs Fisher had declared as she entered the
room that she had not been bullied, at this point, four and a half minutes into the semi-structured interview, she sought to reconsider her original assumption. Mrs Fisher also queried definitions. She perceived bullying as an act that is underhand.

The first part of the discourse illustrates the value of the creation of a space to ask what children and adults genuinely want to ask, both the personal and the social (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2001). It provides evidence of the value of acknowledging the interconnectivity between communities. That is, through the identification of the connections, discourse can take place and the interconnectivity between social justice and heritage are honoured.

The next phase of the discourse provided evidence of children being direct in their questioning and thus a deepening of the dialogue. Shazia asked Mrs Fisher, “Do you feel uncomfortable here in school?” This line of inquiry illustrates Shazia’s perception of life in England as a black person. By the tone of her voice, Mrs Fisher expressed shock that a child would perceive her position in this way. She responded by saying, “No, I like it here, why? … My little brother came here and my big brother.” Mrs Fisher’s reference to her brothers having attended the school reflected her thinking. Underlying her vocalization were the thoughts, ‘why would you think that? I have a long association with this school.’ This dialogue illustrates a reflection of the world we live in and systems consciousness.

Mrs Fisher’s response prompted Aamina’s question, “How did it feel growing up here in England as a black child?” Mrs Fisher hesitated and then expressed the perception that she did not think about being person of Black Afro-Caribbean heritage. She explained, “It’s never bothered me because I was born in London and then from an early age I’ve lived in this city.” At this point Mrs Fisher began to relate her story, she was a teller of her tales. She informed the girls that she grew up in the locality of the school. She finished this story by reaffirming that, “I’ve never thought about being black. It’s never something I consciously think about. I just think about myself as a person not any particular type of person.” Aamina valued Mrs Fisher’s response and thanked her for her answer.

Mrs Fisher made the claim that she does not consciously think about being of Black Afro-Caribbean heritage. This was a declaration of her confidence in her personal identity.
This sits within the themes of living life as inquiry, ‘Who am I?’ ‘How do I perceive myself?’ ‘How do others perceive me?’ (Marshall, 1999) and organisational learning.

The discourse between the three girls and Mrs Fisher enabled the children to revisit their theory making about life as a black person in the UK. Mrs Fisher challenged the girls’ personal theories about black culture and the black community. Mrs Fisher continued to present herself positively. She articulated her perceptions and feelings and these contradicted the girls’ expectations. The following quotation is illustrative of the discourse.

Zahra: “How do you feel now?
Mrs Fisher: About myself?
Zahra: About yourself and feelings.
Mrs Fisher: I’m quite comfortable inside my skin. I like the person I am.”

Zahra responded by saying, “I thought you were going to say ‘Now I feel okay but first I felt worried.’ ” She anticipated that Mrs Fisher’s ethnicity would create a ‘worry’ for her. Mrs Fisher reaffirmed by responding, “I’ve never felt worried because I never thought about being black as a thing I needed to worry about.” This discourse sits within Elton-Chalcraft’s (2009) research into children’s awareness of race. Elton-Chalcraft maintains that children are less aware of the wider political picture of perceptions of race. The children’s perceptions of identity are based on their personal experience within their families and school. They create their own theories, which are partly formed by the knowledge and understanding acquired at school.

Mrs Fisher continued the discourse by providing more historical information about the school’s locality. She informed the girls of the changing demographic in the locality. Mrs Fisher confirmed that it has not always been an area that is predominantly British Asian. She related, “When I grew up around here there was quite a high population of Afro-Caribbean people. There were a lot of Italians so there weren’t very many Asian people here. So as time goes by things change.” Mrs Fisher’s narrative confirms the relevance of finding out more about the past and about our changing communities. The development of insight is enriched by the telling of tales, of auto-ethnography (Whitaker, 2009; Senge, 2006; Westley et al, 2007).
There had been seven minutes of discourse and Shazia requested confirmation that she could ask a follow-up question. This is illustrative of the children having the freedom to follow up their own lines of inquiry. The next line of inquiry evidenced the girls’ curiosity about Mrs Fisher’s work in the school and whether she enjoyed working at the school. The girls pursued an insight into Mrs Fisher’s work.

Aamina brought the discourse back to the children’s perceived dilemma of growing up as a black child in England. She asked Mrs Fisher, “Were you friends with any white children?” Mrs Fisher’s initial reaction conveyed her shock at this line of inquiry. She stuttered. Each sentence was interspersed with hesitation. Mrs Fisher confirmed the notion that friendships are not about only relating to people from either your ethnic or cultural group, which the girls’ had assumed based on their personal experience. She explained that, “I had, and even now I have, a broad circle of friends. They’re not necessarily all black or all white. My best friend is Italian. Another one of my friends is Asian. I have lots of different friends. They’re my friends because of the people they are not because of what their cultures are.” This discourse sits within Richardson and Miles’ (2008) and Elton-Chalcraft’s (2009) research and theories about children’s perceptions of people’s ethnicity. There is a resonance with organisational learning, the requirement for meaningful team inquiry and the team’s learning about interrelationships.

In spite of Mrs Fisher continually reaffirming that she was a confident individual, that her wellbeing was good and that she was positive with regard to her position in society Zahra continued to pursue the notion that Mrs Fisher’s experiences had created “problems and issues.” Mrs Fisher’s confidence and ability to articulate her views presented a perspective Zahra had not anticipated. At this point in the semi-structured interview Mrs Fisher put the question back to the girls. She wanted to pursue a line of inquiry about their sense of identity and sense of self. She asked, “Do you guys like how you are? Would you change anything?” However, this did not gain the response she sought. Aamina affirmed that she liked who she was with a solitary, “Yes.” Zahra moved the dialogue on by deepening the girls’ line of inquiry with, “Why do you like how you are?” Mrs Fisher’s response was:
Mrs Fisher: “I suppose because as you grow up you have lots of experiences and sometimes they’re good ones and sometimes they’re not so good. The experiences you have in life change you and I’m more tolerant of people.”

Mrs Fisher continued to provide frank responses. She revealed that there have been times in her life when she has not been so tolerant of some people. Mrs Fisher checked with Zahra that she had understood her explanation. Wellbeing had come to the fore. The presentation of Mrs Fisher’s narrative provided a place for reflection and a space for a reconsideration of shared understanding.

Shazia developed the discourse further by asking a ‘What if?’ question. ‘What if you were bullied?’ Mrs Fisher explained that if she experienced a situation where she felt threatened and troubled she would seek advice and support from another person. In this scenario the girls did not consider that they might have been potential victims of racism. As explained by Elton-Chalcraft (2009) the girls’ perception of self is that they are members of the dominant group because in the school they are. Their perceptions relate to the notion of confidence of oneself and ones sense of worth and identity.

Aamina moved the dialogue along with what was perceived by the two adults as a startling line of inquiry, “Could you go to the same school as white children?” However children’s perceptions of time and history are not fully developed and in Aamina’s thinking what happened historically in the school’s locality could reflect apartheid in South Africa. Mrs Fisher’s response, which was to laugh and say “Yes it wasn’t the dark ages,” saw her making light of the question. Aamina’s line of inquiry provided Mrs Fisher with the opportunity to revisit the city’s recent history and acknowledge the different communities that have arrived at different times. This is evidence of powerful discourse. This was learning through meaningful discourse. Mutual respect is evident because the adult allowed for the children to feel safe to ask their questions. Through the discussion the notion of changing communities was revisited. This belongs within the research domain of ‘Living Life as a Teller of Tales’.

After twelve minutes of discourse Mrs Fisher recalled an incident of racial discrimination. She narrated to the group, “My mum came here in 1962 and there were a lot of West Indian people in the city. They all lived around here and that was because this was the
only area where they could find rooms to rent. They weren’t allowed to live anywhere else. There were signs in the window where they weren’t allowed to live.” Mrs Fisher described discriminatory practice. Although unlawful, it happened in reality. She confirmed that the situation did change and that “People became more tolerant.” She continued, “This is a multicultural country so people accept peoples’ differences.” Mrs Porter sought confirmation that there were localities were the immigrant black population were discouraged from living. Mrs Fisher confirmed but then reaffirmed, “We all grew up together.” Was Mrs Fisher shocked by her own revelation? She continued by stating where she had attended school and reaffirmed that she had not personally suffered from discrimination. The dialogue continued to confirm the value of telling stories.

The honesty and trust created after thirteen minutes of dialogue, gave Zahra the confidence to ask a question that, in the way she spoke, acknowledged her doubt in asking it. She took time to formulate her inquiry and her speech was peppered with pauses and hesitation. Mrs Porter’s concern was expressed by the few words she uttered and Mrs Fisher admitted that she did not understand. Zahra’s theory was that the black community does not have equity in the same way that the white community does. The full transcript is recorded below.

Zahra: “How would you feel if a prime minister or someone came up to your manager or someone came up to you and said that umm… or the king… came to you.

Mrs Fisher: So someone really high up.

Zahra: They came to you and they said they came to you … black people… and they said um… I’m going to change a rule and um… you people are no longer … the blacks… and you … um … you are equally free with the whites. How would you feel then?

Mrs Porter: Well … ah ….

Mrs Fisher: I don’t really understand what you’re trying to ask me.

The adults attempted to draw out Zahra’s thinking. Zahra continued to have difficulty shaping her thoughts. Again she was hesitant. Did Zahra feel intimidated? Or was she questioning her own assumptions? She struggled with her perceptions. She imagined a scenario where it was asked “Do all blacks have to live here?” Zahra had asked Mrs Fisher to imagine a scenario where black people are restricted to living in specific
locations. Zahra had had the confidence to ask. She was a child trying to define her world and how the wider world works. Mrs Fisher sought clarification by restating, “A bit like in South Africa where there was distinct segregation where white people lived in one part and black people lived in another part.”

The transcript provides evidence of the value of creating opportunities for adults and children to engage in open, honest and thought provoking discourse. It is evident that these opportunities are powerful and healthy. The child was learning from the adult and the adult was learning from the child. Mutual respect was evident. The focus was on the shared learning and development of shared understanding.

Just over fifteen minutes into the dialogue Mrs Porter decided to change the focus of the discussion. On reflection further inquiry into Zahra’s theory making would have been both challenging and rewarding. The change of focus related to the work on raising girls’ achievement in the school. She asked the girls whether they had an explanation for the reason why boys achieved better than girls in the school, whereas nationally it was the reverse. Zahra responded by informing the adults that girls are intimidated by the boys. This invited more lines of inquiry for the school. Do we listen to children sufficiently? Do we really know what is going on? Continuing the discussion Aamina acknowledged the pedagogical strategies that had been put in place, for example ‘no hands up’ strategies. Mrs Fisher encouraged the girls to assert themselves. She stated strongly that the girls were responsible for their own outcomes. Mrs Fisher wanted to find out more about the girls’ learning in the chat group. Mrs Porter explained that they each had a reflective journal and Aamina explained its purpose.

Aamina: “We make diary entries. We write about what happened in our day, our thoughts and our feelings and then we wrote some questions for you and I wrote a story and I don’t know what the rest of the girls did.”

This dialogue continued to evidence the value of discourse between children and adults to explore significant and difficult concerns around racism, bullying and the dominance of boys in class. As well as the notion of taking responsibility for your own learning.

Mrs Porter was aware that the interview time was coming to a close. She wanted to check that no questions were left unanswered. Aamina took this as an opportunity to
ask about Mrs Fisher’s hair. Following the intensity of the previous dialogue this did enable all involved to relax. Mrs Porter suggested to Mrs Fisher that she showed the girls her family photograph. Mrs Porter knew that Mrs Fisher had seven children and that the girls would relate to the notion of having a large family being reflective of their own Asian community. Whilst Mrs Fisher left to find the photograph Mrs Porter invited the girls to consider what they might reflect on over the next week. Zahra used talk to organise her thoughts. She reaffirmed that Mrs Fisher was confident and strong and that she did not perceive herself as a victim. Zahra continued to struggle with this notion. It was not what she had expected at the beginning of the interview. She continued to imagine a scenario where others, who Zahra described as ‘we’ are ‘irritated’ by Mrs Fisher and her black heritage. Mrs Porter attempted to support Zahra by suggesting she wrote her reflections from two perspectives, Zahra’s own perspective and from Mrs Fisher’s. Mrs Porter was aware that Zahra was struggling to empathise. However she was expressing herself in English, her second language.

Mrs Fisher returned and informed everyone about her family. She described each family member; their age, where they lived and where they were being educated. Mrs Fisher recounted that one of her children had additional educational needs however he was still a confident individual. Mrs Fisher communicated that her children were aspirational and ambitious to achieve academically. Mrs Fisher expressed her pride in her family and returned to the theme of literacy and the value of reading. She identified reading as the key to academic success. Earlier in the interview Mrs Fisher had asked the girls if they were ‘readers’. She described her youngest son’s learning needs. Again she emphasised that this does not mean he is a victim of bullying. Zahra noticed that Mrs Fisher’s youngest child’s skin tone was paler than the rest of her children. Mrs Fisher explained that her youngest child had a different father. The girls were very attentive. They were engaged in active listening. Aamina responded with respect and delight, saying, “It’s a really nice family.” Mrs Fisher returned to the theme of the value of reading. She acknowledged her role in her family as the leading learner and learning leader, that is, of ‘mother’. This dialogue confirms the notion of living life as inquiry and that of the value of asking the questions we genuinely want to ask. Mrs Porter invited the girls to make a comparison between the size of their own families with Mrs Fisher’s. Aamina’s response was tragic as she told of the siblings who have died in infancy. Mrs Porter did not follow
this information up directly. She directed her inquiry to Zahra. Was Aamina’s story too threatening to follow-up directly at that time? Was this an avoidance strategy?

To conclude Mrs Fisher had told her story about her family. The children were interested and related her story with their own family contexts. Aamina’s story was difficult to comprehend with everything else that had been discussed. Mrs Porter responded by moving the dialogue onto another child.

Mrs Porter wanted the girls to reflect on the interview over the coming week. Her intention was for the girls to develop their empathy for Mrs Fisher further and more deeply.

During the lunchtime meetings, Zahra presented the Girls’ Chat Group with a revelation. Two of her sisters and her mother, Asma, were involved in the Connecting Communities project. Zahra had felt left out when her two sisters were chosen to attend and not her. The Connecting Communities team had clear criteria about the year groups and families to involve. It had not initially occurred to the team that other siblings in the families would have feelings of disappointment, although it was identified as a line of inquiry during the process of reflection. At times the impact of practitioners’ actions is underestimated especially when working with large families, where it is common for a child to have two, three or four siblings in school, as well as cousins. This disappointment had stayed with Zahra for two years.

It was not long before the girls wanted to share what they were saying and learning with other children in a school assembly. They identified a need for anti-racist and anti-bullying champions. These champions would be children who had shown that they had been proactive in anti-discriminatory practice and had demonstrated this to others.

The Girls’ Chat Group and the School Council formulated a plan to launch the One World project. The girls designed a One World badge which depicted a globe with two clasped hands encircling the world, one black and one white. Children were to be selected having met their identified criteria. The criteria were based on anti-bullying and anti-racist strategies. Following the end of Key Stage Two SATs the Girls’ Chat Group teamed up with other children from Year Six. They planned and prepared a One World
assembly to disseminate to other primary schools in the local authority. This included the presentation of a box of badges and certificates so that the One World project could extend beyond the school.

Towards the end of the summer term it was noticed that pages from their journal were missing. When their attention was drawn to this the girls became quite adamant that those pages had not existed. The researcher concluded that Aamina and Zahra had removed those pages and disposed of them.

**Shazia’s Story**

Shazia’s story is presented in a narrative form and is interspersed with direct quotations from her reflective journal. Her reflective journal has been analysed through the process of identifying emergent themes and lines of inquiry with reference made to the four research themes. Shazia’s story illustrates her leadership learning and her role as a learning leader and leading learner. It presents Shazia’s changing perceptions and understanding of others. The narrative is interspersed with reflections on shared learning, how the girls identified their next steps and the outcomes of their actions. Shazia’s leadership story illustrates how children as leaders can impact on organisational learning through an action research approach. Through the application of the thematic framework Shazia’s leadership narrative confirms a systemic approach to leadership.

Integral to the ethical considerations and the research process of checking authenticity, relevance and accountability the Literacy Subject Leader has read Shazia’s story and has commented that Shazia’s writing evidences the improvement in her academic achievement.

Shazia benefitted from the opportunity to write openly about her experiences and what she had done. She wrote:

“I am feeling very angry because of the silly things that I did in school and I can’t get it out of my head.”

Shazia expressed her emotions and her developing awareness of the impact of her actions on others. She continued:
“I am feeling very pleased because I am slowly starting to hate myself for doing the things I have done in the past.”

Shazia used powerful words to describe her emotions. The notion of being ‘happy’ because you are ‘hating’ yourself is difficult to comprehend. Shazia was telling her tale and illustrated the power of narrative and autobiographical discourse (Rosen, 1998). In the next quotation Shazia articulated her learning about empathy. She wrote:

“I have thought about what you said and I am really starting to understand that somethings that are fun for us are a nightmare for other people.”

Shazia reflected on her past words and actions. This is evidence of her ability to articulate that she has hurt the feelings of others. Her reflections connect with the leadership theory of leadership toxins and nutrients (Whitaker, 1998). The notion of being unable to empathise and understand another’s feelings connects with the leadership toxin of alienation. Shazia proved that she was developing an awareness of the leadership nutrients of responsibility and collaboration.

Shazia clarified her thoughts and her need for others to trust her. She wrote, “People will start to trust me again.” Shazia is systemic in her approach. She developed her sense of systems consciousness and social justice. She wrote, “There will be no bullying in our school.”

The implications of not creating this opportunity was that she would have continued to hurt the feelings of others, become increasingly confused and potentially become a victim herself when she transferred to a secondary school where she would be in a minority. Journalling provided Shazia with the opportunity to state how she felt, how sorry she was and her need for forgiveness.

Following the second meeting of the Girls’ Chat Group, Shazia created her own diagram to illustrate her response to the line of inquiry: ‘What is bullying?’ (Figure 14). Shazia’s interpretation of bullying related to the notion of ‘making fun’ of another person due to a specific personal characteristic. These characteristics related to a person’s skin colour, their learning, their name, their facial features and their weight. Shazia wrote in the second person applying the phrase ‘when you make fun of’. There was an openness and
honesty communicated. Shazia’s perception was one where bullying could be an isolated incident rather than a persistent and recurrent act. There is no acknowledgement that Shazia could be a victim herself.

**Figure 14: What is bullying?**

![Diagram of different types of bullying](image)

Shazia’s story confirmed that children need the opportunity to reflect on social justice. They require the time and space to articulate thoughts in order to develop understanding. The implications are that in learning communities these opportunities have to be created in order to develop every child’s capacity to articulate and explore serious issues and dilemmas.

Shazia continued to develop her systems consciousness through the process of reflective journalling. She wanted to have a positive impact on others. This is evidence of the power of reflection (Schön, 1983). Over the period of a week she wrote:

“I think I can improve this behaviour by setting a good example for the youngers.”

“I feel excited that it is Eid tomorrow and we can celebrate with our families.”
“I feel happy because I have had an excellent Eid and I got £90 for my Eid money.”
“[characters] feeling really happy because I don’t do bullying anymore.”
“I feel happy because the girls’ chat room has helped me to improve my behaviour.”

In four of these five extracts, Shazia starts with her feelings. The practitioner/leader researcher adopted this phraseology in her own reflective journalling in challenging times, when freefall writing was not productive, in order to initiate the process of writing.

Figure 15 is the first of three images from Shazia’s reflective journal to be presented here. It confirms Shazia’s need to gain trust from everyone at school. Shazia’s story illustrates connectivity with her real life experiences. Her narrative presents evidence of relief and release. Shazia found strength in her faith and cultural heritage. Her learning connects with her emergent sense of identity, place and belonging (Charlton et al, 2011; Wyse et al, 2010). Shazia demonstrated that she could express her emotional learning and understanding. Shazia identified the characteristics of a good friend to be a person who fights for you and that they need to be loving, good, honest and helpful.

---

13 Muslims acknowledge the festival of Eid twice during each lunar year. On each occasion children receive gifts of money sometimes referred to as Eidi.
Shazia continued her journaling, reflecting on aspects of her daily life. She described her daily routine:

“Every day in the morning I get up brush my teeth have my breakfast. My mum asks me have you brushed your teeth. I say ‘Yes’. There I am leaving the house saying goodbye. Walking ready for school. There I am sitting down in the maths group getting on with my work and listening to Mrs Shaw.”

For the first time Shazia considered the notion that she could be a victim and how that could make her feel. She wrote:

“If people bullied me because I was a different colour I would feel left out and like nobody cares about me.”

Empathy was an emergent theme. Shazia continued to explore social justice:
“I walk home with my friends, my brother and his friend we talk as a group and so everybody is equal.”

Shazia stated her perception that the learning community was an organisation where equity was undeniable.

“I feel happy in school because everyone is treated equally.”

She conveyed a sense of determination:

“I feel happy because the bullying in school will stop.” (Westley et al, 2007)

Shazia wrote stories about overcoming bullying and racism in school based on her personal experience, retold in the third person. This is evidence of Shazia coming to terms with her actions and a demonstration of inquiry through narrative and the power of narration in a search for clarity and strength.

“There was once three girls who were best of friends and had always been, they played and chatted. The next day they did something, it was bad and not caring. They got in lots of trouble and instead of learning came trouble. The headteacher explained to them not everyone likes what you like. The three girls were worried. They went home and thought and thought about it. The next day they started the day fresh and everybody was happy and so were the teachers in the Primary School.”

Living life as a teller of tales was a recurrent theme in Shazia’s reflective journal. Figure 16 is further evidence of this preoccupation where she tells of a girl being bullied by a group of boys.
Shazia demonstrated her emergent empathy. She retold Mrs Fisher’s narrative:

“Hello my name is Mrs Fisher and I work at the Primary School. I work in the office and I have got seven children. I’ve never been bullied, but if I did I would speak to the person and let them know, so they stop it and know how people are feeling.”

This re-presentation of Mrs Fisher’s narrative indicated Shazia’s learning and understanding. The power of the story told is confirmed as an expression of learning and re-interpretation of place and identity (Charlton et al, 2011). Factual statements provided an acknowledgement of what is secure and potentially good. Shazia sought security in the known and in her actions. She acknowledged people who care for her.
and revealed that she sensed she was now trusted by others. This is indicative of her developing systems consciousness. She wrote:

“I am feeling happy because the teachers and children are starting to trust us once again. And we can stop thinking about the past. And start to think about the future.”

Shazia began to use her reflective journal as a place to test out her script for a school assembly. Shazia applied the conventions of a school assembly by introducing the theme of the assembly, preparing her audience for what they might expect and inviting the audience to reflect for a moment by bowing their heads and closing their eyes. Shazia’s dialogue became increasingly directed towards the audience which is evident in the following three quotations. Her use of language becomes increasingly refined.

**Quotation One**

“Welcome to my assembly. I am going to talk about bullying and racism and why it should stop. Bullying and racism is a sign of disrespect to people that surround you and the community you live in. Bullying and racism can occur in many different ways for example, if you’re fat you might get bullied, if you’re short, if you’re tall and many other different ways. BUT bullying can stop. But of course with the help of adults, teachers and of course PARENTS! And together work as a TEAM. Please close your eyes and bow our heads and think about all of the children in the world who have lost their parents and their homes and how we could help them with their education. Please raise your heads”

In the second quotation, Shazia continues to view difference as a deficit feature. She describes a person as having, “Just one little thing wrong”. Shazia’s viewpoint is that she is British, however her Pakistani heritage does not feature. Children from other countries of the world are the in-coming communities for Shazia. She does not have a perception that she could be perceived as being from an immigrant community. The opportunity to discuss this further did not arise and is identified as a limitation of this research study, that is, time constraints meant that not all lines of inquiry could be followed up.
Quotation Two

“Welcome to my assembly. Today my assembly is about how people are equal. The first thing we are going to talk about is, even if we come from different countries we are still going to be equal. If you come from a place like Portugal or Lithuania you will still be equal. The second thing that we are going to talk about is bullying, just because one little thing is wrong with the person you play with you are treated the same.

Please close your eyes and bow your heads and think about the people who come from different parts of the world and who get treated unfairly and how we could make them equal.”

In quotation three, Shazia’s writing is fluent. Bullying and racism are defined with confidence. She identified the need to work together for equality and the notion of social justice is clearly expressed with the words, ‘We would like people to be treated equally in our city.’

Quotation Three

“Today we are going to think about bullying and racism and why it should stop. Bullying and racism is a sign of disrespect to the people that surround you and community you live in. Bullying can happen in many different ways for example if you are fat, if you are short, if you are tall and many other ways. BUT BULLYING CAN STOP. But of course with the help of adults and together we will all work together as a team. We would like people to be treated equally in our city.”

Shazia’s journalling provides evidence and acknowledgement of the notion that taking responsibility for our actions can impact on how a child behaves as a learner. Shazia wanted to put the past behind her. “I am feeling happy because we have forgotten the PAST and just thinking about the FUTURE.” Shazia applies capital letters for emphasis. Shazia’s use of recurring phrases appeared to be her security and prompt for further reflections. This repetition of statements is a reminder of how followers of faith repeat prayers in their worship. For example in Islam there are special prayers for daily routines and in Christianity the Lord’s Prayer is always spoken at a service.
Shazia’s illustration, shown in Figure 17, provides evidence of the change in her feelings about life in the learning community. It is an acknowledgement of her recognition that she has changed her attitudes towards others.

**Figure 17: ‘I am feeling happy that my behaviour has changed.’**

---

**Academic Outcomes**

Academic outcomes for the three girls were very positive and they all evidenced above expected progress by the end of Year Six (Figure 18). Attainment and progress made in five subjects are considered in order to assess their academic achievements. The five subjects are speaking and listening, reading, writing, maths and science. This presentation of quantitative data supports the outcomes of qualitative research. It cannot be claimed that the girls’ academic achievements were all as a result of this project, effective teaching
in lessons, positive support from the home environment as well as intrinsic motivation have to be acknowledged. However, it was known that all three girls were vulnerable in their academic achievement at a time when they had been involved in a racist incident and were struggling to focus on their learning in class.

Aamina exceeded predictions in three out of five subjects, in speaking and listening, reading and science. In her academic attainment Aamina achieved above national expectations, that is at Level 5 in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In maths and science Aamina achieved a high Level 4. In speaking and listening she exceeded her predictions by two fine levels making a total of five fine levels' progress. Two fine levels is expected progress for one year therefore Aamina made a total of two and a half years' progress in one year. In reading Aamina made three fine levels progress the equivalent to one and a half year's progress, equalling the progress she made in maths and science.

