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Values-Led Leadership in England's Secondary Schools

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Candidate declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.

5. The word count of the thesis is 49,500

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Abstract

This study explores values-led leadership in England's Secondary schools. The research took place between 2021 and 2022 and focused on headteachers' leadership. In the context of a growing headteacher recruitment and retention crisis, my working hypothesis from the outset was that establishing a place for values-led leadership was one way to address this crisis and that values-led leadership is an approach that will lead to greater success for all in schools. Consequentially the research questions were designed to explore the extent of a place for values-led leadership and to enable descriptions of the enactment and impact of values-led leadership in England's Secondary schools.

The approach taken through-out was informed by Layder's (1998) adaptive theory. The adaptive theory approach led to a focus on studies that identified leaders who are driven by values rather than government directives/ agendas. I noted that the leaders in these studies were typically in higher performing schools. This led to the hypothesis that such schools are more conducive to values-led leadership. Other literature detailing successful leadership in keeping with a values-led approach, for example Hill et al.'s architect and work on the power of connective and distributive leadership (Harris, 2013; Armstrong et al., 2018), informed the research tools and data analysis. It also provided theory to adapt and develop.

The study used a phased mixed methods approach. Firstly, a national survey of 30 headteachers. The survey data served to explore the place for values-led leadership in English schools and to identify two schools for the