Shazia exceeded predictions in two out of five subjects, in reading and science. In her academic attainment Shazia achieved above national expectations in reading. In speaking and listening and maths Shazia achieved secure Level 4s. In writing and science Shazia achieved high Level 4s. Shazia exceeded expected progress in reading by making three fine grades' progress the equivalent of one and a half years' progress and in science she made four fine grades' progress the equivalent of two years progress. In speaking and listening, writing and maths Shazia made expected progress of two fine grades.

Zahra met all predicted outcomes except for in reading where she achieved one fine grade below her predicted level. Zahra achieved at national expectations in all five subjects, achieving a secure Level 4 in reading and maths. She achieved a low Level 4 in speaking and listening, writing and science. Zahra made above expected progress in maths and science, making three fine grades progress in each subject, the equivalent of one and a half years progress. In speaking and listening, reading and writing Zahra made expected progress of two fine grades.
Figure 18: The girls’ academic achievement at the end of Year 6, including a comparison with levels of attainment that were expected nationally and an illustration of the significant progress they made in their learning.

Amina’s Attainment and Progress Data
Shazia's Attainment and Progress Data

Shazia's Academic Achievement, Progress and Attainment
Speech & Language

Level at the end of previous year
End of year prediction
Level attained
Expected End Of Year Range

Key
V  Level at the end of previous year
O  End of year prediction
X  Level attained

Maths
Science
Zahra's Attainment and Progress Data

Zahra's Academic Achievement, Progress and Attainment

**Speech & Language**

- 5A
- 5B
- 5C
- 4A
- 4B
- 4C
- 3A
- 3B
- 3C

**Maths**

- 5A
- 5B
- 5C
- 4A
- 4B
- 4C
- 3A
- 3B
- 3C

**Reading**

- 5A
- 5B
- 5C
- 4A
- 4B
- 4C
- 3A
- 3B
- 3C

**Writing**

- 5A
- 5B
- 5C
- 4A
- 4B
- 4C
- 3A
- 3B
- 3C

**Science**

- 5A
- 5B
- 5C
- 4A
- 4B
- 4C
- 3A
- 3B
- 3C

**Key**

- V: Level at the end of previous year
- O: End of year prediction
- X: Level attained

Expected End Of Year Range
Application of the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis

The fieldwork data generated from the transcripts of the audio recordings of meeting two and the semi-structured interview and Shazia's reflective journal have been analysed through the application of thematic framework. This research process has revealed that the relevance and interconnectivity between the research results and the thematic framework can be identified and evidenced. This is described below in a summary of the research findings under the research theme headings.

Living Life as a Teller of Tales

Telling stories provided an opportunity for developing understandings of social justice. The value of providing opportunities for children to co-construct their understanding and theories is evidenced. There is acknowledgement of the need to develop the pedagogy of listening (Rinaldi, 2006). A child's reflections began with a focus on her actions and feelings. Her writing, over time, develops a collaborative approach as evidenced in the assembly scripts.

Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader

In order to acknowledge and investigate diversity and difference there was a requirement to recognise similarities and common features of our lives. This leadership narrative has had impact on organisational learning and has provided a reference point for current and future discourse. This leadership narrative exemplified how multilingual children express themselves and use dialogue to develop their understanding of terminology relating to heritage, race and bullying. It is to be noted that particularity is evidenced through attention being paid to detail.

Shazia's story shows how learning is supported by our wellbeing. The creation of safe spaces and time to reflect and create further opportunities for sharing within the whole organisation is acknowledged.

Living Life as a Global Learner

An insight into children's perceptions of race (Elton-Chalcroft, 2009; Richardson & Miles, 2008) was gained. The value of developing understanding of heritage; diversity and difference was exemplified through shared understandings and feedback. Restorative
justice and the creation of the opportunities to give back to the learning community were illustrated and confirmed to be effective anti-discriminatory practice.

**Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher**

The inclusion of the emergent phase of the action research plan enabled this discourse to happen. The provision of the time, place, space and opportunity to be safe and secure to follow the lines of inquiry and to challenge perceptions was provided. The opportunities for discourse impacted on children's and adults' lives as well as impacting on research results, outcomes, conclusions and final recommendations. The power of reflection is recognised. Through the process of reflection, the child deliberated on past actions and thoughts and created new understandings. The concern was the negative attitude of children towards others. The action was to create opportunities for reflections through oral and written narrative followed by planned actions, that is, semi-structured interviews and engagement in a school assembly.

**Integration and So What?**

Children's awareness of ethnicity was identified and confronted, in that their perceptions of ethnicity and life as a person of black heritage were challenged. The children's responses tested the adults' perceptions of the children's views and at times were difficult to comprehend. The children's perceptions were embedded, for example, that it is white people who are racist against black people and in doing this they removed themselves, as British Asian children, from the scenario.

The implication that has been identified from this leadership narrative is that as a professional learning community, the school has to create opportunities for challenging discourse, for example to talk about ourselves, our families, our personal life experiences to understand each other and each other’s perspectives and perceptions.

There was impact on organisational learning in deepening awareness of systems consciousness and how engagement with children has to be in thoughtful and meaningful. It is a demonstration of the value of our method of inquiry through narrative and reflective journalling (Pen Green, 2006). The research evidence confirmed the need for schools to create meaningful opportunities for children to unravel concepts of bullying,
racism and racist bullying (Richardson & Miles, 2008). The discourse between children and adults presented in this research project is transformative. The children were able to follow their lines of inquiry. The adult they interviewed challenged the children’s assumptions about what it means to be from a black minority community. The uncensored dialogue allowed the children to reconsider their perceptions. Zahra read this chapter in December 2014 and her response is recorded in Appendix 19. This is not only evidence of the sustainable impact of group membership but also confirms how ethical considerations have been taken into account.

In my role as the practitioner/leader researcher my learning from Shazia’s story is an affirmation of the power of reflection, the honesty of children and a deepening of my understanding of the notion of asking questions to broaden and deepen our learning, knowledge and understanding. Figure 19 illustrates the identified themes within the four research themes. These emergent themes were identified, as in the previous leadership narratives, through the processes of recording, interpreting, analysing, integrating and asking ‘So What?’
Figure 19: Visualisation to illustrate Leadership Narrative Three

"Girls' Chat Group"
In Chapter 8 the lines of inquiry, reflections and actions of the Girls’ Chat Group have been detailed. Powerful discourse created disequilibrium between children and adults, which in turn led to deeper understandings of diverse viewpoints. The quality of the discourse enabled researchers to consider the familiar, which became unfamiliar and disconcerting. The research evidence supports the conclusion that the creation of safe spaces to follow our lines of inquiry about subjects that are challenging is essential to a learning community that defines itself as having due regard to social justice and systems consciousness. This conclusion is further evidenced through the presentation of Shazia’s story.

Chapter 9 is an attempt to draw all the threads of thinking together prior to Chapter 10 where conclusions and recommendations are presented. These threads then influence the final statements with regard to leadership development and theory.
Chapter 9: Making Leadership Visible Revisited

Research Plan Phases 6, 7, 8 and 9

The purpose of Chapter 9 is to present the research aim of ‘making leadership visible’ within our learning community. Chapter 9 is a presentation of the final four phases of the research plan and is an iterative process based on the thematic framework for data analysis. **Phase 6** saw a focus on research documentation and the impact of the theoretical underpinning. This involved co-researchers considering leadership theory through reflection and the creation of their leadership stories as reflective dialogues. Presented here are Andrew’s, Caroline’s and Kieran’s stories. Andrew and Caroline, as designated leaders had been invited to reflect on their leadership through narrative. Kieran responded to a request from the practitioner/leader researcher for members of the school team to reflect on the past developments in school, using a pro-forma for self-evaluation supported by lines of inquiry. Each story is presented within the identified research themes and sub-themes. During **Phase 7** the lead researcher collated data, interpreted, analysed, integrated and asked the question ‘So what?’ In this thesis Phase 7 includes the consideration of freefall writing, the identification of research outcomes for children and a reflection of when the learning community revisited the notion of leadership. **Phase 8** saw a focus on the transference of new knowledge and research dissemination. Reflection and conceptualisation on leadership by members of the school’s learning community were facilitated. Opportunities for sharing our action research project with the PhD Action Learning Group, the Headteachers’ Learning Group and students contributed significantly to ensuring research bias did not compromise the validity of this project. **Phase 9** This phase saw a reconsideration of the research limitations as well as discussion concerning the research outcomes and the impact on the learning community, including the potential for influencing and contributing to leadership learning theory. Leadership narratives 1, 2 and 3 are recurring themes throughout and evidence the connectivity between research themes and sub-themes.
Phase 6: Documentation and Impact of Theoretical Underpinning

Andrew’s Story
Andrew is an assistant headteacher with responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching in Years One, Two and Three, as well as leading on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) throughout the school. Andrew started his leadership journey at the school in September 2009.

Living Life as a Teller of Tales
Andrew set the scene by reflecting on his past experience. For example he explained, “When I first started teaching in September 1991 I entered a primary school that was very stuck in the past. On being shown the staff room I was told Key Stage Two staff sit that side and Key Stage One on this side. There was very little communication between staff across key stages apart from a polite greeting.”

Andrew identified his concerns by reflecting on his first year at the school that is the subject of this action research project. He wrote: “Jump forward to September 2009 and I joined this school. I quickly realised that there were similarities to that first school. A headteacher who had only been at the school for a year; many staff who had been at the school a long time. A divide though not between key stages but between staff groups; and most importantly the need for change within the school but up against resistance to change, scared of change and a loyalty to tradition.”

Andrew evidenced his awareness of the need for a collaborative approach to school leadership. He knew that getting to know colleagues and forming positive professional relationships would support whole school learning and development. He explained: “The first year was a steep learning curve, getting to know how things worked and more importantly the people.”
Andrew told his leadership story with honesty, authority, authenticity, knowledge and understanding of school leadership. This is evidenced in the following statement where he identifies negativity and the requirement for the designated leaders to examine their own stance.

“The leadership team itself was a reflection of the school as a whole on its views on change. There was a general feeling of negativity about the school and its position but the cause of this was not seen as the staff’s fault but the children’s and their background. The leadership needed to change its viewpoint before it could begin to change the staff’s.”

Andrew identified what was implemented in order to change outcomes for children. He concluded that ‘the children and their needs are at the centre of it all.’ In his narrative Andrew identified the impact of the cultural changes in the school.

“The biggest change has been that of the learning the children have been offered. The children are now at the heart of learning and it’s built around their needs. The outcomes are still to support children to achieve national expectations but to do this you don’t need to follow nationally produced strategies and curricula. The nature of the school culture is mostly determined by the staff within the school. The shift in my current school’s culture has been achieved by the proactive nature of the leadership team in making changes usually gradual, small and meaningful. Making staff realise they are more accountable has caused the biggest shift in culture.”

Andrew was able to identify the key elements that have influenced change in the school culture.

**Living Life as a Learning Leader and Leading Learner**

Andrew was confident to state what was not working and acknowledge what was causing disequilibrium, for example, apportioning blame on the children and therefore the creation of a culture of negativity. He stated:

“The leadership’s biggest challenge has been altering the view of staff of how well the children can actually do. Leadership needed to break down the barriers that staff had created to stop the children doing well.”
Andrew was confident to state that there were significant barriers to change and therefore to improving outcomes and in making a difference for children. He identified the barriers to school improvement as leadership perpetuated a school culture of negativity, low expectations of children acquiring English as an additional language and adults not able to reflect on and identify what they need to do to improve outcomes.

Andrew acknowledged that leadership roles and responsibilities became clearer over time. That clarity with regard to reporting impacted on leadership efficiency. He highlighted a designated leader’s role in how a leader ‘thinks and acts’. The impact on the whole school team had been that expectations were made clear as well as the learning community’s vision. Andrew believed in the school as a professional learning community. He acknowledged that this was an improving and developing school. He identified ‘being accountable’ as the most significant change agent.

Living Life as a Global Learner

Andrew understood the needs of children acquiring English as an additional language and that the school needed to shift its culture. He believed that schools have to create a curriculum with and for the children in the school to impact on school standards. From Andrew’s perspective the notions of ‘change’, ‘culture’ and ‘accountability’ had been the key forces in implementing positive and sustainable developments as well as creating and contributing to barriers and resistance to change. He had identified the school culture as one principle dynamic for improvement.

Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher

In his living inquiry (Marshall, 1999), Andrew reflected on past experiences and identified similarities and differences. He recognised that the challenge is in creating sustainable development balanced against change that is too slow and potentially not impacting on children and their life chances (Hargreaves, 2006). Andrew identified ‘gradual, small and meaningful’ change. He identified the significance of members of the school community being ‘given the opportunities to identify the need for change, plan and deliver the changes themselves.’ Andrew identified ‘continuing professional development’ as an agent of change.
Through Andrew’s leadership story the truth emerged with regard to the change in school culture that has been facilitated through this action research project. His emphasis is on change management, the power of small, considered steps in organisational learning and the focus on everyone’s accountability.

Caroline’s Story

Caroline is an assistant headteacher, she has responsibility for Years Four, Five, and Six. Caroline leads the expressive arts developments in school and extended school opportunities. Caroline has worked at the school for over twenty years and has taught parents of some of the children. She provided a written response to a distributed paper entitled ‘Seeking a Response to our Learning Saga: Developing a Systemic Approach to Leadership’, the aim of which was to provoke responses from members of our learning community. The analysis of Caroline’s leadership story, applying the thematic framework for data analysis, is presented here. Caroline identified key themes that she considered most relevant in what has been achieved since 2010, these were ‘resilience’ and ‘trust’.

Living Life as a Teller of Tales

Caroline reflected on the past and narrated the school’s story. She wrote:

“In looking back over the past three and a half years it seems to me that one of the key features of our leadership journey (our story) has been the strengthening of our resilience. We have faced many challenges but we have been resolute in our determination to fulfil our vision.”

Caroline recognised that when a collaborative approach has not been in place then it was impossible for trust and resilience to develop:

“Last year I closely observed, and tried to support a teaching team where one member of the team felt that her performance was being adversely affected by her teaching partner. I believe her opinion of the other teacher had already been formed before the year started. She did not try to find and build on the other’s strengths, instead she seemed to seek out his weaknesses. As a result the team gradually became dysfunctional and it became increasingly difficult for them as individuals to carry out their roles effectively. In retrospect I can now see that what was completely missing from this team was trust. Consequently they could not build a functioning, resilient team.”
Caroline told her tale with the children central to her narration:

“At the heart of ‘the vision’ has been improving outcomes for children who attend the school. Gradually the message ‘We are here for the children,’ has become something that is heard throughout the school. When people come into the school who do not acknowledge this, it very quickly becomes clear that they either need to change their view or it is not the place for them! Expectations have been raised through visits to other schools and visitors to our school.”

**Living Life as a Learning Leader and Leading Learner**

Caroline considered our learning as an organisation:

“It may well be that it is the challenges that we have faced that have helped us to build our resilience. It is impossible to be objective about this, but from my perspective because the Senior Leadership Team have remained steadfast it has helped everybody else to remain strong. As a leadership team, I feel we have learned to support each other. We know each other’s strengths and are able to provide back up when we recognise that somebody is struggling. This is now so seamless that we hardly realise that it is what we are doing. This could surely be described as a team that is performing.”

“In the same way, as we look across the school we can see that teams which function well have the same ability to support each other. These teams in turn can support other teams. I see that we are working towards a situation where it is the resilience of the whole school team which allows individuals to become resilient and as a result to be able to overcome challenges and function at a higher level than they would be able to in isolation.”

Caroline reflected on the impact of the Vision Day on the 1st November 2010:

“By including the whole school in the vision day everybody felt that their contribution was valued. It also ensured that ‘The Vision’ encompassed the whole school experience for the children including lunchtimes and clubs.”

Caroline considered how teams have been established in the learning community:

“A great deal of thought has been given to teams within the school; a mix of experience, personalities, strengths. Inevitably in an organisation the size of our school this has not always worked but on the whole the balance of the teams has contributed to the school moving forward.”
Caroline advocated the notion of our school as a learning organisation encompassing many learning communities:

“I have been lucky enough to be a member of a number of learning communities since 2010, including ‘International Schools’, ‘Active Dialogue’ and ‘Researching Girls’ Achievement’. What has been really liberating about these groups is that they are not in any sense hierarchical. We have had a real sense of learning together. Although meetings are very task based, the quality of the discussions helps to clarify thinking. We are learning together – we may not always realise this.”

**Living Life as a Global Learner**

In Caroline’s response to the research paper she chose to focus on the theme of moral purpose. She wrote:

“What comes through strongly for me in this paper is that everything is underpinned by a sense of ‘doing what is right for children.’ You have written about how sustaining this moral perspective can be difficult. For me this is an on-going part of our leadership journey. There are so many outside pressures and we know that sometimes we have to compromise what we believe in in order to survive in the political environment in which we work. There are instances when we have to conform even though we may feel this is not right for children. (The phonics check with made up words would probably come top of my list.) This constant need to compromise can lead to conflict both within ourselves, between colleagues and can even impact on the quality of relationships with children. Listening to the learners’ voices is surely the key and must help us keep our moral compass. We need to listen more and talk less.”

Caroline evidenced an understanding of how the learning community has operated in terms of systems consciousness, how trust has emerged and an understanding that to blame individuals for any failings of the organisation would have been counter-productive.

“Underlying resilience, I believe that there must be a high level of trust. Following our November 2011 Ofsted, although many of us (myself included) had to deal with feelings of guilt, there was never any blame. This was essential to our recovery as a school team.”
Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher

Caroline recognised that the programme of professional development for teaching assistants (Leadership Narrative 1) had impacted on outcomes for children:

“Including teaching assistants in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has given them far more understanding of what we are trying to achieve. This has been greatly appreciated. It has also enabled teachers to take on board ideas put forward by teaching assistants. In turn teaching assistants have felt more valued.”

Caroline responded to the research paper by acknowledging the power of action research. She wrote:

“The Active Dialogue Leadership Narrative is very powerful. The teaching assistants involved in the project have reflected on their practice in a way that would never have been possible through more conventional Continuing Professional Development. (The ‘we know best, this is how you do it model!’) The learning that had come from this is much deeper and much more likely to be sustained in future practice. There is a real sense that what the teaching assistants have written was not just what they thought was required but they had discovered knowledge and understanding.”

Caroline’s leadership story provided the lead researcher with evidence of the impact of this action research project. She was able to make reference to the vision creation, the impact of the School Development Plan 2010 – 2012 and how as a learning community there was a greater awareness of trust, resilience and wellbeing.

Kieran’s Story

Kieran is a Key Stage Two class teacher and team leader. Kieran started his career at our school as a volunteer teaching assistant and then as a salaried teaching assistant. He left the school for one year to achieve his Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and returned to our school in September 2009. Kieran thinks deeply about the developments over the last three and a half years. This is informed by his impressive knowledge and understanding of the local community and the families; he is a systemic thinker (Fullan, 2005).
Kieran applied the thematic framework for data analysis to his own leadership narrative. This is evident in the presentation of the scripts before and after analysis (Figures 20-23). Applying the four research themes he discovered that there are overlaps and connectivity between all four. Figures 20 to 23 are scanned images of Kieran’s response to the self-evaluation pro-forma and his analysis through the application of the thematic framework which he achieved through colour coding the passages of his responses to the original lines of inquiry.
Figure 20: Kieran’s original script prior to analysis

This is as true a record of our meeting as I can accurately recall...

Describe what has happened at since our vision day on the 1st November 2010:

• What has been achieved for children?
The children have had expectations of them raised- meaning they can have a greater level of challenge, can show off what they can do and can have more individualised expectations. Resultantly their needs can also be better met through interventions, and those for whom interventions aren’t the answer are targeted in other ways.
The children are given more opportunities to leave the locality, leading to a broader general knowledge and building towards them having a clearer self-identity of themselves and their place in the world.
Children have a better voice now than in 2010 though they could still have a greater voice- how we raise funds? What clubs we offer? What places they could visit/what topics they cover…? Overall, they have a greater chance of success and in my opinion leave the school more confident, competent and conscientious than leavers 4 years ago.

• What has been achieved for families?
Family support has been a great initiative driven by the school. Families have a key part in education and by enabling them to function as effectively, we are giving them every chance to ensure that their children can reach their potential.
Projects such as ‘REAL’, workshops and open days have involved parents not only within the school premises, but within their child’s classroom and moreover, their child’s learning.
It is noticeable that parents feel more a part of the school (indeed many with a greater belonging within/ownership of the school) and there are more parents on the playground at the end of the day / in parents’ meetings (I have been encouraged by the numbers of mums and dads attending together recently).

• What has been achieved for staff team, incl. governing body?
Changes in TA working hours have meant that they can be more involved in the ‘PPA’ process. In seeing the planning/discussing assessment, they are more able to ‘own’ their practice and plan how they will focus their own input within lessons.
The school have also shown more opportunities for advancements/ professional development with the internally appointed HLTA/midday supervisor roles.
The governing body has benefited from the addition of the safeguarding committee which I feel has further benefitted from a staff governor member.

• What has been achieved for community?
The school’s successes mean that the community can be proud to call the school their own.
I feel that many schools benefit from being the centre of the community- for example a village school is necessarily at the heart of its community. However, this community could be defined by having the mosques at its centre and thus detract from the import of the school within the community. As seen by the number of parents chatting on the playground (mothers, but also Muslim to non-Muslim), this is not the case.
The school has assured its continuing status within the community with its ownership of the new school build.

Describe your perception of school leadership over this time period:
I feel the only thing a leader needs to be is adaptable. On occasions a ‘leader’ in the traditional sense of the term, but at other times an enabler, letting other take the lead; at times a ‘scrutiniser’ at times a ‘trustee’; at times a ‘comforter’ at times a ‘disciplinary.’
Figure 21: Kieran has revisited his reflections applying the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis

This is as true a record of our meeting as I can accurately recall...

Describe what has happened at since our vision day on the 1st November 2016:

- What has been achieved for children?
The children have had expectations of them raised—meaning they can have a greater level of challenge—can show off what they can do and can have more individualised expectations. Consequently, their needs can also be better met through interventions, and those for whom interventions aren’t the answer are targeted in other ways.
The children are given more opportunities to leave the locality, leading to a broader general knowledge and building towards them having a clearer self-identity of themselves and their place in the world.

Children have a better voice now than in 2010, though they could still have a greater voice—how we raise funds? What clubs do we offer? What places they could visit? What topics they cover? Overall, they have a greater chance of success and in my opinion leave the school more confident, competent and conscientious than leavers 4 years ago.

- What has been achieved for families?
Family support has been a great initiative driven by the school. Families have a key part in education and by enabling them to function as effectively, we are giving them every chance to ensure that their children can reach their potentials.

Projects such as "REAL," workshops and open days have involved parents not only within the school premises, but within their child's classroom and moreover, their child's learning. It is noticeable that parents feel more a part of the school (indeed many with a greater belonging within/ownership of the school) and there are more parents on the playground at the end of the day in parents' meetings (I have been encouraged by the numbers of mums and dads attending together recently)

- What has been achieved for staff team, incl. governing body?
Changes in TA working hours have meant that they can be more involved in the "PPA" process. In setting the planning/discussing assessment, they are more able to "own" their practice and plan how they will focus their own input within lessons.
The school has also shown more opportunities for advancement/professional development with the internally appointed HL/TL in today superannuated.
The governing body has benefited from the addition of the safeguarding committee which I feel has further benefited from a staff governor member.

- What has been achieved for community?
The school's successes mean that the community can be proud to call the school their own. I feel that many schools benefit from being the centre of the community; for example, a village school is necessarily at the heart of its community. However, this community could be defined by having the mosques at its centre and the local supermarket in the import of the school within the community. As seen by the number of parents chatting on the playground (Muslim, but also Muslim to non-Muslim); this is not the case.
The school has assured its continuing status within the community with its ownership of the new school pool.

Describe your perception of school leadership over this time period:
I feel the only thing a leader needs to be is adaptable. On occasions a leader in the traditional sense of the term, but at other times an enabler, letting other take the lead; at times a "scullionist" at other times "a trusting" at times a "compricer" at times a "disciplinarian." The changing demands of a school and the changing focuses that circumstances necessitate, mean that a leader must be able...
Living Life as a Teller of Tales

In his reflections Kieran is mindful of the standing of the school within the local community. He has acknowledged that the school is truly a centre of and for the community. He has noted that parents of different heritage communities have created the opportunity for discourse in the playground. Kieran placed these reflections as having a relevance to ‘Living Life as a Teller of Tales’ and ‘Living Life as a Global Learner.’

“The school’s successes mean that the community can be proud to call the school their own. I feel that many schools benefit from being the centre of the community, for example a village school is necessarily at the heart of its community. However, this community could be defined by having the mosques at its centre and thus detract from the import of the school within the community. As seen by the number of parents chatting on the playground (mothers, but also Muslim to non-Muslim), this is not the case. The school has assured its continuing status within the community with its ownership of the new school build.”

Living Life as a Learning Leader and Leading Learner

Kieran considered what had changed for us as a learning community and what impact that had had on children.

“The children have had expectations of them raised, meaning they can have a greater level of challenge, can show off what they can do and can have more individualised expectations. Their needs can also be better met through interventions.”

Kieran emphasised the impact of family involvement on organisational learning. He identified the positive changes made to work contracts and professional development opportunities.

“Family support has been a great initiative driven by the school. Families have a key part in education and by enabling them to function more effectively, we are giving them every chance to ensure that their children can reach their potential.”

Kieran’s responses mirrored Caroline’s, for example identifying the changes made in teaching assistant contracts to enable them to have an increased engagement in planning and assessment processes.

“Changes in teaching assistant working hours have meant that they can be more involved in the planning, preparation and assessment processes. In seeing the planning and discussing assessment, they are more able to ‘own’ their practice and plan how they will focus their own
input within lessons. The school has also shown more opportunities for advancements and professional development with the internally appointed High Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and midday supervisor roles.”

**Living Life as a Global Learner**

Kieran’s reflections are relevant to the needs of multilingual learners.

“The children are given more opportunities to leave the locality, leading to a broader general knowledge and building towards them having a clearer self-identity of themselves and their place in the world. Children have a better voice now than in 2010 though they could still have a greater voice, for example, how we raise funds? What clubs we offer? What places they could visit/what topics they cover…? Overall, they have a greater chance of success and in my opinion leave the school more confident, competent and conscientious than leavers four years ago.”

Kieran reflected on achievements in parental engagement.

“Projects such as ‘Raising Early Achievement in Literacy’ (Nutbrown, 2000), workshops and open days have involved parents not only within the school premises, but within their child’s classroom and moreover, their child’s learning. It is noticeable that parents feel more a part of the school, indeed many with a greater belonging within and ownership of the school, and there are more parents on the playground at the end of the day and attending meetings for parents. I have been encouraged by the numbers of mums and dads attending together recently.”

Kieran reflected on leadership and how the school develops a systemic approach. He explains the advantages of a systemic approach:

“Leaders are more open. The systems of communication and trust integral, as I understand it, to the notion of systemic leadership enabling staff to react to situations upon which they have a key bearing. I would cite the example of girls’ achievement raised at the time of the School Vision. As staff were made aware they could ‘tweak’ their focus and their practise to reflect the needs of the girls in a class. Without communicating this to teachers and had it stayed within the confines of a traditional ‘leadership team’, it would not have been possible to address the situation as effectively, or as simply. Addressing this has meant that as a staff team we can drill down even deeper, for example, to focus specifically on girls who achieved 2C at end of Key Stage One. Again by making staff aware, means that the channels of communication on the subject are opened and ideas can be bounced around, adapted or dismissed. I demonstrated my ‘understanding’ of the notion of ‘systemic leadership’ with a diagram.” Figures 22 and 23
are scanned images of Kieran’s initial response to the self-evaluation lines of inquiry and then his revisit.

“I suggested that this diagram could have the school at the centre with outside agencies around feeding into, and out from the school. We can support others and equally be supported. I also discussed the need for the other, external agencies around the school in the diagram to include other schools (Hargreaves, 2012).”

Kieran’s reflections confirm the notion of a learning community as a place of interaction and personal relationships. These are the aspects that are emphasised within a systemic approach to school leadership. He creates an analogy with the human body, where every organ and function is reliant on the blood system.

“The diagram could be seen as internal to the school, the headteacher and the leadership team as a web of communication or as the headteacher and the wider staff team. In disseminating information, the headteacher knows that if the system is functional, it reaches all staff and that their interrelatedness means that they are discussing and further disseminating what has been passed through the channels of communication. I analogised the system as like a body with the channels like veins and information as blood and that someone at the heart of the system needs to make sure impurities are kept out. Impurities in the body system retard its function, as negativity or contrary philosophies can retard the school’s progression. The leader’s role at the heart is to decide where the school fits in to the external model and what to allow into the internal system.”

Kieran defined his perception of leadership.

“Leaders at school are more open and willing to demonstrate good practice within classes. Leadership in school is more spread out. There are non-leaders, indeed non-teachers in traditionally ‘leadership team’ roles within the spheres of Special Educational Needs (SEN), safeguarding and inclusion. There is more of an ethos within the team that leadership is not restricted to the leadership team and that teachers are leaders of smaller teams, leaders of other professionals and leaders of children’s learning.”

“It is positive that systems are open and inclusive. That there is an emergence of what could be termed ‘leadership communities’ whereby the traditional ‘leadership’ roles of maths, literacy and Special Educational Needs are inclusive of others.”
“The open channels of communication reinforce ‘the School’s way.’ The way staff need to think. The idea that their overarching role is to enable children at our school to reach their potential. This is done through the notion of everyone being a leader. It is for everyone to challenge each other.”
to react and change course- as with the current reading focus which wasn’t necessarily foreseen or planned.
Leaders are more open- the systems of communication and trust integral (as I understand it) to the notion of systemic leadership- enabling staff to react to situations upon which they have a key bearing. I would site the example of ‘girls’ attainment’ raised at around the time of the ‘vision.’ As staff were made aware they could ‘tweak’ their focus and their practise to reflect the needs of the girls in a class. Without communicating this to teachers and had it stayed within the confines of a traditional ‘leadership team’, it would not have been possible to address the situation as effectively, or as simply. Addressing this has meant that as a staff team we can drill down even deeper, to focus specifically on girls who achieved 2C at end of KS1 Again by making staff aware, means that the channels of communication on the subject are opened and ideas can be bounced around, adapted or dismissed. I demonstrated my ‘understanding’ of the notion of ‘systemic leadership’ with a diagram (described as masculine):

I suggested that this diagram could have the school at the centre- with outside agencies around feeding into, and out from the school- we can support others and equally be supported. I also discussed the need for the other, external agencies around the school in the diagram to include other schools.

The diagram could be seen as internal to the school- the Head-teacher and their leadership team as a web of communication or as the Head and the wider staff. In disseminating information, the Head knows that if the system is functional, it reaches all staff and that their interrelatedness means that they are discussing and further disseminating what has been passed through the channels of communication. I analogised the system as like a body with the channels like veins and information as blood and that someone at the heart of the system needs to make sure impurities are kept out. Impurities in the body system retard its function, as negativity or contrary philosophies can retard the schools progression, the ‘leader’s role at the heart is to decide where the school fits in to the external model and what to allow into the internal system.

Leaders at school are more open and willing to demonstrate good practise within classes. Leadership in school is more spread out. There are non-leaders, indeed non-teachers in traditionally ‘leadership team’ roles within the spheres on SEN, safeguarding and inclusion. There is more of an ethos within the team that leadership is not restricted to the leadership team and that teachers are leaders of smaller teams, leaders of other professionals and leaders of children’s learning.
Figure 23: Kieran has revisited his reflections and created his own diagram to illustrate Systemic Leadership.

Leaders are more open - the systems of communication and trust integral (as I understand it) to the notion of systemic leadership - enabling staff to react to situations upon which they have a key bearing. I would cite the example of 'girls' attainment raised at around the time of the 'vision.' As staff were made aware they could 'tweak' their focus and their practice to reflect the needs of the girl in a class. Without communicating this to teachers and had it stayed within the confines of a traditional leadership team, it would not have been possible to address the situation as effectively, or as simply. Addressing this has meant that as a staff team we can drill down even deeper, to focus specifically on girls who achieved 2G at end of KS1. Again by making staff aware, means that the channels of communication on the subject are opened and do not need to be ignored, adapted or dismissed. I demonstrate my understanding of the notion of 'systemic leadership' with the diagram provided (described as masculine):
Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher

Kieran considered the characteristics of a leader.

“*A leader needs to be adaptable. On occasions a ‘leader’ in the traditional sense of the term, but at other times an enabler, letting others take the lead; at times a ‘scrutiniser,’ at times a ‘truster,’ at times a ‘comfor ter’ and at times a ‘disciplinarian.’ The changing demands of a school and the changing focuses that circumstances necessitate, mean that a leader must be able to react and change course.*”

Kieran considered the theoretical viewpoints of leadership including a systemic approach.

“*Accountability. Scrutinies ensure that staff are supporting children’s learning in the best way. That a forthcoming staff meeting is devoted to any professional development needs that may arise from lesson observations shows that the headteacher is deciding which information needs disseminating into the system, allowing an open forum for teachers as professionals, as with the example of girls’ attainment, to openly discuss and action anything relevant that arises. The notion of ‘growing our own’ is important if the school is to be seen to have ‘action research’ and professional development at its heart, and to foster a sense of being our own ‘system’ with our own ‘systems’ that could be termed ‘the School way.’*”

Kieran’s leadership story provides further confirmation of the action research project’s impact on the learning community’s perceptions of leadership including a systemic approach. He recognised the impact of the school’s Vision Day, the work of the action learning groups and the acknowledgement of relationships and interactions as key to furthering leadership ownership across the team.

---

14 In primary schools in England regular ‘scrutinies’ are implemented where evidence of children’s learning, including progress made, is monitored. In this learning community they are called ‘Learning Scrutinies’ to emphasise the notion of ‘learning’ rather than the notion of ‘work’ (Watkins, 2005).
Phase 7: Reflection and Making Sense of the Fieldwork

Phase 7 saw the continuous processes of reflection and making sense of the fieldwork alongside the identification of research outcomes. Freefall writing was one of the research methods that supported this research phase. Research outcomes for children are reported on, followed by a reflection on the notion of a systemic approach to leadership by the learning community.

The Impact of Freefall Writing

Freefall has liberated my approach to academic thought and writing. I have the right to write down what I am thinking in the first person. I have the right to feel justified in what I write. I do need to demonstrate that I am well informed by what others have said, what others have researched and how others lead their researcher and practitioner lives. Those references to others enhance and enrich what I think, reflect and do. I, as practitioner/leader researcher, have absorbed much over the years, and developed my academic thinking. This academic thought is enriched by my life as a creative person, a human being, who has a range of political, artistic and cultural perspectives and viewpoints.

To illustrate the impact of freefall writing six extracts have been selected. Each extract is introduced and then presented in a textbox.

Extract one, shown in Textbox 11, has been selected because it demonstrates a direct link with Marshall’s theory of freefall writing (Marshall, 2007). It was written two months following the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) conference in Birmingham, 2010. This conference provided a platform for members of the PhD Action Learning Group to disseminate emergent findings.
My title shall come from the notes I made at Judi Marshall’s keynote speech.  

“Everything in play at any one time.”

Why does this particular phrase appeal?

The notion of all aspects of self being present and being there as a resource to dip into is exciting. The use of the word ‘play’ appeals. Play as a construct that allows us to know something, an idea so well it goes beyond acquisition but onto an idea that can be used for creative purposes.

In my leadership role, I feel good about what I do when I sense that I am looking in from out and looking out from within. I can be fully engaged in a conversation, with a colleague, with a child, with a parent, with a professional who has come to work with us and be conscious of what I say, conscious of how I stand or sit and think ahead about what is important to value and to reject. In that role, as lead leader and lead learner, the more I am conscious of what I say and do, the more I learn from others and the encounter tends to be nourishing rather than toxic. This is not to say there is no challenge and it is easy. If this was so it is unlikely that the dialogue will change anything, the expected outcome of a learning encounter.

Extract two, shown in Textbox 12, has been selected because it exemplifies the notion of seeking metaphors and analogies across disciplines. I searched for musical terminology to reflect school leadership. This resonates with Wyse’s discourse on the primary curriculum (Wyse, 2014) and Boog’s musical metaphor of the ‘Intermezzo’ to clarify the time required for the initial stages of research (Boog, 2014).
I want to play with the notion of our leadership journeys, the learning stories being accompanied by music and images.

Playing with words, the language of music and art:

- **Movement**
- **Tempo**
- **Composition**
- **Colour**
- **Theme and Variations**
- **Rhythm**
- **Density**
- **Fluidity**
- **Texture**
- **Staccato**
- **Legato**
- **Two dimensional**
- **Three dimensional**
  - **Binary Form**
  - **Ternary Form**
  - **Rondo Form**
  - **Sonata Form**
  - **Lyrics**
  - **Dance**

In the third extract, shown in Textbox 13, I considered the notion of a ‘successful school’ and attempted to define this. There is resonance with the findings of this action research project.

**Textbox 13: Freefall Writing Extract Three: 20.02.2011**

A successful school supports every child and adult to learn. To make progress according to their capabilities, needs, gender, ethnicity, and culture. A successful school creates a learning community that has energy, the ability to inspire, yet also to be realistic. A successful school is constantly learning, constantly developing and improving. A successful school has shared principles and values. It is inclusive, listening, yet able to make difficult decisions. A successful school encourages challenge as long as that challenge is reasonable and respectful. A successful school is resilient, emotionally intelligent, even a force to be reckoned with. A
successful school recognises specialisms as well as providing professional development that ensures we all share common skills, knowledge and understanding.

In this, the fourth extract, shown in Textbox 14, I sought a metaphor in the world of Art. In my reflection on learning communities within one learning community I responded to Kandinsky’s view of internal and external perceptions.

**Textbox 14: Freefall Writing Extract Four: 20.02.2011**

I lead a learning community that consists of many learning communities within it. Each class is a learning community, each year group, each key stage. The School Council, the governing body, the Eco Council, the librarians, the Office team are all learning communities within the whole school. And, just as Kandinsky explains, we have to view the external world and so we reach out to those learning communities beyond. Learning communities that influence, enrich, enhance, challenge and at times, interfere with our vision.

In consideration of ‘the outer and the inner’ Kandinsky said, “Every phenomenon can be experienced in two ways. These two ways are not arbitrary, but are bound up with the phenomenon – developing out of its nature and characteristics: Externally – or inwardly. …

The work of Art mirrors itself upon the surface of our consciousness. However, its image extends beyond, to vanish from the surface without a trace when the sensation has subsided. A certain transparent, but definite glasslike partition, abolishing direct contact from within, seems to exist here as well. Here, too, exists the possibility of entering art’s message, to participate actively, and to experience its pulsating-life with all one’s senses.”

Kandinsky in ‘Point And Line To Plane’ 1923

The fifth extract, shown in Textbox 15, relates to the notion of leadership following a path that is slow and therefore sustainable. ‘Immer langsam’ translates from the German as ‘Always slow’. It was the advice of a German speaking cowherd when my partner and I were tackling the steep slopes of the Dolomites mountains in Northern Italy in 1984.

**Textbox 15: Freefall Writing Extract Five: 14.05.2011**

Immer Langsam
Notions of slow leadership resonate with me and then I thought of the German speaking cowherd we met in the Dolomites. “Immer langsam, immer langsam.” This to me is the recurring theme of my leadership journey.
You cannot accelerate human learning and development. Why is accelerating so desirable? Deep learning takes time and needs to be revisited in different ways. And that’s the exciting element of the learning process. Wallowing is good. It’s good for my soul.

Extract six, shown in Textbox 16, demonstrates my continuing concern for the children in our learning community and the impact of the political world.

**Textbox 16: Freefall Writing Extract Six: 06.08.2011**

As a majority Muslim learning community we have to acknowledge that the children are growing up in a hostile world. They have to be articulate individuals, who can be very clear about their position in this country and this world. They need to be able to articulate the contribution they are making to the communities beyond their own. It is interesting to note that Chris defines community (Watkins, 2005) and in that definition rejects notions of the community around the school that are warm and cosy.

The final extract, shown in Textbox 17, demonstrates my personal concern for my own learning and my aim to make leadership visible in order to strengthen leadership and learning within the context I am operating in.

**Textbox 17: Freefall Writing Extract Seven: 06.08.2011**

I am learning about leadership, I am learning about making notions of leadership visible. I am developing methodology to make that learning about leadership visible. At this point I am not sure what that looks like, not specifically. My theory is that by making that leadership visible, this will mean we will develop a shared understanding of what we mean by leadership and this deepening in our understanding will lead to a leadership that listens, provokes, challenges, celebrates, supports what is right and at the heart is the deepening of the children’s understanding, widening of their knowledge and the creation of an organisational culture that is positive about agency, belonging, collaboration and diversity.

**Research Outcomes for Children**

Research results, as documented in the leadership narratives, indicate that children as multilingual learners gained in confidence in showing behaviours for learning through the four year period from 2010 to 2014. Indicators of gains in confidence in learning include
how children benefitted from the introduction of pedagogical strategies to support multilingual learners (Leadership Narrative One), the impact of the work of the school’s action learning groups through the implementation of the School Vision and the School Development Plan (2010 – 2012), the outcomes for the children who formed the specific sample in the Girls’ Chat Group and members of the School Council. Finally the leadership stories evidence a rise in adult expectations of children, the creation of a positive view of the multilingual child and learning being better matched to the learning and developmental needs of the children across the school.

To restate, the creation of the School Vision and the successful implementation of the School Development Plan 2010 - 2012 contributed to children making at least good progress in their learning across the school whereas previously at least good progress was more limited to Key Stage One and Year Six. This level of progress has been shown through the analysis of the quantitative data, to be sustainable. The learning community’s concern was that an insufficient percentage of children still did not reach national expectations by the end of Key Stage Two and therefore were starting secondary education at a disadvantage. The evidence illustrates that the trajectory for attainment was improving year on year. In maths the children have achieved close to national outcomes.

The children’s engagement in Girls’ Chat Group had impact on their perceptions of bullying and racism and this is fully documented in Chapter 8. The three girls involved in the initial racist incident had vulnerabilities concerning their academic achievement. They were distracted from their learning in class. However, their engagement in the Girls’ Chat Group refocused their concerns and they achieved well.

The Learning Community Revisits Leadership: May 2013

Whitaker (2009) identified the following aspects as key to leadership development: systems consciousness, emancipation, research, organisation, theory and practice, collaboration. Through this interrogation of leadership and research processes a version of the leadership development web was created by the author in consultation with the school learning community. Within the context of this research project, the
leadership development web was created to reflect the significance of my learning and that of the school learning community I was engaged with. It is proposed that the leadership development web can be applied to a range of organisations that support children, families and schools. This is not a model of leadership but rather it is a framework of the leadership processes that are necessary in the development of a systemic approach to leadership that benefits from responsive and collaborative inquiry. This is what is illuminated and apparent in the leadership narratives presented in this research thesis. What follows is an explanation of each of the identified aspects and the component parts followed by Figure 13, the Leadership Development Web, May 2013.

**Systems Consciousness**

Being aware that systems or organisations are messy, complex, fragile, unpredictable and inconsistent is important in terms of developing understanding of what is happening within an organisation and externally. Learning communities need to experience learning processes together as illustrated through the leadership narratives presented in this action research project. Whitaker claims “Systems consciousness is strong in intuition and emotional fluency, traits which are not traditionally regarded as important dimensions of leadership” (2009, p.24). Systems consciousness resonates with the concept of living life as inquiry. It is the understanding that there is never one solution to organisational dilemmas. Within organisations there is a need to be continually connecting with living life as theory, action and learning. The identified components of systems consciousness are insight, understanding, feedback, complexity and messiness.

**Insight:** The notion of systems consciousness invites designated leaders to be insightful and to nurture insightfulness amongst team members. This implies that time is created for reflection and supervision.

**Understanding:** Understanding of the organisation is multi-layered and recognises the organisation as one learning community that connects with other external learning communities.
**Feedback:** The notion of feedback supports the development of communication within an organisation. Feedback is not only a two way process, for example, one class teacher receives feedback from thirty individual learners.

**Complexity:** Systems theory recognises the complexity of natural systems and how this is reflected in human organisations. Recognition of organisational complexity could be deemed overwhelming. However pursuing some understanding can aid in unravelling people’s complex lives and how they impact on our dilemma stories.

**Messiness:** Denial of the messiness of life can lead to an over simplification of the dilemmas faced within organisations. Creating opportunities for adults and children to share their dilemma stories enables an unravelling of concerns and issues and an open recognition of the realities of organisational life. Making the familiar unfamiliar is integral to our organisational sense making (Marshall et al, 2011).

**Collaboration**

The telling of leadership narratives is a collaborative process. Whether it is one researcher communicating to one other, or several researchers sharing or one researcher communicating to an action learning group, inviting responses to inform future theorising: the nature of a leadership narrative is one of collaboration to support the inquiry process. During the discourse, which is either oral or written, aspects of reflective, appreciative, action and first and second person inquiry apply. The notion of collaboration means that each team member has a responsibility to be aware of their reliance and dependency on others. Within collaboration, team learning and inquiry, interdependence, interrelationships, mutual endeavour, energy and creativity are identified.

**Team Learning and Inquiry:** facilitates collaborative inquiry that is responsive to the developmental needs of the organisation. Whitaker comments, “Part of the excitement in recent years about the role and function of teams hinges on the realisation that it is in teams human potential often discovers its most supportive environment for growth, initiative, energy and application” (Whitaker, 2009, p.24). How effectively an organisation operates is dependent on the quality of interaction.

**Interdependence:** This notion of collaboration is supported by the development of interdependence. The opportunities for strengthening interdependence arise from the
quality of relationships and does not negate the requirement for individuals within an organisation to challenge each other professionally.

Interrelatedness: This is the recognition of the interconnectivity between the people belonging to the learning community.

Mutual Endeavour: The notion of mutual endeavour is a response to the idea of creating a genuine shared vision and sustaining a shared quest.

Energy: Paying attention to energy enables members of a learning community to recognise the need for strategies to energise and motivate. The notion of sustainable leadership supports the requirement to re-energise the members of a learning community (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves, 2006). It is the role of the designated leader to safeguard people’s energy to enable them to participate and collaborate.

Creativity: This is the acknowledgement of the need to harness organisational creativity in order to develop the notion of collaboration. Creativity in itself can generate energy and new ways of addressing areas for improvement and organisational dilemmas. It is the role of the designated leader to harness colleagues’ creativity as well as the child’s creative force to motivate and inspire learning.

Emancipation

The notion of emancipation has emerged from action research (Boog, 2003). This notion of emancipatory practice can be admired, however, schools are currently operating within a performance-oriented system (Alexander, 2010). It is a significant challenge to uphold sound principles and integrity. This is when resilience has to come to the fore in support of emancipatory practice. Whitaker advocates action research as the methodology for schools as organisations to face and overcome challenge (2009, p.26). Whitaker presents the argument that it is by embracing the emancipatory aspect of action research methodology that a learning community is able to counteract the fear that is experienced and thus succeed.

Human wellbeing: The notion of emancipatory practice sits well within the idea of leadership nutrients. The notion of having impact on a person’s wellbeing underpins the effective facilitation of learning and is equally applicable to child and adult learners.

Freedom to Learn and Progress: The notion of having the freedom to learn and progress is at the heart of emancipatory practice (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). The
contextualisation of the learning process enables learners to learn with meaning, understanding, purpose and success.

**Action Research:** Engagement in action research supports the principles of participatory democracy and the ideal to impact on social injustice. It is this premise that underpins the action research project presented in this thesis.

**Theory and Practice**
A consideration of theory and practice within a learning organisation engages all team members in reflective and self-evaluative processes. Through these processes continuous improvement is sought. By being conscious of theoretical thought teams are in a position to think more deeply about actions, processes and identify the connections between theory and practice. This in itself has the potential to embed confidence, impact on wellbeing and energise. Being conscious of theory enables the articulation of what is happening in practice.

**Systems Theory:** Systems theory supports the notion of process as the method for transformation and improvement rather than following a pragmatic format of what to do and how. The notion is that the learning community researches what others have done and achieved but have the autonomy to decide themselves how to apply their learning to their distinct context.

**Diversity and Difference:** Human systems are characterised by diversity and difference therefore due regard for diversity and difference has to be underpinning the learning community’s vision for improvement and transformation (Richardson, 2004; Pascal & Bertram, 2009). Each member of a learning community has the responsibility to be curious about the lives and heritage of others and to be well informed.

**Particularity:** The acknowledgement of a systemic approach to school leadership could limit designated leaders to retaining a view of the big picture. However, taking a theoretical stance to practice means that each individual member of a learning community pays attention to the detail within the context of the whole. Whitaker calls this paying attention to “contextual character” (2009, p.28).

This consideration of the worth of theory and practice leads into the notion of research within this emergent concept of leadership development.
Research
Practitioners as researchers is increasingly perceived as the sustainable method for professionally developing practitioners. From the perspective of this action research study the interrelatedness of the roles of practitioner, leader and researcher are interconnected to the extent that it is a struggle for an individual to define when one role is to the fore.

Creating a Research Culture: Becoming a member of and belonging to an action learning group and cultivating the state of belonging enables practitioners to have ownership of what they do and how they function. Expectations are raised. Taking note of theory and research combined with raised expectations impacts on autonomy.

Influencing Theory: Engagement in research implies the resolve to influence meaning-making, theory and to contribute to the accumulation of empirical evidence (Lillis, 2000). This in itself promotes the growth of practitioner and leader confidence.

Organisation
Organisation acknowledges ‘taking responsibility’. Within a school as learning community the idea of responsibility is for children to grasp as well as adults. This is about genuine responsibility that has real implications for the school’s learning community and makes a difference to people’s lives. Organisation impacts on the action research project presented in this thesis, where a praxeological viewpoint of action research has acknowledged the emergence of themes and planned actions. The outcome has been that children’s stories have been validated, perceived to be powerful, worthy of dissemination and have contributed meaning to understandings of leaderfulness. Within the notion of organisation a focus on a collaborative leadership model, organic networks and action learning programmes has been recognised.

Collaborative Leadership Model: This notion of organisation supports a collaborative leadership model. ‘Collaboration’ is cited as an element on the leadership development web but it is worthy of restating within the idea of ‘organisation’. A collaborative leadership model creates opportunities for members of the learning community to genuinely work and learn together. Space and time is created for professional development where everyone comes together to learn about each other,
from each other and with each other. This notion is exemplified through the process of creating a whole School Vision that is not exclusively the prerogative of the designated leadership team.

**Organic Network:** Within the notion of a systemic approach to leadership and learning, a recognition of organic networks arises. Seeking organic arrangements for organisational development allows for action learning groups to act according to identified needs through processes of continuous evaluation, informed by reflection to act. Action learning groups are time limited to enable concerns to be addressed, situations are improved, learning is identified and the time and space is then allotted to the next identified area for development. The arrangement for flexibility within organisational structures enables the development of the mastery of skills, knowledge and understanding and specialisms within an organic whole. Project organisation allows for learning communities to bring together the experts from across the organisation and guards against community members becoming entrenched within one professional space.

**Action Learning Programme:** The organisation needs to organise action learning groups to actively learn together and improve services and outcomes for children. Action learning groups were defined in Chapter 5 as a research method for this action research project. In my role as practitioner/leader researcher I have embraced the notion of action learning in order to strengthen adult learning and andragogical strategies within the learning community.

The version of the leadership development web shown in Figure 24 is from the presentation in May 2013. It is later transformed as an outcome of the research processes of interpretation, data analysis, integration, identification and clarification of research evidence and the development of theory.
Phase 8: Transference of New Knowledge and Research Dissemination

The Learning Community Revisits Leadership: October 2013

On the 2nd October 2013 the school learning community revisited the leadership journey with the director of the Pen Green Research Centre, Corby. The session was a combination of presentation and collaborative work. Time was allocated for reflection
and self-evaluation considering ‘What has gone well’, ‘What has not gone well’ and ‘Even better if …’

The collaborative task was to create a shared ‘leadership mobile’ (Figure 25) entitled: ‘Defining Leadership within the School Context’. The purpose of this task was to give time to reflect on leadership and influence the refinement of the leadership development web. It was the lead practitioner/leader researcher’s intention for the school team members to reflect on school leadership as being relevant to all adults and children belonging to the learning community. However, the staff team focussed on what they wanted to see the designated school leaders doing. Analysis of the responses revealed that overwhelmingly the staff team valued the notion of vision and strategic thinking (Appendix 20). Systems consciousness embraces the creation of a shared vision and communication through effective feedback. Vision was followed by ideas of leaders being supportive and good listeners. The staff team identified knowledge of those being led and their needs, being empathetic and for leaders to nurture the staff members’ potential. Staff wanted the designated leaders to be approachable, communicative and inspirational. They wanted leaders to be self-confident and have confidence in the staff, to generate respect and have respect for those being led and to recognise the skills of others including their strengths. The staff team wanted designated leaders who are confident, that can be respected, show initiative, compassion, understanding and be people that they can trust. Their understanding of leadership sits within the leadership theories of knowledge-based, sustainable and passionate leadership (Davies & Brighouse, 2008). Staff team members wanted a balance between being encouraged to use their initiative with being provided with direction. Leaders needed to be flexible, adaptive and hardworking. Leaders should be knowledgeable and well informed, compassionate and understanding. Team members wanted to be trusted but they also wanted leaders to monitor their work. They identified the value of working in a collaborative way yet designated leaders should also lead by example as well as knowing when to step back.

Within a collaborative learning community each member needed to demonstrate that they can be adaptable. Although the learning community invited designated leaders to direct, model and monitor, members wanted to experience the sense of freedom to reflect and act for themselves that is, to become emancipated practitioners.
Figure 25: Defining Leadership within the School Context

Communicator: Supportive, Reflective, Engaged
Facilitator: Spokesperson, Collaborative
Inspirational: Visionary, Engaging
Virtuous: Fair, Responsible
Flexible: Open-minded, Patient, Empathetic
Knowing: Encouraging, Knowledgeable, Transformational
Inspiring: Humorous, Humble, Authentic
Being an Example: Trusting, Resilient, Resilient

Motivating: Forward-thinking, Enthusiastic, Supportive
Trusting: Positive, Encouraging, Visionary
Relationship: Supportive, Understanding, Collaborative
Informative: Assisted, Observant, Supportive
Analytical: Problem solving, Knowledgeable
Early in 2014, three teaching assistants, reflected on the school’s leadership developments. The practitioner/leader researcher was proactively seeking responses in order to establish an understanding of the views of others. Through this process the teaching assistants produced their shared leadership web (Figure 26). Five key leadership aspects were identified; (i) strength, (ii) to be focussed, (iii) motivated, (iv) to have clarity and (v) vision. The notion of strength was one to be developed within all members of the learning community, inclusive of children, members of the governing body and children’s family members. The development of strength within all team members is desirable in order to develop as an emancipatory workforce. Within organisation and particularity, the teaching assistants searched for clarity of purpose and action. There is connectivity with concepts of effective communication and shared understandings of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Vision has emerged as a recurring theme throughout the research project and sits within the concepts of systems consciousness and collaboration. Whether the person is a designated leader or not, an adult or a child, a member of the staff team or a parent, a collaborative approach engages everyone to plan, implement, reflect, evaluate and impact and make a difference to children’s lives. Although the organisation had developed its understanding of what it means to have a vision, there remained a high level of expectation placed on designated leaders. Learning community members expected to be led rather than perceiving themselves as leaders.

Taking into account the feedback from the learning community it can be acknowledged that the school learning community benefited from the action research process and the outcomes of the research. However, there are clear indications that this action research project represents the beginning of an organisational journey. The learning community needs to continue on its path of deep organisational learning in order for members of the community to sense that they have the right to be emancipated and free to learn (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).
Figure 26 The Leadership Web
Phase 9: Impact of the Research Project on our Learning Community

In the research methodology the following notions of i) clarity and accuracy, ii) relevance, iii) validity, iv) reliability, integrity and confidentiality, v) authenticity and originality and vi) making a valid contribution to school leadership learning were identified in order to consider the limitations of this action research project alongside how ethical considerations have been consistently and constantly adhered to. Each idea is discussed in turn including the identification of vulnerabilities and actions taken in order not to endanger the validity of the whole project. Not only did reference to Tracy’s criteria support this process but also acknowledgement of the debate on definitions of quality has informed the search for suitable criteria, (Malterud, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2006 and O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015. The criteria I identified are summarised in Table 11: ‘Framework to present the research limitations and ethical considerations for this action research study’.

Clarity and Accuracy

To secure clarity and accuracy, responses and feedback have been triangulated through consultation with co-researchers, including children, research participants, including parents, colleague headteachers, the PhD Action Learning Group and students on BA and MA courses of study. The process of dissemination has in itself required clarity of articulation and presentation. These processes have provoked interrogation and the requirement to respond with some authority. It has been a participatory process with co-researchers: capturing their views has nourished the research process with their perceptions, viewpoints and theories.

Relevance

The notion of relevance sits within Tracy’s criterion, ‘worthy topic’ (2010). Through the presentations to co-researchers throughout this research process the notion of ‘relevance’ has been truly tested. Research results have been presented throughout this process on professional development days, at professional meetings, leadership meetings and available as papers. The final selection of the leadership narratives to be presented in this research thesis has rested on colleague feedback. What has been identified most relevant to co-researchers has been selected. The notion of relevance is also supported
through the process of literature review and what is relevant beyond our learning community.

**Validity**

The process of literature review ensures the research has validity. Colleagues have actively validated the research results. They have critiqued the outcomes and have had the confidence to feedback when processes were threatening (Leadership Narrative One), when insufficient time had been allocated (Leadership Narrative Two) and when sample selection was deemed exclusive (Leadership Narrative Three). This process of checking-in with co-researchers and research participants has informed the process of qualifying outcomes and impact.

**Reliability, Integrity and Confidentiality**

Ethical concerns and permissions have been constantly and consistently addressed throughout the research process. These are evidenced in the appendices of this document. References have been made to school policies to ensure the research project complies with the policy and procedures of the learning community thus assuring reliability and integrity. The practitioner/leader researcher has been mindful of self-moderation and self-regulation, making considered decisions and not allowing the research project to harm either any person involved in the process or the organisation. The research methodology and methods were identified and co-constructed with colleagues, thus creating and securing multivocality (Tracy, 2010). Multivocality ensured the triangulation of recording, interpreting, analysing, integration and a shared reflexive turn (Malterud, 2001).

**Authenticity and Originality**

It is without doubt that the practitioner/leader researcher has been influenced through lived experiences including how choices have been made concerning workplace and research context. Lived experience has influenced research thinking. However, it is this lived experience that has created the drive and motivation to search for ways of working with children that uphold beliefs and values around social justice, emancipation, democracy and participatory practice. A characteristic of qualitative ethnographic research is that the research context is considered deeply, the familiar is made unfamiliar and the small-scale project, such as this, has to be original because of the emphasis on the responses and actions of individuals participating.
Making a Valid School Leadership Learning

It is considered that the research results have engaged the practitioner/leader researcher and co-researchers in theoretical thought through their meaning making. Figure 27 is the visualisation of all the themes identified from the three leadership narratives. The dissemination of these findings (Appendix 12) to a range of audiences has facilitated the shaping of the Leadership Development Web and the contribution made to new school leadership theory. This thesis connects with current research methodologies, has taken due regard of contemporary contexts and has contributed new knowledge and understanding.
Figure 27: Visualisation: Themes from three leadership narratives
In Quest of Emergent and Recurring Themes and Lines of Inquiry

In order to verify the validity and authenticity of the practitioner/leader research presented in this research thesis Table 16 illustrates each aspect of the leadership development web evidenced by the research project outcomes. A rigorous process of capturing the emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis produced the fieldwork evidence and is exemplified and summarised at the end of each of the three leadership narratives. It is from this engagement with the research data alongside the iterative process of checking with colleagues and external groups that the leadership learning theory presented in Chapter 10 are informed. These results have influenced the final version of the Leadership Development Web which is renamed: ‘Leadership and learning: A systemic approach’. The aspects of systems consciousness and organisational learning remain. However, theory, practice and research are reconsidered and become ‘pedagogical leadership and learning’ and ‘andragogical leadership and learning’. ‘Collaboration’ has been included within ‘organisational learning’. The aspect of ‘wellbeing’ is now considered worthy of the status of a principle aspect. ‘Social justice’ has become the main concern inclusive of emancipation. To secure rigour and communicate the systemic nature of this concept of leadership learning the connectivity between each leadership learning aspect and project evidence location has been matched to 12 variables, in line with Leithwood and Levin’s framework (2004). Finally a new framework has been devised to reflect the learning from this research project (Figure 28). This framework, which is to illustrate the connectivity of a ‘Community of Learners’ and their impact on multilingual learners, also draws from the Rich Picture (Figure 10).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Aspect</th>
<th>Research Evidence Location</th>
<th>Framework Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>Research Theme: Global Learner</td>
<td>Variable 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>Research Theme: Global Learner</td>
<td>Variable 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared understandings</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 9, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>Visualisations</td>
<td>Variable 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Theory</td>
<td>Research Theme: Global Learner</td>
<td>Variable 6, Variable 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variable 9, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Research Theme: Teller of Tales Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 9, Variable 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto ethnography</td>
<td>Research Theme: Teller of Tales Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 11, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Justice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variable 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political insight</td>
<td>Research Theme: Teller of Tales Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing communities</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 9, variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variable 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxeology</td>
<td>The Research Plan</td>
<td>Variable 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and difference</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 5, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing theory</td>
<td>Research Theme: Practitioner/Leader Researcher</td>
<td>Variable 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Andragogical Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variable 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxeology</td>
<td>Research Theme: Learning Leader and Leading Learner</td>
<td>Variable 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularity</td>
<td>Sub-theme: Organisational Learning</td>
<td>Variable 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a research culture</td>
<td>Sub-theme: Action Research</td>
<td>Variable 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing theory</td>
<td>Leadership Development Web Leadership Narratives Visualisations</td>
<td>Variable 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variable 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative approaches</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team inquiry and learning</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 8, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives Visualisations</td>
<td>Variable 8, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelationships</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 8, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 8, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Leadership Narratives</td>
<td>Variable 8, Variable 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 28: Framework to illustrate the connectivity of a ‘Community of Learners’ and their impact on multilingual learners.

**Global Content, e.g.,**
- Systems Consciousness
- Social Justice
- Political Insight

**Variable 1**

**Government Leadership, e.g.,**
- Policy
- Funding
- Standards

**Variable 2**

**Local Government Leadership**
- School Improvement
- Funding
- Collaboratives
- Multi Agency

**Variable 3**

**Research Community e.g.,**
- Action Research
- Praxeology
- Creating a Research Culture
- Developing Theory
- Critical Friendship

**Variable 4**

**Child / Family Context, e.g.,**
- Socio-economic
- Heritage
- Changing Communities
- Diversity and Difference

**Variable 5**

**Organisational Learning, e.g.,**
- Collaborative Approaches
- Team Inquiry and Learning
- Interdependence
- Interrelationships
- Energy and Creativity

**Variable 8**

**Staff Team, e.g.,**
- Wellbeing
- Individuals’ Specialisms and Capacity
- Particularity
- Shared Understandings
- Feedback
- Professional Development
- Supervision
- Emancipation

**Variable 9**

**Leaders’ Professional Learning Experience, e.g.,**
- Professional Study
- Supervision
- Systems Theory
- Pedagogical Leadership
- Andragogical Leadership
- Systems Theory

**Variable 11**

**Other Stakeholders, e.g.,**
- Community Groups
- Partners
- Unions
- Media
- Pre-schools
- Collaboratives

**Variable 7**

**Multilingual Learners, e.g.,**
- Wellbeing
- Diversity and Difference
- Autoethnography
- Confident Learners
- Interdependence
- Interrelationships
- Emancipation
- Team Inquiry and Learning
- Energy and Creativity
- Feedback

**Variable 12**

**Learning Environment, e.g.,**
- Knowledge and Understanding of How Multilingual Children Learn
- Plan - Do - Review
- Pedagogy
- Praxeology
- Involving Parents / Family Strategy
- Complexity

**Variable 10**

**School Leadership, e.g.,**
- School Leaders
- Governors
- Action Research
- Pedagogical Leadership
- Andragogical Leadership
- Systems Theory

**Variable 6**

**Other Stakeholders, e.g.,**
- Community Groups
- Partners
- Unions
- Media
- Pre-schools
- Collaboratives

**Variable 7**
Part 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations
Chapter 10: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

“In a systemic perspective attention moves from concern about the things that make up the world to an interest in relationships and how they are organised. By shifting focus from things to relationships, we begin to see how living systems are self-organising and self-sustaining, and that many characteristics of living systems are not evident in the separate parts, but emerge from their interaction”

(Marshall, Coleman and Reason, 2011, p.43).

The principal outcomes of the research inquiry were the support for and development of more confident learners (Nutbrown, 1996), improved academic outcomes (Watkins, 2005) and the emergence of trusting relationships in leaderful teams that took on the responsibility of creating the School Vision and the School Development Plan (Whalley, 1994; Lambert 2003). It was identified that there is a requirement for both consistency and innovation in school leadership (Whitaker, 1997). This research inquiry has made a contribution to leadership theory.

The four research themes are revisited. Firstly in order to consider reflexivity in terms of the role and impact of the author; secondly to pull together the reflections from this thesis. The ideas of power and ethics are noted. This is followed by a definition of the theory created from this research process. In ‘contributions and recommendations’ the praxeological research plan is reconsidered through each phase and how a future action research project could be crafted. Finally the conclusions and recommendations are presented within the context of the research aims, research questions and the research line of inquiry.
The Research Themes Revisited

In my role as the lead practitioner/leader researcher I recognise my impact on this research project. O’Reilly and Kiyimba explain, “Reflexivity is an iterative process, and in its basic form means that researchers make visible their impact on the research process and the impact of the research process on them” (2015). It has been necessary to make that impact visible throughout the research process. What follows is a summary of how that visibility has been achieved.

From the beginning of the research process I have declared my intent and role as a qualitative researcher, for example, at my interview for the post of headteacher, at the start of each session with the teaching assistants, at the school’s vision day and with the three girls who belonged to the Girls’ Chat Group.

The purpose of the thematic framework for data analysis was to provide a vehicle for reflection. The tasks of interpretation, analysis, integration and reflection could have been too vast. There was a risk of overload. The thematic framework brought focus and clarity to my research reflections.

During the write up phase of this research project I openly declared my concerns about the three roles I held as practitioner, leader and researcher. At times during the research process these reflections were a cause for much deliberation. I shared these concerns with my co-researchers in the PhD action learning set. These concerns are evidenced in Appendix 13, for example, within the research theme ‘leading life as a leading learner and learning leader’ I focus on the concept of praxis.

Through reflection on the four research themes I identify the impact of this research on me as a researcher and pull together the threads of the emergent themes.

Living life as a teller of tales

The aspect of interaction and telling stories as research fieldwork proved to fascinate me. In terms of my learning and therefore impact, the strength of the child’s voice to reinterpret the school’s vision and then for three children to influence future practice in the school which continues to resonate today. It was a challenge to let go of the
Responsibility. My voice became diminished through Leadership Narrative 3 as I gained confidence in and respect for the girls. The prime purpose of this research project was to investigate school leadership. The key learning is that the potential for leadership sits amongst all that belong to the school community. Designated leaders need to be prepared to recognise the potential of other adults in the organisation and the children to lead projects successfully.

This action research project has emphasised the power of the narrative in research methodology. This confirms the notion that this research sits within an ethnographic qualitative research paradigm. The research reflections have confirmed that to unravel what is happening in school leadership and learning. What is the benefit to children? As reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983), the practitioner/leader researchers had the confidence to listen to the children’s stories and to recognise the need for safe places and confidence in adults to listen actively to their concerns. Following the analysis of the research fieldwork and results, the notion of ‘belonging’ has emerged as a dominant concept alongside communication and relationships. The notion of ‘belonging’ is one key to unlocking our tales and making sense of our identity as a learning community and as individual learners (Wyse et al, 2010).

**Living life as a leading learner and learning leader**

Throughout the research process I grappled with leadership theory and the application of theory to practice. The ideas of a praxeological approach to research and a systemic approach to school leadership enabled me to reflect, reconsider and articulate the ideas relating to leadership development that emerged and recurred.

The research outcomes created further lines of inquiry. For the designated school leader the challenge is to create the opportunities for colleagues and children to have the freedom to lead and learn at the same time as acknowledging that many like the comfort of being led.

There is an interconnectivity between leadership and learning that is powerful. The recognition of this interconnectivity creates sustainable and transformational leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Davies & Brighouse, 2008; Busher, 2006). The terms ‘learning leader and leading learner’ are defined within the context of this research project. This
is an acknowledgement of the need for school organisations to be learning-oriented as opposed to performance-oriented (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Watkins, 2005).

Life as a learning leader and leading learner, on reflection, represents the interconnectivity, the interdependency and the interrelationships between leadership and learning. They are relevant to integrated centre leadership, school leadership and academic leadership. This notion of 'life as a learning leader and leading learner' invites confirmation of 'leaders as learners' and 'learners as leaders'. That is, designated leaders need to continuously recognise themselves as learners and make that learning visible to others. Learners, within a learning community, encompass children, young people and adults. All learners within an organisation have the potential to lead when 'leadership' is defined to mean 'one who sees and finds a way through'.

The interrelationship between learning and leadership have been made visible. Leadership is multi-layered and multifaceted. The power of building communities of action learning groups which are able to identify and celebrate change as a positive paradigm for organisational development has been claimed. We acknowledge our role as agents of change. Social consciousness and social justice especially for vulnerable children have been explored and exemplified.

Leadership learning was identified through the identification of emergent and recurring themes, lines of inquiry and shared theory making. Within the notion of leadership learning, participatory action research and the development of praxeology were included. Active dialogue and inquiry supported and challenged approaches to research studies. Planning and evaluation processes were shared, advice sought and learning was identified from each other’s stories, challenges and achievements. This arrangement of a cycle of engagements with different action learning groups was supportive and complex. The pedagogical strategies were put in place with the aim for the children to achieve at national expectations and this continues to be a vision for the school.

**Living life as a global learner**

It is within this theme that the focus shifts to the needs of multilingual learners as well as to social justice and systems consciousness. In drawing the themes and threads
together of their research in schools to address racism and bullying, Richardson and Miles emphasise the power of the child’s and young person’s voice (Richardson & Miles, 2008). It is in this spirit that this action research project furthers their work to identify effective pedagogic strategies to develop practitioner and leader awareness, confidence and resolution to act in the face of an increasingly discriminatory society. The reflection presented here is that impact on the development of andragogic strategies within a systemic approach to school leadership is desirable to organisational learning.

Pakistan has had a strong influence on my life as a learner and as a leader of learning. During the period from 1987 to 1993 I spent three and a half years living and working in Pakistan, including an extended period of two and a half years. I therefore pursue this notion of school leadership in relation to world events with a specific focus on Pakistan. This is not to the exclusion of other places; this is an example of my meaning. Within the context of the school the world political arena has impacted significantly on the demographic of our locality. An economic crisis in one part of the world brings economic migrants. War and conflict in another part of the world brings asylum seekers and refugees. Communities are influenced by a range of religious and non-religious values and belief systems (Charlton et al, 2011). Not only throughout this timed specific research process but throughout my professional career as a school educator I have sought information in order to have a better understanding and knowledge of the impact of international politics. I gain and develop an insight not only from media reports (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/; http://www.theguardian.com.uk), non-fiction texts and film but also through travel and engagement in world literature, art, music and textiles. This engagement, I claim, enriches my understanding and perceptions.

All three girls in the Girls’ Chat Group were from homes where their home language continues to be spoken daily. They were multilingual learners who grappled with difficult concepts in English and in doing so improved their own articulation of discourse in English. It has been evidenced that the three girls engaged not only benefitted from the discourse to develop understanding of terminology used to describe bullying and racism and related to anti-discriminatory practice but also achieved well academically. Leadership Narrative 3 made the familiar unfamiliar (Marshall et al, 2011) for both the child and adult researchers. From recent feedback it is evident that colleagues want
restorative approaches to be increasingly embedded in school life. However, all the girls were articulating their thoughts and theories in English which could be open to misinterpretation (Conteh, 2003; Gregory, 1996).

Having the confidence, knowledge and understanding to create safe places for difficult discourse is an additional outcome of this action research project. It was not a predicted outcome and yet it still has a relevance to the research line of inquiry, aims and questions. The praxeological approach to inquiry and action research methodology allowed for this deep emergent learning to happen. This reflection relates to the idea of emergent trusting relationships.

There are implications for adult professional development, including access to higher qualifications, to develop adult and child confidence and deepen understanding of each other’s lives and perspectives. The learning community was better informed to meet future challenges. The adult and child learning impacted on the learning community’s future thoughts, theories and actions.

**Living life as a practitioner/leader researcher**

The creation of the thematic framework for data analysis provided the mechanism to bring together all my threads of thinking. Although the acknowledgement of the complexity is thrilling, it has the potential to be a barrier to clarity and the identification of next steps. The opportunities for dissemination were moments when I was able to bring order to my reflections. Engagement in this action research project clarified strategies for sustainable whole school engagement in development and improvement. I felt liberated when I was able to make the personal professional and the professional personal; not seeing my professional self as an interference to my personal life but as nourishment. Emerging as a praxeologist was exciting. During one tutorial I asked, “Can I call myself a praxeologist?” It is now my endeavour to pursue this.

The four research themes are now revisited in more generic terms rather than specifically through the lens of the author and pulls together the reflections from the
thesis.

The notion of a practitioner researcher acknowledges the influence of Marshall (1999), Whitehead and McNiff (2006) and their respective theories of ‘living life as inquiry’ and of ‘living theory’, together with the relevance of action research. To be a researcher is to reflect and ask questions: What is my concern? What if? How can I make a difference? (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). To be a practitioner also requires constant inquiry: what is my concern? What if? How can I make a difference? Throughout the research study process I constantly move between the two roles. The more I read, the more I acknowledge the link between research methodology and evolving leadership styles. Reason says, “Co-operative inquiry is therefore also a form of education, personal development and social action” (Reason, 1988, p.1). Marshall explores notions concerning who the researchers are and the importance of integrity when taking on that role (Marshall, 1999). Leadership and research are thus interrelated. During this action research process I have struggled to identify when I am a leader and when I am a researcher. This creates an inner dynamic and tension between my world of work and my academic world.

As a practitioner/leader researcher working within a complex learning organisation, the task of identifying the range of action learning groups I engaged with supports a systemic approach to integrated leadership (Senge, 2006). All the action learning groups, whether staff, child, family or community based demanded a focus on transformational and pedagogical leadership that is shared, sustainable and responsive (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Whalley et al, 2008). Through this engagement with each action learning group, ways to facilitate and develop discourse and action research projects have emerged and have been identified. The development of discourse demands a consideration of the questions we need to ask in order to move our learning and understanding, our lines of inquiry. From these lines of inquiry, action research projects emerged and developed. They inspired and developed rich learning for primary aged children. The action research paradigm supports, challenges and enhances the research process, illustrating a deepening of understanding amongst both adults and children.
The value of critical friendships was evidenced within the school learning community as well as with external groups. The establishment of the school’s action learning groups was to develop critical friendship within the school. The School Development Plan work involved members of the school learning community studying research findings and theory to inform changes and developments in pedagogical strategies. However, time constraints did not always allow the time necessary for the theoretical and reflective discourse necessary. The learning community benefitted from several critical friendships over different time periods including with academics from the University of Cambridge and the Institute of Education, London, UK (Charlton et al, 2011; Wyse et al 2010; Wyse & Parker, 2012; Watkins, 2005). The PhD Action Learning Set were a group of critical friends to the practitioner/leader researcher. This action learning set contributed to the validation, critique, rigour and robust nature of this research project. The headteachers’ learning group provided the nourishment and motivation to continue on the quest of school leadership.

From my perspective as the lead practitioner/leader researcher, engagement in this research project has heightened my awareness of the need for educators to develop awareness, knowledge and understanding of what the rise in Islamophobia means for both the Muslim child as well as the non-Muslim child. The notion of generating mutual respect, knowledge and understanding is acknowledged. This action research project evidences the reasons why and brings recommendations for future practice.

Table 16, presented in Chapter 9, pulls together the principle themes that emerged and recurred during this research journey.

**Power and Ethics**

My multifaceted role as practitioner, leader and researcher could be deemed restrictive, fraught with power and ethical concerns and hard to define in terms of the complex ideas of limitations. However, it is my belief and standpoint that these connected roles bring strength and validity to the research process. It is my threefold role that makes this research project innovative. My declaration of my passions for a
specific community of heritage and for the creative arts brings a different perspective to the research process and enriches Marshall’s theory of ‘living life as inquiry.’

The shift in leadership power is evidenced through the three leadership narratives. In the first, the researcher is the facilitator and makes decisions, e.g., identifying the lines of inquiry. However, through the narratives of the participant teaching assistants it was possible to evidence their growing confidence in their pedagogical learning and understanding, such as, their impact on young learners. Participants also became confident to critique the researcher, requesting more explanation and definition of expectations. During the process of the second leadership narratives, learning sets had increasing autonomy to identify their own lines of inquiry, e.g., the ‘Raising Girls’ Achievement’ learning set. Finally, in the third leadership narrative ownership of how the project progresses is the entitlement of the three girls who are the co-researchers in this project.

At the beginning of this research journey I was conscious of my role as facilitator. As relationships with my work colleagues and the children strengthened over time we co-constructed our ideas about leadership. As we journeyed through the process so I was able to let go and take more risks.

**Defining the Theory**

Having considered a systemic approach to school leadership with reference to Boog (2003), Fullan (2005), Senge (2006), Collarbone and West Burnham (2008), Whitaker (2009) and Robinson (2012), the conclusion is reached that a systemic approach values processes of networking, working in collaboration and a constructivist approach to developing processes, ways of thinking and acting (Whitaker, 2009). The influence and impact of the above systems theory on this action research project is evidenced in the creation of a thematic framework for data analysis and through the presentation of the research fieldwork.

In conclusion, for the purposes of this action research project a systemic approach to school leadership is defined as one that develops everyone’s ability to identify process,
acknowledge the value of seeing the whole, the patterns established by the parts within. It recognises the dynamic nature of the relationships between the parts and focuses on how things work together rather than with what they are like. A systemic approach to school leadership values and focuses on the interrelatedness and the interdependence of all phenomena. It values integration and autonomy.

The interconnectivity between leadership and learning has been established and in recognition the theory making is entitled ‘an emergent systemic approach to leadership and learning’. The notion of ‘systems consciousness’ is recognised as an aspect of this systemic approach. It has been evidenced in this research study that insight, understanding, feedback, complexity, the theoretical underpinning and messiness are key constructs to a systemic approach to organisational leadership.

Due consideration to learning as a fundamental process for both children and adults has to be acknowledged. Both pedagogy and andragogy in terms of leadership and learning are identified as key aspects of a systemic approach. Child learning processes and adult learning processes are connected but have to be valued for their distinctiveness and they invite different approaches. Within ‘pedagogical leadership and learning’ and ‘andragogical leadership and learning’ resides an acknowledgement of praxeological processes (Pascal & Bertram, 2012) to support and develop organisational inquiry and the emergence of new perspectives on theory. I have struggled with Whitaker’s constructs, for example, the separation of ‘theory and practice’ from research and therefore a praxeological approach is favoured (Whitaker, 2009).

Within pedagogical leadership and learning, ‘diversity and difference’ are identified in recognition of the necessity for the learning community to be active in building its knowledge and understanding of the contextualisation of its locality and demography.

Within andragogical leadership and learning, ‘particularity’ is included in recognition of the value of attention to detail alongside that systemic view of the bigger picture. The aspect of andragogical leadership embraces the notion of creating a research culture. It is this attention to generating opportunities for adults to engage in research that influences whether a learning community becomes self-sustaining or not in terms of development.
Cooperative and collaborative inquiry are located well within the concept of organisational learning and provide the starting point for professional development through action research methods and methodology. These are strong strategies, which the evidence from this research project suggests create sustainable organisational improvement, as each member of the school learning community takes responsibility and is accountable for their learning and their contribution to the whole organisation. Application of the thematic framework for data analysis confirms this emergent theory-making by showing the predominant themes and lines of inquiry. The aspect of organisational learning subsumes interdependence and interrelationships, the generation of energy and creativity in striving for mutual endeavour.

There are two more aspects of ‘Leadership and Learning: A Systemic Approach’ to be considered. These are wellbeing and social justice.

Wellbeing has emerged as significant for our learning community. Due regard for a person’s wellbeing is recognised as the way adults and children can build their resilience to meet life’s challenges. Supervision is identified as the strategy for supporting adults in the learning community. Opportunities for engagement in auto ethnography, including the creation of leadership narratives, have been shown to further enrich a person’s wellbeing and confidence to take on their responsibilities, whether a child or an adult. The identification of what nourishes us as human beings is recognised and encourages us to pursue ways to feed our creativity and acknowledge our talents.

The aspect of social justice has had a resonance throughout this research process. We have not been afraid to ask difficult and challenging questions of ourselves and of others. To be empowered to follow challenging lines of inquiry for the development of political insight is essential. This, combined with deepening knowledge and understanding of heritage, our changing communities and our community partners, generates the motivation to make a difference, connects with action research methodology and the ultimate goal of emancipation.

The Leadership Development Web has emerged and evolved as the ‘Leadership and Learning: A Systemic Approach’ diagram (Figure 29). Both versions are original to this thesis. The essence of Whitaker’s ideas remain but the processes of co-construction
have to take account of the research evidence and the influence of others theorists including Fullan (2005), Robinson (2012) and Marshall, (2004).

**Figure 29: Leadership and Learning: A Systemic Approach:**

**Contributions and Recommendations**

Taking on a praxeological stance, as developed by early years theorists (Formosinho & Formosinho, 2012; Pascal & Bertram, 2012) helped me come to terms with the dilemmas of my intertwining roles and responsibilities. I was able to accept that the
way the personal, the social and the professional interconnect is a source of nourishment rather than a toxin (Whitaker, 1998).

As I progressed through the research process I was able to let go of my power base and not only give it to work colleagues, but more importantly, empower the children who were my co-researchers. This was liberating for me as practitioner, school leader and researcher. Giving responsibility to primary aged children needs to be genuine, trusting and emancipatory (Boog, 2003).

In primary schools we can feel too restricted in liberating children to lead. This can be attributed to the internal and external pressures we face in the concern to raise standards. However, we cannot risk limiting primary education to the academic goals that have been set. It is a rapidly changing world and children need to build their resilience and creativity to face the challenges of the future.

The declaration of my interest in music and art meant that I was free to demonstrate the musical leadership journeys I participated in. It made sense to my fellow PhD co-researchers and my colleagues at school. One PhD co-researcher contributed to the selection of music that accompanied our journey (Appendix 14). Searching for metaphors and similes emerged as a source of nourishment for Kieran. The expressive quality of elements of this qualitative research project demonstrates a human need to reach out and relate to other aspects of our spiritual lives (Reason and Bradbury, 2006).

Having the freedom to draw and represent graphically notions of leadership was liberating for me and for co-researchers at school. The Rich Picture represents a significant moment on my research journey when I could spontaneously and confidently map out what the research project meant to me. This was the beginning of recognising the praxeologist that lies within.

How might any of this discourse influence future research and thinking about leadership?
I continue to use the boteh image when I am presented with the opportunity to describe and explain my ideas about school leadership. Listeners are given their own boteh on which to write their feedback. I shall continue to work in this way. In designing a display for school, a colleague and I saw a complex boteh/paisley design that for us represented a definition of safeguarding for our school. My colleague’s description read:

“The paisley pattern is made up of many beautiful intricate details; the lines, curves and spirals weave and interlock with each other to make one united and unique design.

Safeguarding works in a similar way. The various agencies, departments and professionals communicate with each other to ensure everyone’s needs are met. By working together and making links they support and encourage, so that individuals can reach their full potential.”

I use the boteh design, including the spiral and bumps to illustrate school leadership in dialogue and I shall continue to develop these theories as long as they resonate with others. It may be that this application of a culturally relevant device that I recognised in the Te Whariki curriculum in New Zealand will be further developed by practitioners, leaders and researchers in the future.

This research project began with the implementation of a plan that was informed by action research methodology (Stringer, 1999; McNiff with Whitehead, 2002). Each research phase is considered in light of the process we have engaged in over a five and a half year period from September 2008 to January 2014. This section presents a review of the research plan.

**Phase 1: Praxeological Inquiry**

During participation in the research project process praxeological inquiry became increasingly recognised as a concept of inquiry, which brought together the reflective practitioner/leader researcher and the requirement to ensure theoretical underpinning was brought to the fore. Discourse with critical friends enhanced and enriched this inquiry process. Within the context of this research project critical friends are defined as those practitioners and researchers who are external to our learning community,
including university academics, PhD tutors, peers working in other learning communities, for example, the headteachers’ learning set and colleagues in the PhD Action Learning Group.

Phase 1 of the research process involved the recognition of the theoretical underpinnings that informed the identified lines of inquiry. The contribution of critical friendships enhanced and enriched this research phase.

**Phase 2: Contextualisation**

Phase 2 enabled the practitioner/leader researcher to consider the implementation of small-scale research projects in order to test research methodology and research methods. Simultaneously the contextual information was deepened especially through engagement with members of the school’s senior leadership team. At this stage the consideration of visualisations supported the practitioner/leader researcher to identify the complexities and interconnectivity of the research process. This was in line with a systemic approach to leadership and learning. By the end of this phase, research aims and questions had been formulated. Time for revisits needed to be planned into future research phases to ensure connectivity with research plans and implementation. Phase 2 involved a consideration of leadership visualisation, research aims and questions were formulated and the pilot research projects were implemented, ‘Global Learners’, ‘Active Dialogue’ and ‘Connecting Communities’.

**Phase 3: Research Project Plan and Implementation**

Phase 3 saw the implementation of the research action plan that had been informed by the praxeological inquiry and contextualisation processes. A systematic approach to implementation ensured that documentation was recorded. Multiple techniques for data collection, collation and future analysis enriched the research process and helped to guard against gaps in documentation. This was an emotionally significant phase and therefore it was important that feelings of relief at getting started and the generation of optimism and energy did not prevent systematic implementation. Creating time to check-in with co-researchers was essential for keeping on track. The practitioner/leader
researcher in this project benefitted significantly from engagement with the PhD Action Learning Group during this phase.

**Phase 4: Evaluation and Plan Next Steps**

Participatory research that was responsive and collaborative ensured that research evaluation and the planning of next steps were shared, and the co-researchers had ownership for the aspect they were responsible for. Within the context of our learning organisation the allocation and confirmation of roles and responsibilities within action learning themes and action learning groups strengthened the likelihood of meaningful outcomes. During Phase 4 the need to safeguard the ownership of the project was recognised. Co-researcher roles and a participatory approach supported this inclusive approach.

**Phase 5: Emergent Approach**

Phase 5 recognised the deepening praxeological approach to this research design. Progress through the research process involved co-researchers in the identification of lines of inquiry. It became necessary for a selection of these lines of inquiry to be followed up through next steps and new action plans. The practitioner/leader researcher and co-researchers were operating while immersed in the needs and priorities of the workplace and therefore were systemically engaged in their leadership and operational concerns. The combination of being alert to workplace demands, engagement in professional interaction and theory and research enabled the practitioner/leader researcher to identify emergent themes. This notion supported the idea of organisational research being responsive to the demands of the workplace and self-sustaining. In this research project the racist incident provoked a response. The initiators of the incident were protagonists. Progress through the research process found the practitioner/leader researcher acknowledging the interconnectivity between the many themes and threads she had identified in her role. To restate, Phase 5 confirmed what had emerged that was worthy of further investigation through the identified lines of inquiry and the unexpected.
Phase 6: Documentation and Impact of Theoretical Underpinning

The fieldwork documentation came to the fore. Reference to theory with regard to research analysis processes confirmed the processes of recording, interpreting, analysing, integrating and asking ‘So What?’ as described in Chapter 5. The thematic framework for data analysis was created during this phase as an outcome of the literature review. The thematic framework took into account living life as inquiry (Marshall, 1999).

Participatory and collaborative research was developed where co-researchers were invited to follow lines of inquiry and to initiate their own ways forward. The leadership stories and research evidence generated through the application of the thematic framework for data analysis provided confirmation that the lines of inquiry investigated were arising from real events, concerns and dilemmas.

Phase 6 ensured that the documentation process followed the sequence of fieldwork analysis, that is, of recording, interpreting, analysis, integration and asking ‘So What?’ The thematic framework for data analysis was confirmed. In the body of the thesis, this phase is represented by Andrew, Caroline and Kieran’s leadership stories.

Phase 7: Reflection and Making Sense of the Fieldwork

The processes of recording, interpretation, analysing, integration and asking ‘So What?’ continued through reflection, checking in, exchange of feedback and reference to the literature review and research methodologies. The identification of emergent and recurrent themes and lines of inquiry became increasingly complex and therefore further visualisations and tablature of the research evidence supported analytical processing. The write-up phase started. To reaffirm research is a continuous process and Phase 7 involved the continuation of the fieldwork analysis, the collation of feedback from co-researchers and peers, the application of research visualisation to enrich clarification and understanding while the process of the write-up started.

In the write-up of this action research project, Phase 7 is represented by a consideration of the impact of freefall writing, the identification of the research outcomes for children
and the recognition of the value of considering practice alongside theory and developing our praxeological approach.

**Phase 8: Transference of New Knowledge and Research Dissemination**

The development of the leadership development web became a significant component of the research process. The development of this diagram has involved co-researchers, headteachers, BA and MA students and the PhD Action Learning Group. Opportunities to present the research project as an approach to systemic leadership enabled the practitioner/leader researcher to clarify and confirm aspects of the research design, research methods and outcomes. This process informed the exploration of new leadership and learning theory (Whitaker, 2009).

**Phase 9: Impact of the Research Project on Our Learning Community**

Finally in Phase 9 a reconsideration of the research limitations was completed. Recognition of the impact of this research project became increasingly evident through the collation of emergent and recurring themes and lines of inquiry. Research outcomes have been recognised as on-going and impact on future practice. The impact on our learning community is supportive of a systemic and praxeological approach to school leadership and learning.

I confirmed ownership of the leadership development web following a series of tutorials. A search for an appropriate visualisation that had cultural heritage resonance was sourced through engagement with members of the learning community, that is, the Girls’ Chat Group 2013 - 2014. The ‘Boteh’ design, which emerged from one girl’s demonstration of how to draw a mehndi pattern, was researched, adopted and adapted.

Further revisits, self-evaluation opportunities, engagement with a critical friend ensured co-researchers recognised their ownership of this research project. Their engagement and participation strengthened the difference the research outcomes have made. During Phase 9 the practitioner/leader researcher sought feedback through research dissemination presented as a series of papers to a range of groups. This process of
dissemination informed the final write-up stage and the final research discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

The research line of inquiry, aims and research questions are revisited inclusive of the final conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Research Aims, the Research Questions and the Research Line of Inquiry are revisited

In order to present conclusions and recommendations relevant to the research project aims, each aim is presented in turn with the corresponding research question or questions.

Aim One: Reflect on and further develop notions of leadership as a dynamic and creative learning process from both a personal and learning community perspective with the prime purpose of impacting on children’s lives.

Question One: How can learning communities investigate and influence leadership as a dynamic and creative process to impact on children’s lives?

Conclusion

The focus of this aim and research question is leadership and learning theories and their impact on and for children. Throughout this research project process due regard has been given to the literature review. One outcome of the literature review was the creation of the thematic framework for data analysis. Through the application of this thematic framework an investigation of leadership concepts and learning was facilitated.
This framework ensured that reference to theoretical underpinning was consistent and constant. The four principle research themes identified enabled the practitioner/leader researcher to maintain a focus at the same time as recognising the complexity of leadership learning and learning about leadership. These research themes noted the influence of a systemic approach and, as time progressed, the notion of a praxeological approach emerged and influenced the research inquiry.

The dynamic between the two notions of leadership and learning is complementary, interrelated and interconnected. Therefore the recommendation focuses on the research theme ‘leading learners and learning leaders’.

As a practitioner/leader researcher my learning has been focussed on my role as the headteacher and therefore the power that lies within that designated role: how being in that position makes me powerful, influences responses, reactions and interactions.

**Recommendations**

For the notion of a systemic and praxeological approach to leadership and learning to be further defined and investigated. It has the potential for developing leadership and learning that is both self-sustainable and self-transformational.

Within our school learning community, to continue to create opportunities for children and parents to be given genuine pedagogical leadership roles and responsibilities. To, therefore, further develop our pedagogy of listening (Rinaldi, 2006) and embed our strategies that have evolved from what has been achieved that is, our family and professional development strategies (Appendices 21 & 22).

**Aim Two: Investigate and identify how collaborative and responsive inquiry can influence, shape and transform children’s learning and school leadership.**

*Question Two: How can learning communities, including children, make their learning and
leadership visible?

Conclusion

The research device of the leadership narratives identified members of the school learning community who are pedagogical leaders. At the outset of this research project, in my role as the practitioner/leader researcher, I had my own theory concerning school leadership. I recognised that pedagogical leadership would not be confined to those colleagues who are the designated school leaders. However, I had not predicted the strength of pedagogical leadership that would be evident from the children and families. The children have shown that when given the right to take responsibility, whether that is as a democratically elected leader or as an individual child who has been provided with the opportunity, they prove themselves to be pedagogical leaders motivated to make a difference for children, with a strong and fearless voice (Pascal & Bertram, 2009).

The creation of opportunities for parents and carers to consider what is important for them in terms of their locality, their community and their cultural and religious heritage brings strength to their voice. The focus on school improvement and the development of school leadership through the work of the action learning groups exemplified how over time the groups developed ownership and confidence in leading on their action plans. Time for meaningful discourse supported the groups’ learning and confidence to become self-sustaining (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Action learning groups, school leaders and children could identify how they made a difference for children and these research outcomes have been presented and confirmed (Hargreaves, 2012). Andragogical learning and leadership have not yet been fully explored and future inquiry and research would further inform our pedagogical and praxeological strategies and development (Kemmis & Smith, 2008).

The notion of making learning and leadership visible evolved through discourse, the recording of observations, opportunities for self-evaluation and theorising, the presentation of the leadership narratives and the emergence of the leadership development web. The development of the boteh/paisley visualisation is representative of our leadership learning and learning leadership.
Recommendation

Through the implementation of the Professional Development Strategy and the School Development Plan the school learning community engages in practitioner participatory research to further develop and improve outcomes for children. The Professional Development Strategy embraces andragogical leadership as well as pedagogical leadership.

Question Three: How can collaborative inquiry and action research facilitate the shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?

Conclusion

The processes of recording, interpretation, analysis, integration and asking ‘So What?’ through the context of the thematic framework for data analysis confirmed my belief in living life as inquiry as a research method for the exploration of leadership within a primary school. This contextualisation of leadership strengthened and influenced leadership in that it enabled me to acknowledge and visualise the complexities of leadership within my professional and personal life. The recognition of the interconnectivity of inquiry theories, that is co-operative, action research, systemic and praxeological inquiry influenced the development of the research design. This is not to say that there were neither limitations identified nor any aspects of the research project that did not create tension. The difficult times created significant learning as identified in Caroline’s leadership story.

Recommendation

Recognition of the range of inquiry theories can further enhance and enrich inquiry research processes. Learning organisations need to embrace inquiry and create safe places for meaningful discourse.

Aim Three: To establish the value of action research as a method for sustainable school improvement through the presentation of evidence of impact that makes a difference for children.
**Question Four:** How can action research support sustainable school improvement to impact on outcomes for children in primary schools?

**Conclusion**

This depth of study gave me the confidence as a school leader to facilitate action research through the formation of action learning groups. The action learning groups were able to focus on specific aspects of school life that impact on children’s learning. The outcomes have been identified. During the research process pedagogical leaders became increasingly confident in their ownership of their leadership roles and responsibilities. These pedagogical leaders were not only the designated leaders but pedagogical leadership was identified across the team and amongst the children.

**Recommendation**

Action research methodology provides a structure for school development that is sustainable and emancipatory (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Therefore the recommendation for future school improvement is to implement an approach to school development that takes due regard of action research methods within a praxeological approach. A praxeological approach embraces a systemic view of research with concern for the social aspects (Formosinho & Oliveira-Formosinho, 2012).
The Research Line of Inquiry Revisited

The research line of inquiry was to investigate whether a collaborative action research presents a sustainable approach to school development and promotes responsive leadership, creates accountability supportive of aspirations in learning and successful outcomes for children.

From the presentation of the three leadership narratives, the consideration of outcomes of the leadership stories and learning community’s evaluation and the documentation of the analytical research processes it is possible to conclude that the action research project, ‘Leadership Narratives’ has had an impact on aspects of leadership and learning within the school learning community. The strength of this impact is dependent on the opportunities individuals have had to facilitate. Co-researchers have had time and space to engage, consider and apply research methodologies. These have tended to be colleagues that have designated leadership roles, although not exclusively. In Leadership Narrative 3 the power base shifted and was held by the children in the Girls’ Chat Group. The consequence and implications for the learning community is to continue on this praxeological journey of creating opportunities for meaningful, contextualised action research ensuring that it is not only designated leaders who hold the power to lead.

Whitaker’s paper has been influential in shaping this research project journey. However, this has not been a total acceptance of what Whitaker presents. His ideas have been critiqued and developed further within the context of a primary school. Taking Whitaker’s ideas of what systems leadership can be defined to be, I further deliberated on the different aspects and created the leadership development web. This was then further developed by taking into consideration feedback from the school learning community and having processed my learning as the practitioner/leader researcher.

This leadership development web moves away from theories of types of leadership but advocates the idea of developing leadership within a school as a learning community. It honours leadership from every member of the school learning community. It rejects the idea of one leader leading from the front, although, in the present English school system the hierarchy of leadership remains the established answer to improving and developing
what we offer young children. I argue that this does not create a sustainable future for school leadership. Too much emphasis is on the role of the person at the ‘top’ of the hierarchy. I finish with a radical question (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002) How can we create learning communities for young children that truly honour the child’s voice, harnesses the child’s potential as a school leader and understands that every member of a learning community has the potential to lead learning?

Finally …
This leadership research learning journey has been rigorous, exciting, inspiring, troubled, enriching and authentic. Our learning as a learning community does not cease here. This active learning process brings with it renewed confidence and commitment to our vision to make a difference for children and their families and to further our quest to get to ‘maybe’ through our lines of inquiry and deep praxeological learning and development.

I finish with the Mohsin’s words which encapsulate this research inquiry and learning process.

“I love life because I can see new things in my life and I keep learning.”

Mohsin, nine-years old, 03.10.2013
Appendices
Appendix 1: Collation of Research
Visualisation

1.1: Mehndi design drawn by a former pupil to illustrate the inspiration for the evolving and emergent visualisations.
1.2. Visualisation: Leadership Narrative One

1.3. Visualisation: Leadership Narrative Two
1.4. Visualisation: Leadership Narrative Three

1.5. Defining Leadership within the School Context
1.6. Visualisation: Themes from three leadership narratives

1.7. Visualisation: The emergence of the 12 leadership narratives and reflective dialogues.
Appendix 2: Framework guiding the Wallace Foundation study of linkages between leader learning experiences, their practices and their effects on student learning (Leithwood and Levin, 2004)
Appendix 3: Permission request and agreement letter to the Local Authority

Over the last seven years I have been studying for my PhD with the University of Leicester and the Pen Green Research Centre, Corby. The title of my thesis is: Our Leadership Narratives: A learning community develops a systemic approach to primary school leadership through collaborative and responsive inquiry and by making leadership visible.

I have applied action research methodology to impact on quality school improvement. My research findings and results show proven impact. I am working hard to submit my thesis on Monday 27\textsuperscript{th} July 2015 and am currently working on Version 2. I am able to reassure you that all reference to our School, our city and persons directly involved in the research project have been anonymised as requested by the University of Leicester, School of Medical and Social Care Education.

I therefore request your permission to submit my PhD thesis. I shall send Version 2 on Monday 11\textsuperscript{th} May 2015 and you will see how I have taken due regard to ethical processes and confidentiality (Chapter 5).

I give permission to Anne Christine Parker to submit her PhD Thesis as titled above.

Signed…………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………

Role ………………………………………………………………………

274
Appendix 4: Permission request and agreement letter to the school’s Governing Body

The purpose of this letter is to:

- To confirm that I intend to continue with my doctoral studies.
- Ask for your consent to write about our leadership journey with the understanding that all my writing will be available for you to read.
- Ask for your consent to include the School Development Plan 2010-2012 and accompanying documentation.
- Agree on the content of my thesis. Should there be any content you either disagree with it have any concerns about, we will discuss and come to an agreement about inclusion.

If you are in agreement with the above please sign below. Please do ask me any questions you may have about this process.

Name……………………………………………
Role………………………………………………

I give consent to Anne Christine Parker to include aspects of our leadership journey in her action research project. I understand that I have the right to non-participation in this action research project process.

Signed……………………………………………
Date………………………………..
Appendix 5: Permission request and agreement letter to the Teaching Assistants

Dear Colleague

At School we are working together to improve our practice across the school in a collaborative approach. A key aspect of our work is to develop the children’s acquisition of English, as all the children are bilingual. We are now embarking on our professional development to develop our skills in supporting and extending interaction with children. Outcomes from this professional development will inform the action research project, ‘In what ways can cooperative inquiry facilitate shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?’

Be assured that any data collation, data analysis and research papers that are written as an outcome of our ‘Professional Development: Speaking and Listening’ will be readily available for you to read. If you have any concerns with any of the content I will be most willing to discuss these with you and I will not publish anything without your agreement, you reserve the right to non-participation.

To give me your consent to present our research data please sign below.

Name……………………………………
Role in school…………………………..

I give my consent for Anne Christine Parker to use data from the professional development for teaching assistants towards the action research paper, ‘In what ways can cooperative inquiry facilitate shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?’

Signed……………………………………………….Date…………………………

Thank you
Appendix 6: Permission request letter to members of the School Council

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is……………………………………, I am………………years of age and I am in class…………at The School.

During the academic year of 2014-2015 I have been a member of the school council.

I give my permission for Mrs Christine Parker to use the data generated from our meetings and activities in her doctorate studies at the University of Leicester U.K.

Yours faithfully

Signed
Print
Date

Appendix 7: Permission request letter to members of the Girls’ Chat Group

To Whom It May Concern

My name is……………………………………, I am………………years of age and I am in class…………at The School.

During the academic year of 2014-2015 I have been a member of the Year 6 Girls’ Chat Group.

I give my permission for Mrs Christine Parker to use the data generated from our meetings and activities in her doctorate studies at the University of Leicester U.K.

Yours faithfully

Signed
Print
Date
Appendix 8: Permission request letter to members of the Learning Community

Dear Colleague

The purpose of this letter is to:

- Inform you of where I am in terms of my doctoral studies.
- Ask for your consent to write about our leadership journey with the understanding that all my writing will be available for you to read.
- Ask for your consent to include the School Development Plan 2010-2012 and accompanying documentation.
- Ask for your consent to include extracts from our Raising Achievement Plans (from September 2010 to March 2013) and accompanying documentation, including your leadership reports.
- Agree on the content of my thesis. Should there be any content you either disagree with it have any concerns about, we will discuss and come to an agreement about inclusion.
- Invite you to contribute to this action research project through reflection on our shared leadership journey.

Over the next fifteen months I shall be writing up my action research project entitled ‘Our Learning Saga: A Tale of Learning Communities Creating and Developing a Systemic Approach to Primary School Leadership Through Collaborative Inquiry and by Making Leadership Visible.’

(Please refer to the attached extract from my upgrade paper, pages 2 to 11. A full version is available on request.)

We have been on an intrepid leadership journey. There have been times when external pressures have been a risk to a collaborative approach to school leadership. However, my perception is that we have grown, developed and become a supportive and cohesive school leadership team. We can consider ourselves to be an effective learning
community within a larger school organization. We have an extensive range of complementary skills, considerable experience and a depth of knowledge that has positively impacted on outcomes for children who attend the School. We teach together, from each other, from our colleagues, the children, their families, the governing body and the wider community. I see this as the essence of systems leadership at the School; our willingness to learn from others as well as acknowledging and applying what we know works.

What has been achieved?

- The School Development Plan 2010-2012, implementing an action research model to school improvement
- Termly ‘Raising Achievement’ Plans. Overtime these have increasingly fit for purpose and effective in supporting school development, the greatest impact has been on good to outstanding progress in children’s learning across the school.
- We are judged to be a ‘good’ school in terms of the Ofsted criteria. (September 2012 Evaluation Schedule).
- We give ourselves time to reflect and identify what is going well, not so well, and even better if …
- We continue to develop distributive leadership across the school. We acknowledge that you do not have to be a designated leader to show leadership qualities.

If you are in agreement with the above please sign below. Please do ask me any questions you may have about this process.

Name……………………………………………

Role……………………………………………

I give consent to Anne Christine Parker to include aspects of our leadership journey in her action research project entitled, ‘Our Learning Sage: A tale of Learning Communities
Creating and Developing a Systemic Approach to Primary School Leadership Through Collaborative Inquiry and by Making Leadership Visible.’ I understand that I have the right to non-participation in this action research project process.

Signed…………………………………………………………
Date…………………………………………………………
Appendix 9: The PhD Action Learning Group’s Learning Community Contract

- Have fun
- Challenge and act as a Critical Friend
- Be open with each other/stay in touch
- Be willing to take risks
- Trust each other/Be truthful/ (about gaps)
- Give each other space – no assumptions!
- Confidentiality
- Support and encourage, nourish each other
- Respect each other/ Respect difficulties
- Have faith in each other/show commitment

Appendix 10: PhD Action Learning Group’s Document: ‘How we want to work together’

- Time to think/reflect on my work
- Dialogue ~ discussion/ de-construct/stimulation
- Social contact/ peer support
- Visit each other
- Challenge ~ facing difficulties
- Feedback
- Filling gaps in knowledge
- Encouragement ~ Reminders of what I’ve done/look back as well as forwards
- Getting perspective on field – other areas
- Time and space to work
Appendix 11: Overview of meetings of the headteachers’ learning set and the themes discussed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Session Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.01.2010</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.03.2010</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>Building resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.04.2010</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>Resistance to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.05.2010</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>What small actions would have a big impact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.06.2010</td>
<td>2009 – 2010</td>
<td>Developing self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.11.2010</td>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>Unidentified themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.03.2011</td>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>Life Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.05.2011</td>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>Planning for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.06.2011</td>
<td>2010 – 2011</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.10.11</td>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Missed sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.01.12</td>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Making Leadership Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.04.12</td>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.06.12</td>
<td>2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Extended check-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.09.12</td>
<td>2012 – 2013</td>
<td>Life beyond headship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.11.12</td>
<td>2012 – 2013</td>
<td>The humility of the leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.01.13</td>
<td>2012 – 2013</td>
<td>Missed session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.03.13</td>
<td>2012 – 2013</td>
<td>Shiny moments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12: Research Project Timeline: From February 2008 to July 2015

This timeline shows the research phases alongside research activity and school experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Activity</strong></td>
<td>Praxeological Inquiry</td>
<td>Start of the research process. PhD Action Learning Group is formed. Meetings are held throughout the research process. Practitioner/Leader Researcher starts Research Journal.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections on past academic study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Events</strong></td>
<td>Practitioner/Leader Researcher is appointed as a primary school headteacher to start in September.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Practitioner/Leader Researcher starts headteacher post at the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive building work begins on the school site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Praxeological Inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Exploration of the Research Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Activity</td>
<td>‘Global Learners’ session is implemented with the Learning Community: ‘Am I a Global Learner?’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Events</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspection: Judgement of satisfactory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practitioner/leader researcher joins the Headteachers’ Learning Group and attends 19 meetings over a 3 year period.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Exploration of the Research Context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Research Project Plan and Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Connecting Communities' project is planned, implemented and evaluated: 'Asma’s Story'.</td>
<td>Practitioner/leader researcher presents paper at the EECERA conference, Birmingham as a member of the PhD Action Learning Group. Every member of the Leadership Team are given a Reflective Journal.</td>
<td>Leadership Narrative Two: ‘Belonging’ The Vision Day takes place on 01.11.2010.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HMI Monitoring Visit: Outcome is ‘satisfactory’.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February/March 2010</th>
<th>April/May 2010</th>
<th>June/July 2010</th>
<th>August/September 2010</th>
<th>October/November 2010</th>
<th>December 2010/January 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

285
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>Evaluation and Plan Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5</td>
<td>The Emergent Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Activity</td>
<td>Vision Day Revisit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of the School Development Plan 2010 - 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Narrative Three: The Girls’ Chat Group is formed and meet at least fortnightly until the end of the school year. Presentation of the Rich Picture at Pen Green ‘How can we do what’s right for children and still raise standards?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Events</td>
<td>Ofsted Inspection: Ofsted Category: ‘Notice to Improve’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>Evaluation and Plan Next Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5</td>
<td>The Emergent Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6</td>
<td>Documentation and Impact of Theoretical Underpinning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted Inspection: ‘Good’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
approach to primary school leadership through responsive and collaborative inquiry and by making leadership visible.'

<p>| School Events | School is included in the Local Authorities 'Expanding Schools Programme.' | Work starts on the new build project: The Key Stage Two Department. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Research Activity</th>
<th>School Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 9</td>
<td>June/July 2014</td>
<td>Impact of the Research Project on the Learning Community</td>
<td>Paper presented to a strategic group of headteachers, who focus on the needs of pupils with English as an additional language: ‘Seeking a Response to our Learning Saga: Developing a Systemic Approach to Leadership’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 2014 – July 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final write-up Complete thesis and chapters read by members of the learning community and critiques submitted to the practitioner/leader researcher.</td>
<td>Dual site school with the opening of the Key Stage Two Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

290
Appendix 13: Research Journals and Learning Logs, their collation and analysis

Contents

13.1: Research journal facsimile

13.2: Extracts from the collation of the Research Journal under the four research themes and four sub-themes; through the processes of recording, interpreting, analysing, integrating and asking So What?

13.3: Extract from a PhD action learning set journal, showing the highlighting process

13.4: PhD action learning set journal: The identification of emergent and recurring themes

13.5: PhD action learning set journal: The identification of lines of inquiry

13.6: Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue: Extracts from the teaching assistants’ logs

13.7: Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue: Extract from document collated to identify learning

13.8: Leadership Narrative Three: Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from document collated to identify learning: ‘What is Racism?’

13.9: Leadership Narrative Three: Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from document collated to identify learning: Shazia’s Story
Appendix 13.1: Research journal facsimile

12/04/08
Is it possible to produce a creative element into my studies?
For some years I've had this notion of creating an installation that gives clues to my leadership Experiences. I imagine a small room - the size of my study perhaps - maybe a space rather than a room. Images are projected onto the walls, there's a soundtrack I have created and there must be something tactile - I could create an exposure for my PhD friends and they could record their responses.

Something to taste
Something to do? To support the response:
Find out from Mara about the space they have,
for me week keep a photographic diary.

13/04/08
- Wanting to immerse myself - the preparations for Thursday and Friday - interesting has washed up as a preferable alternative.

In getting my study into a more organized state, I happened to read the back cover of John Irving's 'Until I Find You'. It reads:

"Running through John Irving's novels is the theme of lost children and absent parents... Central to Mr. Irving's art is his feeling about the passage of time... He thinks in the long form, and so obsessed by the transformations of life."


Need to read the complete reviews - an exciting bit of evening.

- I have an interest in how the life of immigrant children and families is portrayed in literature.

Appendix 13.2: Extracts from the Thematic Framework for Data Analysis: Research Journal

1. Living Life as a Teller of Tales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.04.2008</td>
<td>“Wanting to immerse myself in the preparation for Thursday and Friday (headteacher interview). It’s interesting how washing up becomes a preferable alternative. In getting my study (workspace) into a more organised state I happened to read the back cover of John Irving’s ‘Until I Find You’ – It reads, “Running through John Irving’s novels is the theme</td>
<td>At home, washing up as an alternative to interview preparation, I find comfort and inspiration in my reflections on Irving’s theme of time passing. I make the comparisons between my personal and professional lives. I believe when engaged in deep learning, as the learner, your perceptions are heightened and consequently your ability to make connections. For</td>
<td>Marshall (1999) illuminates this notion of one’s life as a professional and on a personal level. Over the years I have fought this, being determined to separate the two. Through the processes of reading the literature, reflecting deeply and engaging in free fall writing I understand that it is better go with the connectivity and systemic</td>
<td>I imagine the implications for myself as a leader. Better to acknowledge and engage in the complexity and connectivity of my professional and personal lives. They nourish each other. This is better for my wellbeing as a leader. The notion of transformation in leadership and learning sits well with ideas of settings embracing more learning oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of lost children and absent parents … Central to Mr Irving’s art is his feeling about the passage of time … He thinks in the long form, and is obsessed by the transformation of life.”

The New York Times

Cross ref: Lead Learner and Learning Leader: I have an interest in how the life of immigrant children and their families is portrayed in literature.”

example I see transformations and transformational in the world of Art and Literature as well as being a notion I want to pursue in my professional life. I perceive a connection with the transformational lives led by families newly arrived in the UK.

approach to life, leadership and learning.

MacGilchrist and Buttress (2005) present a theory of leadership for learning and teaching that ‘transforms’ outcomes for children.

approaches to school improvement rather than those that are performance oriented.

leadership learning. However, these are incidental moments and are not necessarily planned.
2. Living Life as a Teller of Tales: Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.08.2009</td>
<td><strong>“The building of a powerful and effective communication culture is one of the key tasks of management. It is not enough to be clear about what has to be communicated, it is essential to give time and attention to the means by which communication is managed and the important behavioural strategies that are so necessary for success.”</strong> Whitaker, 1993.</td>
<td><strong>This quotation confirms that communication is a key responsibility of everyone but we all need to know it is and we all need to be pro-active and self-aware. Sometimes this most important concern gets forgotten due to the intense way everyone works in a setting.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Line of inquiry: Is Whitaker making a distinction between management and leadership? Says more about the chronological time this written. The early 1990s was a time when leadership and management in schools was coming to the fore with the national changes in Local School Management.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practitioners, including leaders, in settings benefit the organisation by keeping communication to the forefront of their concerns. Practitioners note that a range of behavioural strategies are required to ensure meaning is effectively communicated and the response is acknowledged.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

295
### 3. Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.06.2008</td>
<td>“You feel as if you are searching for a metaphor – and the reference to ‘tempered’ has led me to liken ‘integrated leadership’ to a piece of polyphonic music. A reminder of the time I likened membership of a team to membership of a jazz quartet. This highlights the complexities of the role and yet there is harmony.”</td>
<td>There is a recurring theme of my references to the Arts. This could be considered as an acknowledgement of a bias I have for the creative arts. However, the point I am making is that searching for metaphors, similes and analogies is a healthy way to approach organisational leadership and learning. Again this is a consideration of the complexities of life in an organisation.</td>
<td>Limitation: The confines of academic writing could limit the presentation of this thesis. Emerging Theme: Connections between leadership and musical metaphors, similes and analogies.</td>
<td>For me as a designated leader in a school, the implication of identifying suitable metaphors is nourishing. Metaphors support the communication of ideas and help to unravel the complexities of organisational life. Emerging Theory: The connection between my need for nourishment through the creative arts and my wellbeing as a school leader.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Living Life as a Leading Learner and Learning Leader: Organisational Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05.01.2009</td>
<td>“Had a really lively discussion with the lunchtime supervisors today – good dialogue in English and Punjabi. I picked out the phrase ‘lambi line’ – and we had a good laugh about that.</td>
<td>A ‘lambi line’ refers to a ‘long queue’. The reference made here is, to when there is a ‘long’ queue of children going into the hall for their school dinner. I have discussed the dilemma of queuing with the lunchtime supervisors. On this occasion we are laughing because I have understood the subject of their conversation and they know how much it frustrates me.</td>
<td>I know that being able to speak at least one community language (Urdu) at a basic level informs, nourishes and enriches my school leadership and learning. The response and feedback from parents, children, community leaders and colleagues is always positive. From my observations, having the confidence to say a few words in another person’s language is uplifting, it’s communicating and it is about making the effort.</td>
<td>One implication is that if one perceives oneself as a global learner then one embraces the notion and culture of multilingualism. Secondly, one needs to question notions of power (Boog, 2003) and how the language of languages is applied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Living Life as a Global Learner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.05.2011</td>
<td>“Went to Ground Zero today. Felt St Paul’s Chapel was a more fitting tribute than the World Trade Centre Tribute exhibition. There was no recognition of the context within which the attack occurred. It came across as superficial. I felt the museum in Guernica (Northern Spain) created more depth in one’s response. It was more thought provoking.”</td>
<td>This passage, from my Research Journal, evidences how I perceive myself as a global learner. I seek out opportunities to visit places that have a resonance and significance within global histories. I question the impact of these places and I have an expectation that the will meet my spiritual and contemplative needs. I am critical if they do not.</td>
<td>I have an expectation that sites of significant world events will create emotional and spiritual responses. I express a need to be informed, held and to understand. Informed and influenced by my personal life experiences, I have a belief that as a leader of learners I have a responsibility to be curious, follow lines of inquiry and develop my awareness and understanding of global events.</td>
<td>I consider the notion of being a global learner is not only applicable to children but needs to be embraced by all human beings. Within this concept sit notions of sustainability, social justice and knowledge and understanding of the world (DfES, 2005a).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Living Life as a Global Learner: Systems Consciousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05.08.2008</td>
<td>“Currently I am reading a text that I am enjoying so much I am reading it from cover to cover. I’m finding it so thought provoking, inspiring and reflective of my experience as a leader over the years. It’s ‘Working Below the Surface: The Contemporary Life of Organisations’ (Huffington, 2004). It touches upon so many aspects of leadership, the emotional landscape, women as leaders and conflict resolution. What I’m interested in are the I engage in interdisciplinary texts. I am heartened and excited to read a text that not only affirms my ways of thinking but also makes me question my assumptions. Emergent Theme: Emotional landscapes The recognition that organisations and organisational life is ‘messy’ resonates with other leadership theories. This extract sits within two research sub-themes: ‘systems consciousness’ and ‘organisational learning’. The more there is an understanding of the theory of systems consciousness and that this theory is articulated and referred to; the greater chance there is of innovation, quality provision and success for the primary beneficiaries within an organisation. However, the risk is that settings are organisations where external pressures and interference.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dilemmas of distributive leadership and how it becomes unclear who the decision makers are. It queries our quest to have all processes so clear cut and clarified and I guess there’s also a suggestion that without that element of fear/messiness how can you have creativity and innovation? Is it that nothing exemplary comes without a struggle?”
7. Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.04.2009</td>
<td>“I am wondering – ‘What have I done?’ Is this really within my capabilities? Well yes it is, but it is proving very challenging – and I knew it would be – but so much seems to be working against me.”</td>
<td>This extract from my research journal confirms the cathartic element of the writing process. I reflect on and acknowledge the challenges I am confronting as a school leader. This is a time when I am seriously questioning my capabilities but in doing so I am also reassuring myself that the job is challenging.</td>
<td>Emergent Theme: Feelings of vulnerability.</td>
<td>The implication is that it is a requirement to take time out, reflect deeply and acknowledge the challenges and dilemmas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Living Life as a Practitioner/Leader Researcher: Action Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Interpreting</th>
<th>Analysing</th>
<th>Integrating</th>
<th>So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.08.2015</td>
<td>Listening and watching Birtwhistle’s ‘Orpheus’ – it’s fantastic. Currently reading John Wyndham’s ‘The Day of the Triffids’. Time once again to reflect. I love what I do, but find it all such a struggle. What are the potential research questions at this point? What do I want to investigate in depth? And what will make the difference? Interestingly Harrison Birtwhistle, said “You always do your best and you can’t do better.”</td>
<td>Evidence of my need to touch base with the Creative Arts. From this starting point I then acknowledge that I need to be finalising the purpose of the research study. However, I come back to Harrison Birtwhistle’s notion of human beings striving and succeeding in doing their best and implying that if your ‘best’ was not ‘good enough’ there will have been a reason, possible beyond your influence.</td>
<td>Emergent Theme: Struggle I identify a connection with Bruce’s writing on the notion of ‘chaos’ (Bruce, 1991).</td>
<td>From the research journal: “There are several lines of inquiry: √ Aspects of leadership √ Depth of professional development to make a sustainable difference to what happens for children. √ Transition from EYFS to KS1. √ The concept that there has to be a struggle between professionals in order for us to make a difference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 13.3: Extract from a PhD action
learning set journal, showing the highlighting process.

Framework for Analysis

Practitioner/Leader Researcher Green Bright Green
Lead Learner and Learning Leader Yellow Orange
Reflection of the World We Live In Turquoise Indigo
Teller of Tales Violet Pink

PhD Journal 3rd April 2011
Page 1.

What is it I am trying to achieve?
I want notions of leadership to be more out there, accessible, meaningful, relevant – not an idea that is suppressed but is released and allowed to support the future of children’s learning at our school.

Earlier today I was reflecting on my past and how I am not always one to make my learning, thoughts visible. I have a tendency to hide, rather than shout from the rooftops. I know this is partly due to a feeling of not being ‘good enough’. And if I am not ‘good enough’ it’s really not worth me telling you.

Here is an example of what I am talking about:
I studied at Bretton Hall College, West Yorkshire. My main subject was music and my second subject was Art. Not playing to my strengths at all, I had chosen music as my main because I wanted to ensure I continued with piano tuition for the 3 years. This was a cause of frustration for my A Level Art teacher (& Geography teacher – by far my best subject at school) and my Art tutor – Andre Roder. But my reticence to make my Art work visible was further evidenced by the fact I did not share my work.
**Appendix 13.4: Identification of Emergent and Recurring Themes**

Note: Ticks indicate frequency with which themes were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Life as a Teller of Tales</th>
<th>Living Life as Practitioner/Leader Researcher</th>
<th>Living Life as Leading Learner and Learning Leader</th>
<th>Living Life as a Global Learner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Living Life as Inquiry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Justice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action Research</strong></td>
<td><strong>Systems Consciousness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning Communities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Praxis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Justice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Stories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Systems Consciousness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Experiences of disequilibrium. Initiative overload. Impact of national initiatives, e.g., ‘Teaching Schools’

- Communities of practice. Our collaborative approach

- Sharing our quests Taking account of your quest “Acknowledging your quest” Karen

- Stating our intentions and outcomes of the research process/capturing our research processes. Notion of a desired transformation

- Our Learning Community Contract (Appendix 9)

- Critical reflection/on action/Reflective practice/reflexive practice/leadership to deepen thought/using research methods to reflect on practice. Through the mirror writing

- Making a difference

- The emotional life of an organisation/ of research. Researching the emotional dimension. Organisations are unique, diverse and dynamic

- Professional heritage Noting what is ‘joyous’

- Identifying lines of inquiry/questions/direction/The story of the (research) question

- Journaling

- Building Communities of practice/positive partnerships/developing professional learning communities

- Defining a Leadership Learning Process/identification of common themes

- The transformational qualities of research and services

- Community Cohesion

- Development of Leadership Cultures. Leading – Evaluating – Growing

- Work based supervision

- Mastery orientation

- Action Research Methodology/Methodological tensions

- Action Learning Groups/Sets/Potential shared learning

- (Trusting the) research process/ Recognition – Reflection-Realisation – Response/ Fluidity and flow

- Transitions

- Respect and dignity at work

- Notion of positive critical “The spirit within organisational life”

- Margy

- Our authority, ‘Authority and

- Defining Practitioner Action Research

- Ethical contracts: The ethics of an encounter

- Social Constructivism/Being a constructivist /co-

- Polyvocal ethnography: Collective inquiry

- Wellbeing

- How to help people feel good
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidents/Dilemma Stories/Analysis</th>
<th>Democracy’ Karen’s paper</th>
<th>with leadership. Schön</th>
<th>Construction/Constructivist methodologies to achieve reductionist targets</th>
<th>about the children, the team and themselves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rich and Emotional Lives</td>
<td>Cooperative/Collaborative inquiry “Being a process facilitator” “Leading the process not the content” Notion of co-investigation/the power of the group question/notions of group communication:</td>
<td>Perceptions and perspectives/Concept of multiple perspectives</td>
<td>Elaborating our research/“I have a conceptual model.” Julie</td>
<td>Action Learning/Our action learning journey/My journey/Action Learning spirals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Constructivist pedagogically embedded approach to research and leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership in Children’s Centres</td>
<td>Critical friendships (Holman, 1983)</td>
<td>Unpick how we can make a reflective space/reflective inquiry/Time and space</td>
<td>Several cycles of development/Revisiting “Analysis of our academic stories. Where I am now. To plot where I am at.”</td>
<td>Leading change in our learning communities: The worries/impact of the culture of change/Leaders as agents of change/education for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belonging/Place identity project/The push and pull of place and identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pockets of passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Dilemma about how people tell their stories.”</td>
<td>Adult and child learning (Dweck &amp; Leggett) Children and parents as co-researchers. ‘Disproportional dynamics’</td>
<td>Rilke ‘Love the question’</td>
<td>“Have to admit the not knowing” Karen</td>
<td>The paradox of fast and slow/slowing down processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Authenticity of the debate/Authenticity and reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being generative/degenerative and being authentic/behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disproportional dynamics</td>
<td>Andrew Pollard ‘Social World of Children’s Learning’ 1986</td>
<td>First person singular and first person plural</td>
<td>Finding support through the methodologies we select</td>
<td>Freire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Theories of cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of local and national government policy making and implementation/Social policy/Impact of significant budget cuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mindfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopes and fears</td>
<td>Feedback/Collective feedback</td>
<td>Definition and interpretation of the words we use</td>
<td>Identification of limitations/Every construct has its limitations</td>
<td>Sharing and exchanging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling/documenting our stories/ Journeys (Hum Safar) mapping, pictures / stories as anchor points/the dynamic between the story and the reality/The resurrected song/ballad/film/music</td>
<td>Enabling and nourishing relationships</td>
<td>Decluttering by making sense and meaning</td>
<td>Research frameworks</td>
<td>“This group is an explicit methodology – we bring conundrums/critical incidents and give birth to new ideas.” PW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We create artificial/symbolic beginnings and endings</td>
<td>Deepening Dialogue</td>
<td>“I don’t need to know exactly what it would look like” LK</td>
<td>Lewin’s model of action research (McNiff, 2002)</td>
<td>Historical and political context of developments in early years. Integration of services for children aged under five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional impact of leadership</td>
<td>People having the <strong>power</strong> to ask the questions (Boog, 2003)</td>
<td>“I’m not me yet.” CP</td>
<td>Authenticity/ authentic practitioner truth</td>
<td>“I’m not giving up.” LK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igniting and stirring the fire/Field of fire story EM</td>
<td>Perceptions of ‘high expectations’. Children and adults who are watched, appreciated and understood achieve.</td>
<td>Seeking clarification/crystallisation EM /identification of research dilemmas</td>
<td>Principles of good data collection</td>
<td>Intergenerational transmission/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dynamics of crisis</td>
<td>Collaborative leadership groups</td>
<td>Identify the retrospective strands that have brought me to this place</td>
<td>Research project as a focussed ‘snap shot’</td>
<td>Inspirational communities (Westley et al, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematisate (Problematisation) your organisation</td>
<td>Insider/outside topology</td>
<td>Systems or systemic? JV</td>
<td>Seeking Validation</td>
<td>The philosophy of adult learning and ‘learning through your work with people’ MW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making leadership visible</td>
<td>Crossing a boundary</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>The continuous process of research and</td>
<td>Evaluative discussion What I/we am/are hearing What I/we want to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The multilayered dimension of leadership.</td>
<td>How we value each other</td>
<td>Freefall writing as inquiry</td>
<td>Writing with integrity</td>
<td>Growth and awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-ethnographic study: A map of my own</td>
<td>Children making sense of their school experience/ Leaderfulness in children</td>
<td>Echoes</td>
<td>Action research spiral (McNiff, 2002)</td>
<td>Dealing with critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted experiences</td>
<td>Share my writing with my co-researchers</td>
<td>“I’ve got myself stuck.”/Something has to release us</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waggle dance</td>
<td>We all have responsibilities and rights (resonates with the views of our School Council)</td>
<td>“Something will knock you off your perch.” Karen</td>
<td>Notion of elaborated text to explain, visualise, develop themes</td>
<td>Language prevalent in the primary school sector, how learners are described – provokes a dramatic response within the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notion of a journey epicentre</td>
<td>Process/Acts of engagement</td>
<td>“Leadership as an act of inquiry.” LK</td>
<td>“Turning a corner.”</td>
<td>This is time for sharing and for energising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership metaphors and analogies /'As If'</td>
<td>The strength and power of our group learning</td>
<td>Our findings are the critical part</td>
<td>Physically and emotionally we are at parallel paths</td>
<td>Role as social activator / Role as social investigator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t lean into skips.” JD</td>
<td>Claiming</td>
<td>“Talk about your learning” MW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**leadership is the dilemma and key focus of my research**

What I/we need to know

<p>| processes for adult learning, Andragogy/andragogic processes/andragogic steps/Co-constructing the agenda |
| personal responsibility. (Sergiovanni, 1992) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dilemma “I don’t know whether I can be in the PhD group today.” EM</th>
<th>Learning communities to contain, challenge, inspire, reassure</th>
<th>Some found Dartington too distracting. (It was a turning point for me.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Stuff happens.”</td>
<td>Co-constructing the agenda</td>
<td>14.04.2014: Our learning as individuals impacts powerfully on our learning as a Learning Community. In what way? Provokes/Challenges us to think differently, to do differently and pursue our quests to make a difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have some measure of control over it.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflector and activist ✓
### Appendix 13.5: Identification of Lines of Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Living Life as a Teller of Tales</th>
<th>Living Life as Practitioner/Leader Researcher</th>
<th>Living Life as Leading Learner and Learning Leader</th>
<th>Living Life as a Global Learner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
<td>Learning Communities</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories</strong></td>
<td>Can you have a collaborative question?</td>
<td>What are the better way? “Why do we have to work in this way?” Julie</td>
<td>What are we doing together? Relational development Relational practice Effective relationships</td>
<td>Systems Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Life as Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>Where am I? Where am I now?</td>
<td>In what ways can co-operative inquiry facilitate shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?</td>
<td>Where do the ideas flow?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is this leadership?</strong></td>
<td>How are we going to do this differently?</td>
<td>What do you think?</td>
<td>How do you know that?</td>
<td>Is quality sustainable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is troubling you?</strong></td>
<td>How are we going to work together? How can people grow in groups!</td>
<td>Where am I most creative!</td>
<td>How do you document a process like this?</td>
<td>Why are you going along with this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When did the journey start?</strong></td>
<td>How are we going to work together? How can people grow in groups!</td>
<td>When am I most creative!</td>
<td>What is so strong from early years that needs to go into Primary? Notions of a multidisciplinary approach</td>
<td>What has been the impact of Children’s Centres?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you map what is going on here?</strong></td>
<td>Who holds the power?</td>
<td>What should I focus on?</td>
<td>When am I leader and when am I researcher?</td>
<td>Is my reading changing my practice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is knowing knowledge?</th>
<th>Is knowledge knowing?</th>
<th>What is transformative?</th>
<th>Who defines it is working?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does a parent/child perceive what they receive/experience?</strong></td>
<td>How can I sustain my quest?</td>
<td>Where are the questions coming from?</td>
<td>How are the groups sustained?</td>
<td>What is transformative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is this leadership?</strong></td>
<td>Can you have a collaborative question?</td>
<td>What are the better way? “Why do we have to work in this way?” Julie</td>
<td>What are we doing together? Relational development Relational practice Effective relationships</td>
<td>Who will want to do this work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is troubling you?</strong></td>
<td>How are we going to do this differently?</td>
<td>What do you think?</td>
<td>In what ways can co-operative inquiry facilitate shared and responsive leadership of children’s learning in primary schools?</td>
<td>Is quality sustainable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When did the journey start?</strong></td>
<td>How are we going to work together? How can people grow in groups!</td>
<td>Where am I most creative!</td>
<td>When am I leader and when am I researcher?</td>
<td>Is my reading changing my practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you map what is going on here?</strong></td>
<td>Who holds the power?</td>
<td>What should I focus on?</td>
<td>When am I leader and when am I researcher?</td>
<td>Is my reading changing my practice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is my reading changing my practice?</th>
<th>What is really important for communities?</th>
<th>Who is listening?</th>
<th>Who is not listening?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you map what is going on here?</strong></td>
<td>Who holds the power?</td>
<td>What should I focus on?</td>
<td>When am I leader and when am I researcher?</td>
<td>Is my reading changing my practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your biggest foul up this week?</td>
<td>How do I make the most of it?</td>
<td>When did I start? And when do I stop?</td>
<td>Leadership aspects of the researcher’s role? Do you perceive this as a leadership role?</td>
<td>Why are we calling it that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your song?</td>
<td>Should I sit or should I stand?</td>
<td><strong>So why not make my dilemma the key focus of my research?</strong></td>
<td>EYDCPs: Did they work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I become the author of my story?</td>
<td>Is this living life as theory?</td>
<td>What contribution do you want to make?</td>
<td>Where have we been?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who do you think you are?</td>
<td>“What contribution does this make to the field?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What am I doing?</td>
<td><strong>What was significant? What was not significant?</strong> This is different for different people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 13.6: Extracts from the teaching assistants’ learning logs

1. What strategies were used to support and extend the children’s speaking and listening?

Use of props (globe travel bag etc)
Role-play, the bag was also made available for the children after the lesson to act out and use the language used in lesson.
That the “Italy trip” was revisited when Mrs Parker returned to reinforce what the children had learned. And that the bag contained extra items from the trip to build on vocabulary.
The children thought about questions with Mrs Salman to ask Mrs Parker about her trip (modelling).
The children got to ask their own questions as well as working with an adult.

2. Was there anything in this extract that you could use in your practice?

I think the use of props is important as it allows even children with limited English to access curriculum and take part in lessons.
I also think that it is important to revisit lessons.
And as in the end with Shohaib that children are allowed to find explanations and test theories by asking questions.

1. What strategies were used to support and extend the children’s speaking and listening?

Introduction of the country and use a globe to explain where Italy is in relation to England and Pakistan.
Provision of role-play materials to extend children’s own knowledge of travel.
Use of and discussion about ‘real’ travel bag. Bag made available for children to explore and discuss freely in home area and share this activity with peers. Discussion about languages, asking the children to suggest useful words to know in Italian to extend and support their abilities in formulating theories. Opportunities given to revisit the travel books.
The children could ask about the trip, and ask the children some questions.

2. Was there anything in this extract that you could use in your practice?

Extend provision of materials to support knowledge, explanation of topics and promote discussion.
Encourage children’s talk about personal experiences relevant to topic to support their learning and understanding.
Remember the importance of taking cues from the children and value their questions and extend discussions by providing thought-provoking questions.
Importance of using visual and practical strategies. E.g. role-play, modelling, ‘real’ objects/photo.
These strategies are all valuable for supporting our bi-lingual children and children with communication difficulties.
## Appendix 13.7: Leadership Narrative One: Active Dialogue: Extract from document collated to identify learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Themes</th>
<th>Evidence Location</th>
<th>Leading Learner and Learning Leader</th>
<th>Organisational Learning</th>
<th>Reflection of the World We Live in</th>
<th>Systems Consciousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Narrative 1: Active Dialogue</strong></td>
<td>Depth of understanding about the needs of children. One participant had implemented a second observation because she was not satisfied with her first attempt. Acknowledged a high attaining child's appreciation of another child's skill. One research participant acknowledged that she had a tendency to finish sentences for the children. We need to be patient and let the children speak. It was acknowledged that more research participants were encouraging and supporting good listening and respectful discourse. The value of feedback as an andragogical process.</td>
<td>We need to value the children’s discourse. There was a whole group agreement that the provision of real objects, real life experiences and visual prompts were essential to support our learners. Participants felt that they had been given insufficient guidance prior to implementing the task. They felt written tasks were threatening. Do not make assumptions. Pupils who are higher attaining are not always good listeners. Pupils who are not achieving as well can be good listeners but lack confidence in speaking. The identification of the need for adults to pay attention to children’s discourse was further acknowledged. A research participant’s honesty in articulating that they had not done this before was a breath of fresh air. Our reflections led to insights and practice changes.</td>
<td>The children engage in learning about the main World Faiths. We made an assumption about how one child would respond to a focus on his religion, Christianity. He was concerned about how other children would respond. He demonstrated his awareness of the differences represented by his family and his community.</td>
<td>Participants felt that they had been given insufficient guidance prior to implementing the task. Participants said that they felt written tasks were threatening. The value of feedback as andragogical and praxeological processes/approaches.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Leadership Narrative Three:

### Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from document

**Collated to identify learning: ‘What is Racism?’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aamina (A), Shazia (S) and Zahra’s (Z) Dialogue Recording</th>
<th>Emerging/Recurring Themes Interpreting</th>
<th>Identification of Lines of Inquiry Analysing and Integrating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: When you make fun of the sizes of the different sizes of people.</td>
<td>Aamina uses the phrase ‘when you make fun of’ to describe bullying actions.</td>
<td>Aamina’s engagement in active dialogue supports her learning and her interpretation of actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z and S: Yeah, yeah, yeah.</td>
<td>Zahra and Shazia are in agreement.</td>
<td><em>Living Life as a Leading Learner</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: or different sizes or … colour.</td>
<td>Aamina, Shazia and Zahra are identifying possible differences between people.</td>
<td>Aamina, Shazia and Zahra identify how people are different from one another. The identification of differences provides the opportunity to tease or bully and has the potential to lead to racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Or when you make fun of different sizes or do voice racism.</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Living Life as a Global Learner</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: When you make fun of their accents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Or how fat they are or skinny.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

314
### Appendix 13.9: Leadership Narrative Three:

#### Girls’ Chat Group: Extract from document collated to identify learning: Shazia’s Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shazia’s Writing Recording</th>
<th>Emerging/Recurring Themes Interpreting</th>
<th>Identification of Lines of Inquiry Analysing and Integrating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "I am feeling angry because of the silly things that I did in school and I can’t get it out of my head.” | Shazia expresses her emotional response to the racist incident. | Shazia is developing an awareness of the impact of her actions on others.  
Living Life as a Global Learner |
| "I am feeling ashamed because I am slowly starting to hate myself for doing the things I have done in the past.” | Shazia uses powerful spoken language to describe her feelings. | Shazia is telling her tale.  
Living Life as a Teller of Tales |
| "I have thought about what you said and I am really starting to understand that somethings that are fun for us are a nightmare for other people.” | Shazia reflects on her past words and actions and is able to articulate why these have hurt others. | Shazia is developing her sense of social justice.  
Living Life as a Global Learner |
| "I am feeling very happy because people will start to trust me again and there will be no bullying in our school.” | Shazia clarifies her thoughts and her need for others to trust her. | Shazia is systemic in her approach and wants the impact of her future actions to be far reaching.  
Living Life as a Leading Learner. |
**Appendix 14: Music that has Accompanied My Leadership Journey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Music, Musician/s, Composer</th>
<th>Why this track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I’m a Believer</td>
<td>First record I purchased all by myself. There’s power in that. I did boy bands at an early age, I was 8 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Monkees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neil Diamond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart Club Band</td>
<td>First album bought with my brother. The Beatles did bring the generations together in our family. Our first Beatles record ‘Love Me Do’ was purchased in 1962. I was four years old, my brother was eight and Daddy was forty three. I was Ringo, David was George, Daddy was John and E was Paul. (E was the boy next door.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Heart Club Band</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Capprioccio Espagnol, Opus 34 No. 1</td>
<td>The first music I remember dancing to; jumping from settee to armchair; flinging myself up, up into the air.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Igor Markevitch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rimsky Korsakov</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Prelude from Suite Bergamasque</td>
<td>This is the piece I played for my audition for college. Miss H had been my piano teacher since I was 8 years old. We were best friends. She was a traditional piano teacher, and I know there are some aspects of my musicality she knocked out of me because of the formality of the lesson. However, I can have a good go if I have the music, as long as it’s not too hard. I cherish the memory of our lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kathryn Stott</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claude Debussy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music, Musician/s, Composer</td>
<td>Why this track?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **6**  
Isa Lei  
Meeting by a River  
Ry Cooder and V.M.Bhatt | We started to travel more widely in 1985 when we went to visit a friend in Portage La Prairie, Canada. I can still see the destination board at Heathrow and I remember saying to Stephen, “We could go to India next year!” And the following year we travelled to India. |
| **7**  
Mil Kar Juda Hue To Na Soya Karenge  
Ham from  
A Milestone …  
Jagjit and Chitra Singh | From September 1988 to June 1992, we spent at least three years away from England and most of that time was spent living and working in Karachi Pakistan. We loved everyone’s passion for Urdu poetry, Punjabi folk songs. A, in particular, loved to translate the poetry of Khalib for us. Jagjit and Chitra Singh are acclaimed Ghazal singers. They were a favourite of A’s. |
| **8**  
The first movement of Beethoven’s First Symphony in C major | For me this symbolises optimistic starts to all my leadership journeys. |
| **9**  
Ae Mere Humsafar (Our Journey)  
Qayamat se Qayamat Tak  
Alka Yagnik & Udit | From the Bollywood film, ‘Qayamat se Qayamat Tak’, Stephen and I heard this on all the buses we travelled on in Pakistan, India and Nepal. I found it to retain its popularity with the Pakistani heritage communities I have worked with in England. The film is based on the Shakespearian play ‘Romeo and Juliet’ and therefore resonates with the idea of east meets west. |
| **10**  
My Song  
Keith Jarrett | Jazz exemplifies the interweaving of melodic and tonal threads. Each performer chooses their path but is always mindful of the tonality within which the whole ensemble sits. |
| **11**  
‘Il un Bal’ and ‘Marche Supplice’  
Movements from the Symphonie Fantastique  
Hector Berlioz | This vast orchestral piece introduced the notion of an Idee Fixe to the western musical world. The Idee Fixe is a metaphor for emergent recurring themes. Themes or Idee Fixe are presented in different guises dependent on context. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Music, Musician/s, Composer</th>
<th>Why this track?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>‘Raindrop’ Prelude</td>
<td>This piece was suggested by a co-researcher belonging to the PhD action learning group. It creates a leadership imagery of the endless process of aspirations, challenges and achievements; slow and sustainable leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fredrick Chopin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performed by Artur Rubinstein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Felicidad Celebration</td>
<td>This joyous track conjures up shared achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gloria Estafan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>‘Menino do Bairro Negro’ ‘Little Boy of the Black Quarter’</td>
<td>We spent a summer holiday in Portugal. Stephen as working with a number of Portuguese speaking families at the time and we wanted to experience Portuguese culture. We were in Lisboa for a few days and enjoyed the Fado singing. Unfortunately we missed an opportunity to hear Mariza perform live. I have played this track in assembly a few times and it has been particularly appreciated by black Portuguese speaking children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fado Curvo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mariza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jose Aronso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 15: Overview of the Active Dialogue Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Date, Title and References</th>
<th>Session Purpose</th>
<th>No of Research Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.01.2010 Speaking and Listening</td>
<td>• To develop our knowledge and understanding of children’s language/English</td>
<td>29 and one observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>acquisition and how children use talk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• To further develop our shared understanding of the value of supporting and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extending the children’s spoken language and specifically in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To agree how we will further develop our roles as adults to further improve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>children’s speaking and listening across the school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interim Professional Development Tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read ‘She’s Back!’ (Parker, 2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child Observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Reflection</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To provide a starting point and to develop the facilitator’s knowledge and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understanding of the participants’ perceptions, experience and expertise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For participants to gain an insight into the facilitator’s viewpoint,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>previous experience, knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the Child Observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Record the child’s talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Record the talk of the adults and children s/he is interacting with.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyse how the child is using talk to support their learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 02.03.2010</td>
<td><strong>Speaking and Listening</strong>&lt;br&gt;References&lt;br&gt;1. Observation exemplars from the Beacon document.&lt;br&gt;2. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – Assessment Scales</td>
<td>Identify next steps to extend the child’s speaking and listening.&lt;br&gt;To feedback and share our child observations.&lt;br&gt;To consider what we have learnt about children’s speaking and listening.&lt;br&gt;To consider what we need to do, as adults, to support the children’s speaking and listening. 21 and one observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 25.05.2010</td>
<td><strong>Speaking and Listening</strong>&lt;br&gt;English as an Additional Language (EAL) local authority consultant participated in and supported this session.</td>
<td>To share and analyse our child observations.&lt;br&gt;To consider what we need to do, as adults, to support the children’s speaking and listening. 28 and one observer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### References
1. Samples of children’s dialogue provided by the LA consultant
2. ‘Teaching Children English as an Additional Language: A Programme for Seven to Eleven year olds.’ Scott (2009)

### Interim Professional Development Tasks
- Reflection

### Purpose of Reflection
- To consider learning having implemented two child observations.
- To identify further actions to support and extend children’s learning.

### 22.07.2010

**Speaking and Listening: How confident are you?**

- To consider confidence in supporting and extending children’s speaking and listening.
- To evaluate the programme asking the questions:
  - What went well?
  - What has not gone so well?
  - Even better if …
  - What difference has it made?

Non-attendance was due to absence due to sickness
Appendix 16: School Development Plan 2010 to 2012

School Aims
We aim to create a caring school that promotes high standards of achievement and extends social skills to enable our pupils to become positive and confident members of our community.

We aim:

- To place the highest importance on the acquisition of literacy and fluency in English
- To offer a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum to promote the highest achievement of every child
- To offer a range of experiences within and beyond the school curriculum to prepare our children to be responsible citizens
- To develop in each child positive attitudes towards themselves and others, towards their learning and to encourage self-motivation and self control
- To give equal opportunity and access to the whole of school life taking into account gender, race, religion and ability
- To secure a safe and secure environment for all
- To promote an interactive partnership between school, home and the wider community
- To value and develop the skills and knowledge of the whole school community in order to fulfil the aims of the school

1. The School Development Plan, 2010 – 2012, is organised into six sections:

1. The Safeguarding Children Plan
2. The Learning and Teaching Plan
3. The Equality and Community Cohesion Plan
4. The Site and Health and Safety Plan
5. Human Resources Plan
6. Leadership and Management Plan
### 2. The Learning and Teaching Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Targeted Action</th>
<th>Desired Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)</td>
<td>Vision Day: Developing Links with the Pre-schools&lt;br&gt;Reinstate Adult and child group * (see e-mail)&lt;br&gt;Shared theme days with pre-schools&lt;br&gt;Staff exchange visits ✔&lt;br&gt;Increase amount of contact between school and pre-schools over the academic year ✔&lt;br&gt;Develop engagement with parents&lt;br&gt;Begin a story/rhyme time group * ✔&lt;br&gt;EYFS staff attend the Early Years network group ✔&lt;br&gt;Share Vision Day outcomes with the pre-schools. ✔&lt;br&gt;Share all initiatives with all EYFS team members and the pre-school staff teams. ✔</td>
<td>Greater numbers of children starting EYFS with age related expectations, 30 – 50 months with some elements of 40 – 60 months. &lt;br&gt;Transition from pre-school into EYFS does not have a negative impact on the children’s development and learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Resources/Cost</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Start/End Date</th>
<th>Led by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EYFS Budget: 2011 – 2012</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee Governor visits Invite the chair of the Governing Body</td>
<td>18.02.11&lt;br&gt;RP met with KH, agreed foci of staff swaps including 3 areas of transitional strategies. ✔&lt;br&gt;July 2011&lt;br&gt;Group for pupils and parents joining GP started by YR at the onsite pre-school, going well.&lt;br&gt;Staff exchange visits completed between 2 pre-schools.&lt;br&gt;Increased contact especially with 2 pre-schools. Children come on several transition visits.&lt;br&gt;Engagement of parents increased&lt;br&gt;Rhyme Time: Group evolved into whole year group/parent workshop.&lt;br&gt;AK joined the Early Years Network Group. RP provided training for the preschool team on speaking and listening; phonics; rhyme time for children.</td>
<td>Nov 2010&lt;br&gt;July 2012</td>
<td>RP &amp; AK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2011 – 2012:<br>• Swaps with pre-schools, set up Nov 2011.<br>• Re-introduce rhyme-time initiative to parents of new group.<br>• YR to continue with play and learning group.<br>• Continue with visits out with St Barnabas
### The Enriched Curriculum

**Make more of local places for educational visits.** What has our city got to offer and are we making the most of the city? Consider more abstract topics, such as ‘identity’ rather than always having topics that are knowledge-based, e.g., ‘Roman Britain’. Consider what we want children to experience.

**Vision Day**

The Enriched Curriculum team obtain examples of key skill progression. Organise and facilitate a subject leaders’ meeting. Teachers trial integrating/identifying key skills within planning. (Medium Term Plans). Identify transferable skills and ensure there is progression across the school. Evaluate year group topics with a focus on key skills.

Audit of skills of staff and parents and governors. Draft a ‘Learning and Teaching’ Policy in support of these developments. Draft ready to present to the Strategy committee by the end of the summer term 2011.

Trial and evaluate a whole school topic (2011 – 2012).

Seek external support to assess impact.

**2011 – 2012**

- Audit governors then parents on the skills they can offer
- Quality local places to visit review (to include visiting a place more than once,

We have a curriculum that meets the needs of the children who come to our school. Planning reflects the quality of the enriched curriculum. The planning process is efficient and effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget:</th>
<th>Learning and Teaching Committee</th>
<th>Governor visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultant costs: £1200</td>
<td>18.02.11 Examples of progression statements found for history, geography and art. “I can.” child-friendly for subject specific skills developed. Need to acquire for science, PE, RE, music and ICT. Staff audit collated. Now need more staff to be engaged in future developments. Need a staff meeting to share what has been done so far and to ensure ownership. Proposal to develop a whole school theme of ‘belonging’. Need to plan in time to plan and again strive for whole staff involvement, including TAs and children. Want to consult with parents and governors. HT &amp; RG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

324
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Raising Girls’ Attainment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Vision Day</strong></th>
<th><strong>Learning and Teaching Committee</strong></th>
<th><strong>Governor visits</strong></th>
<th><strong>Budget allocation</strong> 2011 – 2012</th>
<th><strong>Resources:</strong></th>
<th><strong>18.02.11</strong></th>
<th><strong>Audit carried out, in classes, to monitor and evaluate balance of gender in responses given to adults, who dominated in group work and to make any other relevant obs.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tally of boys and girls: How are they contributing in class?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£900</td>
<td>Girl friendly resources to engage girls in maths</td>
<td>Nov 2010</td>
<td>July 2012: Allocate time to work with all curriculum coordinators to ensure progression in skills. (Cross ref Curriculum Coordination).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement less ‘Hands up.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CS &amp; KD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate whether this is an issue at other schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse participation in sports clubs: Are they equally accessed by boys and girls?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who are the role models for the girls?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.02.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yrs 3, 4 &amp; 5 to trial a ‘girl friendly’ project with girls who have not made sufficient progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ attainment rises and more girls make good progress in their learning across the school. The gap between girls’ attainment at School and the national outcomes is narrowed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising Girls’ Attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget allocation 2011 – 2012</td>
<td>£900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources:</td>
<td>Girl friendly resources to engage girls in maths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.02.11</td>
<td>Audit carried out, in classes, to monitor and evaluate balance of gender in responses given to adults, who dominated in group work and to make any other relevant obs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011: Allocate time to work with all curriculum coordinators to ensure progression in skills. (Cross ref Curriculum Coordination).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2011 – 2012: Staff meeting time to be allocated for sharing the data and sharing ideas about how to overcome girls’ difficulties more specifically. Data re girls’ attainment and progress to be discussed at all pupil progress meetings. Appropriate actions to be identified and taken.

Staff meeting time to be allocated across 2011 – 2012.

Data re girls’ attainment and progress is closer to that of the boys and better in some cases. Investigations of contributions in class & access to clubs found boys & girls to be fairly even. A maths related club specifically for girls in Yrs 6 & 5 has been run and will continue.

Progress at least satisfactory in reading writing across the school. In one yr group it was unsatisfactory in maths. Challenging to formulate and implement ideas satisfactorily. Needs a higher profile?

Healthy Schools Programme: Vision Day
SL to check pricing for equipment. Equipment and storage purchased. KS to plan the zones. MA to consult with the School Council. Inform the whole school in assembly. Check price of a chalkboard/white board for pillar to communicate who can do what at playtime. VS to talk to TM about the zones. Zones painted.

Zones painted on the playgrounds in different colours 2 sets of equipment established Bronze ambassadors to check equipment and manage it.

Funding for playground equipment: 2011 – 2012

Learning and Teaching Committee Governor visits

18.02.11 Still to do: Suggestion box Explain the zones to everyone Equipment needs adding to: Ready to go Changing bronze ambassadors to class monitors.

Nov 2010 July 2012

MA & KS
GQ to check the suggestion box and take ideas to MA.

2011 – 2012: Set dates for the end of half term audits. Could the School Council take this on? Suggestion box needs to be more prominent, reintroduce in assembly. Budget for replacing equipment. Introduce zones to new Year 2 pupils. New outside area needs to be incorporated in. Consultation/development needed re the organisation of the back playground with regards to zoning requirements especially for lunchtimes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Schools Programme</th>
<th>Vision Day</th>
<th>Prof development and Performance management contribute to develop a confident midday supervision team. Midday supervisors are increasingly confident in their roles and they show the parents that they are in touch with the children as much as the teachers are. Higher uptake of school lunches More Asian food on the menu</th>
<th>Cost of School Lunches</th>
<th>Learning and Teaching Committee Governor Visits</th>
<th>July 2011</th>
<th>6 out of the 12 actions have been achieved.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2012:</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>We have almost everything in place that we had planned. We have achieved our objectives. Routines are established, monitors are responsible for the equipment. Regular audits of the equipment have been carried out. Governors have visited and offered feedback.</td>
<td>RW &amp; AT</td>
<td>Nov 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Lunches:
- Menus are available from the office with dates on and are displayed at both entrances.
- Menu board in hall to include photographs of some of the more unknown food so that all children know what everything is, especially for those who are new to the school and the younger children.
- Questionnaires sent out to find out food preferences through the School Council.
- All midday supervisors have had performance management objectives set.
- Write a Wet Play Policy/Guidance and displayed in the classrooms.

Cost of School Lunches:

Learning and Teaching Committee Governor Visits:

July 2011

6 out of the 12 actions have been achieved.

RW & AT

Nov 2010
Promotional days when both parents and children are invited to stay for lunch, creating an opportunity for parents and carers to talk to the midday supervisors.  
Have special days planned over the academic year. **2 days planned and implemented**  
Get Asian food recipes from parents. ✅  
Midday meal supervisors to monitor packed lunches and note children regularly having unsuitable food provided. June Garth to run a packed lunch workshop with parents of identified children invited **some monitoring**  
Activities are signposted in the playground.  
Encourage all children’s independence skills in the dining hall and encourage children to ask for “just a little bit”. **improved**  
Key Stage 2 pupils support the younger children in the EYFS/Key Stage 1 playground, encouraging ‘play’ and the playing of games. ✅  

2011 – 2012: Forward plan themed lunches  
Organise EYFS and parent lunches as part of the induction process  
**Develop better provision for lunchtime playtime, especially in the back playground**  
**Develop health packed lunches**

Make the dining room more inviting  
All children eating in school are receiving a healthy meal  
Girls to be having as much fun as boys and actively participating in the outdoor activities, including equal use of the MUGA  
Wet playtimes are better organised  
Children know where to go if they do not have someone to play with
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Schools Award</th>
<th>Develop better quality adult child interactions during lunchtime, especially with the youngest children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The School has a commitment to the global dimension to education and children’s learning. Special focus weeks, events and curriculum overviews indicate this commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 2011 Successful International week implemented the week beginning 14.02.11. Year 6 curriculum focus in the spring term, ‘One World’ Successful international visit to Ukraine, 6 Year 6 pupils and 1 teacher. July 2011 Sports Day link to the Olympic Games. 400 Days to go whole school conga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept 10 – July 2012 CS &amp; VS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Library and Information Hub</td>
<td>Achievement of the Foundation Level ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Day</td>
<td>2011 – 2012: Allocate time to set up an international link, this would give us the Intermediate award. Develop a project with a school from another country in Year 6. Continue to develop the global curriculum in relation to the theme ‘Belonging’ and the ‘Olympics’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library is well resourced and used appropriately for the promotion of reading and the teaching of research and library skills. A dedicated member of staff oversees the library for 1 day a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisatio n of time Non-contact time for the lead teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee - Headteacher reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011 We are on our way to achieving our objectives – pupils have been in groups to change books and to learn about how to find books. KS 2 have made book marks with their own barcodes ready to start using in Sept 2011. All books are on the system. New librarians appointed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 10 - July 2012 JM &amp; Library team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To organise and resource the library in order to create an area which promotes Vision Day</td>
<td>All pupils are trained on how the library is set out and how to use it. Class and parent/carer reading sessions happen in the library area on a rota basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 – 2012:</td>
<td>JM to be in the library for a full day in the first week of the new academic year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library is well resourced and used appropriately for the promotion of reading and the teaching of research and library skills. A dedicated member of staff oversees the library for 1 day a week</td>
<td>Organisatio n of time Non-contact time for the lead teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching Committee - Headteacher reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011 We are on our way to achieving our objectives – pupils have been in groups to change books and to learn about how to find books. KS 2 have made book marks with their own barcodes ready to start using in Sept 2011. All books are on the system. New librarians appointed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 10 - July 2012 JM &amp; Library team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reading and provides opportunities for the development of library and research skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecology: To become an Eco-School, initially achieving the Bronze award and then working towards the Silver award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Vision Day**
Develop whole school awareness of Ecology work
Develop the garden at the front of the school
Include recycling materials to make framework for greenhouse
Implement developments for the whole of the outdoor site, including the two playgrounds.
18.02.11
Design and create a sign for the front project.

2011 – 2012
- Silver Award
- Green Team to be further established
- Memorial Garden started
- Develop a learning plan for the additional school grounds.

| She will ensure KS 2 are all able to use new barcodes to take books out.
With new EYFS class take turns for reading time (Wed morning)
KS 1 to choose book to go home with HLTAs/TAs. For pupils to get used to using the library before getting own barcodes in Year 3. |
|---|
| All classes use the Atrium area for reading and research.
Further links are embedded between home and school.

| There is an increasing awareness across the school with regard to ecological issues and how they impact on our daily lives.
We are a Silver Award Eco-School.
Development of the outdoor areas raises awareness of the value of these areas for every aspect of the curriculum.
All fittings and fixtures in the school building support good eco-practices |
|---|
| Staff meeting time
Further explore possibilities of external funding
Money raised through fundraising events: |
| Learning and Teaching Committee - Headteacher reports |
| 18.02.11
Bronze award achieved.
July 2011
Now half way to achieving the Silver Award.
We have achieved whole school awareness, developed the front garden, including the greenhouse.

| 18.02.11
Bronze award achieved. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 – July 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Coordination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Autumn term: Resource development |
| Spring term: Talking to pupils |
| Summer term: Lesson observations |

| 2011 – 2012: SLT to plan overview of the year so that coordinators know what is expected through the year. |
| Coordinator cover to be managed by SLT & GT. |
| Coordinators to monitor planning to see that skills, knowledge & understanding are being covered. |

| 2011 – 2012: SLT to plan overview of the year so that coordinators know what is expected through the year. |
| Coordinator cover to be managed by SLT & GT. |
| Coordinators to monitor planning to see that skills, knowledge & understanding are being covered. |

| ICT | For all members of the school community to be inspired by IT: to use it safely; to use it as a tool to raise standards; to develop and |

| For IT systems see site plan |
| For E-safety see The Safeguarding Children Plan |
| For further details see IT Plan |

| 2011 – 2012 |
| All IT systems work efficiently and effectively and provide anytime anywhere access. The vast majority are able to use IT effectively to enhance their learning |

| Revenue and Capital Budget 2010 - 2011 |
| Learning and Teaching Committee Governor visits |
| July 2011 |
| Achieved objectives for the Autumn and Spring terms, although resource development is on-going. |
| Coordinator observations not done because of arrangements for cover. |

| Sept 10 – July 12 |

| Sept 2010 – July 2012 |
| JM |
| IT used safely. IT systems developing well. IT used to develop Maths, especially in Year 6. |
| IT assistant completed level 1 course. |
| Network server and class link software updated |
| Curriculum & admin systems updated |
| Interactive Whiteboard Training |
| Enrich their potential and for our IT systems to fully support this. | Continue to work on linking office and curriculum network so that all staff are able to access what they need. Further develop network so that it is used more efficiently. Purchase new hardware. Write action plan for the development of the Learning Platform. Review ICT curriculum, develop use for ICT lessons and in the classrooms. Continue to improve staff confidence and expertise. Review ICT policy Interactive whiteboard training for the new boards & active vote. Develop Purple Mash & Education City home use. Further develop opportunities for pupils to access ICT at lunchtimes and after school including 'Making the News'. |
|---|---|---|
| | Software, including home access improved. E-safety training completed. 3 workshops for parents held. Attendance improved over the 3 weeks. Homework club for Year 5 extended into IT IT Homework club for Year 6 started. Club for able, gifted and talented pupils in Year 5 started: Making the News July 2012 |
3. The Equality and Community Cohesion Plan

3.1. Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Targeted Action</th>
<th>Desired Impact</th>
<th>Resources/ Cost</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Start/End Date</th>
<th>Led by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To establish a Parents’ Forum</td>
<td>Vision Day</td>
<td>The Parents’ Forum is established and is actively involved in different aspects of school life.</td>
<td>Refreshment Costs</td>
<td>The Learning and Teaching Committee</td>
<td>18.02.11</td>
<td>28th March coffee morning for mothers, repeated at 6pm – open to all. To have the first meeting of the Parents’ Forum by the end of May 2011.</td>
<td>Nov 2010 – on-going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On 1st November 2010, members of the School Council stated their vision: “We want The School to be a school where all children progress in their learning.”

The adults contributed to a vision statement for the children at The School on that day. On Friday 18th February 2011, members of the School Council (aged from 7 to 11) rewrote that statement from their perspective as children. This is what they wrote:

“We want girls to have equal chances. We want everyone to have confidence in themselves and high expectations, to work harder and push yourself. We want girls to stand up for themselves.

We think it is important for our learning to have both positive and interesting experiences as well as being taught main skills. We benefit from the help of a whole variety of different clubs.

We want to carry on building respect between children and adults at all times. Children must learn to understand about each other in and out of school, for example, on school trips, at home and on the street and when linking with other schools. Every child needs to be given a chance to take part in many different types of activities. We want to have long term relationships with other schools not just enjoying one off events.
We want our families to help us with our learning. We want our families to take us to more places. We want families to come into school and see what we are learning and to join in.

We want the School Council to look at issues in our school and to put action to them.

We think it is important to learn as children how to be responsible for the world we are growing up in so that when we are adults we will know how to care for it.

We want The School to be a welcoming and friendly environment both inside the school and outside the school. We want a library which has many different levels of books. Every child needs to be encouraged with stickers and with praise. They can learn independently through playing. Children need a safe playground in which children should be expected to try their best at all times.

We want children to be able to work by themselves. We want children to be responsible for their learning, to concentrate, listen and pay attention. We want to know what we are learning and why. We want visitors to help us with our work and our learning.

We want both children and adults to enjoy breaktimes and lunchtimes. We want to provide a wide range of interesting activities for the children. We want to have clearly zoned areas of the playground. We want to see girls having the same opportunities for sports activities as boys and we want all children to benefit from places and spaces for quiet reflection and thinking. We want everyone to be clear about expectations, and ensuring all children respect other children’s space, play and games.

We want the public to know how good The School is and what we have achieved, through the local newspaper and the school newsletter. We also want the bond with linking schools to develop even more, as well as, with the
pre-schools and the local mosques. We would also like to have links with other
countries of the world.

We want to change topics more quickly so that we learn more. We want to do
fun activities to help us with our learning. We want families, governors and
partners to join us in our learning and come into school. We want teachers to
use interactive whiteboards more and we want learning to be fun and active.

We want to make our school a better place to be in. We want to make sure all
children in every class, year group, in the whole school is looked after. We
want to keep every child in school aware of changes and for the School Council
to continue to help to improve the school.”

The School Council
February 2011
Appendix 18: Table to Evidence the Feedback Outcomes

Where feedback from the teams was repeated the feedback is recorded once. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of times stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Statement</th>
<th>Progress Made</th>
<th>Ideas for Working Towards Our Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| We want our school to be a school where all children progress in their learning. | • Has improved. End of key stage results are improving (2)  
• Progress was at least ‘good’ across the school. (3)  
• School Council feedback, numbers relate to the number of children who responded: Reading is excellent (4). Maths OK (4), English superb, OK (2), fine. Science the best (4).  
• On track to achieve and in some areas exceed expectations have been raised. (3)  
• Gaps to national are decreasing  
• Children are set more ambitious targets (2)  
• Closer monitoring of progress: pupil progress meetings (PPM), Target Tracker. At PPM identify individuals who need extra help. (2)  
• Interventions for individual children to make good progress.  
• Children are more aware of where they need to be in their learning.  
• We are working as a team to implement.  
• Longer teaching assistant hours enables time to exceed attendance targets of 96%.  
• Improve punctuality.  
• Reduce unauthorized absences.  
• Targeting groups  
• Mixing groups between classes (abilities).  
• How having the levels on groupings impact.  
• Sharing achievement by the child – what target have I met/ have I got better at (Lift Off! Books). Increase children’s knowledge and understanding of their NC levels and know what steps they need to take to make progress (7).  
• More consultations with children and pupil ownership (2).  
• Parental ownership.  
• Levels on the website.  
• Home Learning  
• Workshops  
• Learning Clubs | No input from the year three team so feedback from a total of 9 teams. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>We want girls to have equal chances. We want everyone to have confidence in themselves and high expectations, to work harder and push yourself. We want girls to stand up for themselves.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls’ Chat Group (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls’ International Football Area (IFA) only days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls only groups and clubs (3). Not proven to be effective in maths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We do have confident girls. Don’t seem to be so reluctant to learn with boys (3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk partners (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active questioning strategies (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s happening, girls do have equal chances. We have narrowed the gap to national Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No hands up strategies (5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting a positive attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving girls chances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>... Factor (In school talent contest) – girls showed confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More targeted tracking of end of key stage 1, both girls and children who achieve at a level 2C (3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With the help of the School’s Book of the girls are building their confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011 – 2012 the School Council chair was a girl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback from all ten teams.
We think it is important for our learning to have both positive and interesting experiences as well as being taught main skills. We benefit from the help of a whole variety of clubs,

- More residential visits, London and France as well as Suffolk (4).
- Wider variety of visits, e.g., to the Houses of Parliament, Anti Bullying conferences, cinema, pantomime, Literary Festival (5).
- Linking schools (3).
- More clubs available (4), including homework clubs, effective teaching assistant involvement and are monitored.
- Sports clubs (3).
- Gardening in school
- Belonging Groups activities (2).
- Working with external agencies, Jack Hunt cluster ‘Art of Being Brilliant’ (3).
- Opportunities for young scientists
- Development of year themes
- Opportunities for children in leadership roles, e.g., Factor.
- Singing assemblies
- Improvement in learning experiences in Art and Maths.

No input from the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 9 teams.

We want to carry on building respect between children and adults at all times. Children must learn to understand about each other in and out of school, for

- Linking with other schools (6), including football.
- Circle times – encouraging the children to listen to each other
- Higher expectations

No input from the year two team and the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 8 teams.

- More of the same.
- Are clubs open to year 1 children?
- Life skills/Life experiences. Exposure to experiences they are not used to. Camping trip Summer Term (Water), Natural History Museum (3).
- More walks and short trips.
- Adults and children honestly appraise which topics work for children and are relevant to them as well as providing broad experience coverage
- Pupil Premium children – are they accessing clubs? If not – why not? Quality of provision – are they making a difference – evidence?
- Music clubs and teachers.

No input from the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 9 teams.
example, on school trips, at home and on the street and when linking with other schools. Every child needs to be given a chance to take part in many different types of activities. We want to have long term relationships with other schools not just enjoying one off events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>We want our families to help us with our learning. We want families to take us to more places. We want families to come into school and see what we are learning and to join in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English as an additional language (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family literacy and numeracy (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maths clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reading buddies (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family days/trips (6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parental involvement in year group trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents coming to assemblies and the school productions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents invited to help with craft/art sessions (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Home Learning project – inviting parents to come and support their child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No input from the OATs, years two and six teams and the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 6 teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>• Encourage the wider community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helping parents to help read with child at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents stay at the beginning of day to help with an activity or for specific activities – all areas of the curriculum. Design interactive activities involving parents. More opportunities in school for families to get to know what their children are learning. Family Day (5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take alien home for visit and write about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Newsletter – with ideas of places to take children linked to theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent Teachers’ Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Homework club – parents invited to work alongside children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>• Wider experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Belonging Groups – children learning with children from other year groups (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Incident reporting: Zero tolerance (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High profile of anti-bullying week (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussing issues as a class when arise, e.g., racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involvement with the cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Giving more responsibility to the children, … Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Year 6 assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One World Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Children friendly on trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers talk with children a lot now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No input from the year two team and the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 8 teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>• Pupils visit mosque and learn about community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continuing link with MS Primary School in Year 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More ‘Belonging Group’ sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Buddy Stop in Learning Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Anti-bullying ambassadors in Year 5. We need help to stop children from bullying (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local School link – makes it easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We need to help others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need more trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help children on subjects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No input from the year two team and the midday supervision team so feedback from a total of 8 teams.
### 6

We think it is important to learn as children how to be responsible for the world we are growing up in so that when we are adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>6</strong></th>
<th>We think it is important to learn as children how to be responsible for the world we are growing up in so that when we are adults.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | **• Gardening club**  
| | **• Solar panels**  
| | **• Bat boxes**  
| | **• Powerdown fortnight/day (5)**  
| | **• Green Team (2).**  
| | **• School Council**  
| | **• Eco Council**  
| | **• Class Gruffalo**  
| | **• Daily Recycling (2)**  
| | **• Governors’ Award**  
| | **• Given opportunities to help in the community**  
| | **• Spring term topic: One World**  
| | No input from the year three team the midday supervision team and the school councillors so feedback from a total of 7 teams. |
| | **• Make children more aware about where in the world we live.**  
| | **• Modelling aspect of own and others’ and school property more.**  
| | **• Jobs in class, i.e., turning off the lights.**  
| | **• Embedding Social, Moral, Cultural and Spiritual aspects in the curriculum.**  
| | **• Ecology, fair-trade etc. throughout the year.**  
| | **• Camping trip. Summer Term (Water).**  
| | No input from the OATs, years three and six teams, Ht and DHT, MDS team and the school council so |

After reading the PhD Thesis, words cannot describe my emotions, I felt terrible and appalled about what I had done. Reading the PhD refreshed all my memories. At first when I read the PhD I felt disgusted and could not believe I had ever done such a silly thing. Reading onwards I recognised the changes in my behaviour and how I repent after I had done it. From being so naïve to being a mature teenager now, I know how the victims feel. If only I could go back to primary school and change my behaviour. I have changed a lot now. I have lots of multicultural friends that are all very loyal to me. My behaviour changed ever since I joined ‘The Girls’ Chat Group’ every Thursday. The chat group helped a lot because we negotiated and talked through our behaviour and actions. Thanks a lot for creating such a beneficial group. Thinking back to what I had done is way out of context now. I still don’t know how I could have done such an immature act. I have learnt that even if someone comes from a different background/culture, we are still humans. Seeing the thesis makes me want to go back in time and change my actions. Even if our names are not mentioned in the PhD, I still know I did it and so do you. I have put the past behind me and will never wish to do the same ‘act’ again.

Thank you,

Zahra
Appendix 20: Learning Community Responses to the Notion of a Systemic Approach to Leadership

At the October 2013 meeting the last collaborative task was to create a shared ‘leadership mobile’. Definitions of leadership were created and placed within our school’s context. The responses from the nine groups have been collated. The table below is a presentation of the outcomes.

Table to Show Notions of School Leadership: Staff Team Feedback: What We Expect of our Leaders/of our Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notion</th>
<th>Tally</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of those being led and what they need/Empathetic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence/Confidence in self and staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for those being led/generate respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination to lead well</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience with those who are struggling</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing strengths/recognising the skills of others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing potential/nurturing potential/value our potential</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage initiative/encourage yet direct</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing success</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed to the team</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible/Adaptable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long hours!/Hard working</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready to muck in</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good memory</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus and Vision/Forward Thinking (but willing to take a different route)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>See the bigger picture</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Creative problem solver</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Be approachable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Knowledge of subjects/everything/Informative</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Compassionate and understanding (everything)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Organised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Good Listener</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Trust/trust but monitor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Communicators</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Believe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Spokesperson</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Lead by example</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Knowing when to step back</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Challenge and motivate</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Receptive</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Community of leaders</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 21: The Family Strategy

The ‘By Whom?’ column is left blank in respect of ethical considerations.

### 2014-2015 Development Plan for Family Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision: Enabling parents to feel confident in supporting their children’s learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>End of Year Outcomes:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For parents to have a greater understanding of their children’s learning.
- Help parents feel able to support their child’s learning.
- To encourage parents as learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December Milestones:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1) KS1 & KS2 Numeracy workshops  
2) EYFS, Year 1 & 2 phonic workshops  
3) MacMillan Tea Morning & Afternoon  
4) Year 1 project  
5) Involvement of parent Governors in School life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned actions to achieve these Milestones:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When (Year/Date)</th>
<th>By Whom?</th>
<th>Intended outcome</th>
<th>As a result of this action what are the next steps?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Phonics and Shared lessons  
Open Days – Shared lessons, parents are invited to observe teaching and learning alongside their child and support the learning in the classroom.  
Link Governor to be involved in open days and shared lessons. | 13th, 14th, 20th, 21st October, 2014  
Year 2  
Nov 2014  
Year 1 14th & 16th January 2015 | Phonics workshop  
Class teachers- Share lessons | For parents to experience learning with their children/understanding and greater awareness of the curriculum | EYFS - Targeted approach has proven successful in having higher numbers of parents access the workshops.  
Parents will be invited back in the Spring term to have Phonics Phase 3 input and further support with home learning activities. |
| 2 | Numeracy Workshops  
Workshop 1 - Addition and subtraction  
Workshop 2 – Multiplication and division | 2nd & 9th Dec 2014 | | For parents to learn about the calculation policy. To support parents in their children’s learning. | Workshop 1 – 80 parents attended  
Workshop 2 – 40 parents attended.  
Feedback was very positive and more workshops were requested.  
Governor was present at a maths workshop. |
<p>| 3 | MacMillan Tea Afternoon | Autumn term – 10th October | Whole School | To encourage the wider community to support and raise funds for | A real success, event took place on both school sites and we raised over £250 for the Macmillan charity. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4 | Parents’ Group  
Weekly meeting with Parents & Carers. Drop in session to discuss about any issues they may have. | Sept  
Every Tues | Parents & Carers are confident to share information, positives, worries or concerns. |
| 5 | To explore involvement of parent Governors with Parents’ Group. | Oct | To have more informed and active parent governors. |
| 6 | To reflect on our current practice and to pilot sharing video dialogue about children’s learning. | Feb 2015 | For parents to have a shared understanding about their child’s wellbeing and level of involvement. |
| 7 | Parents invited into Year group assemblies, Headteacher assemblies and productions. | ½ termly  
All year groups | To share learning and children’s achievements with parents. |
| 8 | REAL project  
Member of the team to be trained on the course to have a team of practitioners improving early literacy. | Home visits 11th, 12th Nov | To raise achievement in Literacy.  
First mark making event was a big success. Storytelling to follow in the Spring term. Deliver a reading workshop for parent late Jan 2015. |
| 9 | Teacher/Parent consultations | All staff  
All teachers. | Parents find out about their child’s progress and achievements and future targets are shared. |
| 10 | Sharing Educational Visits | All year groups  
All teachers | Parents have first-hand experiences of the educational visits. |
| 11 | Family Days Out  
Leaflets and flyers to be showcased |   | To promote family time and supporting parents to access wider  
Leaflets are displayed at front entrance area. This will continue to be updated. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sports Day – Learning about different sports and health events and taking part in the activities.</td>
<td>All Year groups</td>
<td>All teachers</td>
<td>To share children’s sporting achievements with their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Translation – supporting communication with parents and promoting learning in home language.</td>
<td>Throughout the year</td>
<td>To ensure parents have full understanding from the teacher about their child’s achievements.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ensuring parents understand the importance of full attendance. Attendance is monitored and patterns of non-attendance are looked into.</td>
<td>When required</td>
<td>To have full attendance of children in school.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>½ termly</td>
<td>To inform parents of the children’s current topics and learning going on in the half term.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Inviting Pashto &amp; Dari speaking Parents in to discuss school life. Ask if parents have any questions.</td>
<td>Parent s to have a clear understanding of the school.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Family fun session for Pashto &amp; Dari families</td>
<td>Create a feeling of belonging and support.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Workshop for parents ‘Something to talk about. Something to learn’ Continue throughout the academic year.</td>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>Explore ways of involving parents in children’s learning.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>English Course Develop parents confidence and understanding</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>Parents to learn English.</td>
<td>Weekly attendance meeting are held between AHT’s. Met target of 97% for first term. Family support worker to continue to visit households where attendance is concerning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Art &amp; Craft</td>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>City College</td>
<td>Sessions will begin with new parents in Feb/March 2015. Parents transfer their knowledge and creativity skills and use in the home setting. Excellent feedback. Parents had ideas which they will go on to use with their own families. DIY Workshop for Dads to begin in Feb 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Community Learning</td>
<td>Autumn Saturday mornings</td>
<td>To develop children’s home language and culture. To improve children’s self-worth confidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DIY Workshop for Dads</td>
<td>Feb 2015</td>
<td>City College</td>
<td>To develop skills to use within the household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Reading workshops</td>
<td>Feb 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>To develop parent confidence with parents supporting their child with home reading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 22: The Professional Development Strategy

Professional Development Strategy

Our professional development strategy is presented under the headings:

- Context
- Processes
- School Priorities
- School Development Planning
- Engagement in Initial Teaching Training
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Context

The School’s Strategic Plan sets out how we identify the appropriate professional development to ensure:

- We achieve our school aims
- Achieve our School Vision
- Achieve our identified school priorities

The staff team is our most valuable and most valued resource in the continuous process of school improvement.

In order to achieve the above we have to access professional development opportunities for individual members of staff, groups of staff (2+), teams, the whole school team and for other partners (stakeholders) that will make a difference and have impact.

Processes

We have two key processes that enable us as a school to identify our professional development needs. They are:

- School self-evaluation
- Performance management

Both processes are well planned, well documented, embedded and supported within the school.

1School Aims: Staff Diary 2012-2013
2School Vision: Staff Diary 2012-2013
School Priorities

The school priorities are reviewed on a three yearly basis and are presented in the School Development Plan 2012-2015.

Professional development at the School has to impact on the following four key priority areas:

- Pupil Achievement
- The Quality of Learning and Teaching
- Behaviour and Safety
- Leadership and Management

As well as having a strategic overview of focus areas for the school year, in the termly Raising Achievement Plan we identify the appropriate continuing professional development to enable us to achieve our identified priorities and key objectives. These are monitored by the leadership team and members of the governing body on a termly basis. This process is a strength of the school.

School Development Planning

Action Research as the Methodology for School Development Planning

Our action research methodology for school development planning and professional development follows that of action research that is:

- What is our concern?
- Why is it our concern?
- How are we going to improve the situation?
- Plan for improvement
- Monitor and evaluate
- What difference does it make? What impact has it had? So what?
- Identify next steps to embed good to outstanding practice

In other words: Plan Do Review

This is the methodology we applied for our 2010 to 2012 school development planning. We aim to continue this process. However, there are exceptional circumstances when senior leaders have to take over the processes to ensure and secure rapid school improvement. These circumstances could be one of the following:

- An insufficient percentage of targets are achieved
- The school’s outcomes are below government floor standards
- The quality of learning and teaching across the school is judged to be requiring improvement or below
• The school is an Ofsted category

**Engagement in Initial Teaching Training**

The recruitment and selection of teachers remains a challenge for us. Therefore, part of our professional development strategy is to be engaged in initial teacher training.

**Engagement in Initial Teacher Training**

• **SCITT**
  
  o SCITT is our local organisation that will be a provider of school centred initial teacher training.
  
  o Other partners are the Local Authority, Learning Partnership and the Institute of Education, London.
  
  o The Headteacher sits on the executive group of the SCITT.
  
  o The Deputy Headteacher sits on the management group of the SCITT.
  
  o The School is leading on maths and meeting the needs of multilingual pupils.

• **Partner Universities**
  
  o We are a partnership school with Partner Universities and we have trainee teachers on placement.

**Professional Development Opportunities**

**Androgogy: Adult Learning**

At the School we are aware that just as children have different learning styles so do adults. Therefore, it is important that we recognise that for adults a range of professional development opportunities need to be provided to meet our different needs and preferences.

It is important to recognise the impact of on-going professional dialogue that occurs on a daily basis in school. School is a learning organisation not only for children but also for all adults. The more we recognise this on-going process the more children will benefit.

15 SCITT: School Centred Initial Teacher Training
The Role of Research in School Development

Perceiving school development as research and, more precisely, action research, embeds an evidence based approach to school improvement.

Therefore, where members of the school team are accessing higher qualifications the expectation is that the research elements will impact and make a difference for children.

A Menu of Professional Development Opportunities

At the School we access a menu of professional development opportunities to meet the requirements of the school priorities.

Opportunities for Individual Members of Staff

- Induction
- Performance Management
  - Access to qualifications
  - Access to courses, workshops and conferences
  - Access to cluster meetings
  - Access to locality meetings
  - Visits to schools, early years settings and other educational organisations, e.g., Early Excellence, Huddersfield
- Action Research, e.g., Study at degree level and above, Maths Specialist Teacher qualification (MA level study)
- Professional Dialogue, Mentoring, Coaching and Lesson Study
- Mentoring trainees and students
  - Both teachers and teaching assistants have the opportunity to mentor trainees and students
  - We know mentoring
    - Focuses the mentor’s attention on professional standards
    - Promotes reflective practice on the part of the mentor
    - Provides opportunities for the mentor to focus on aspects of their own practice

Opportunities for Groups of Staff (2+)

- Access to courses, workshops and conferences
- Visits to schools, early years settings and other educational organisations, e.g., Early Excellence, Huddersfield
- Action research project
- Linking Schools: Partnership working, for example, within a cluster of schools, to share expertise and knowledge.

Opportunities for Teams
• Access to staff meetings, teachers’ meetings, leadership meetings and senior leadership meetings
• Access to courses, workshops and conferences
• Critical friends: for example consultant Headteachers, academics, tutors
• Visits to schools, early years settings and other educational organisations, e.g., Early Excellence, Huddersfield.
• Team development, e.g., Teaching Assistants, Performance Managers, Office and Administration Team, Line Managers

**Opportunities for the Whole School Teams**

• Access to professional development days
• Access to staff briefings
• Employees Assistance Scheme and Worklife Support

**Opportunities for the Whole School Teams**

• Access to professional development days
• Access to community consultations

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

At the School we are aware that some professional development activities are more successful than others. Therefore, our monitoring and evaluation processes are key to establishing what works well, what does not work so well and even better if…..

**Linking the Raising Attainment Plan and Performance Management**

Professional development activities are identified on the termly Raising Attainment Plan. This allows the flexibility to identify strategic needs, on-going individual needs and needs that arise from the school’s monitoring and moderation processes.

**Professional Development Evaluations**

When members of staff access external courses, workshops and conferences a professional development form is filled in. The aim of the evaluation process is to identify future actions and the overall effectiveness of the event. Each staff members performance manager receives a copy of this feedback and therefore updates on impact are discussed at review meetings. Outcomes and impact are also recorded through the system of leadership half termly reports.
Bibliography


Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF). (2010) *Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) Speaking and Listening Assessment Guidelines: Levels 1, 2 & 3.* [https://www.tes.co.uk/.../app-grid-for-speaking-amd-listening-level-1-3-6086913](https://www.tes.co.uk/.../app-grid-for-speaking-amd-listening-level-1-3-6086913)


Gronn, P. (2010) Leadership: its genealogy, configuration and trajectory in Journal of


John, K. (2012b) Authority and democracy 100 years on in ASILP Year Book.
Chippenham: Antony Rowe.


360


Parker, C. (2001a) It’s about making his mark in the world. An action research study into the development of shared understandings about children’s mark making. Dissertation submitted in part requirement for the MA in Early Childhood Education of the University of Sheffield. Sheffield, UK. University of Sheffield, Department of Educational Studies.


RAISE. (2013) RAISEonlinehttps://www.raiseonline.org


Unpublished paper for the EECERA Conference, Birmingham.


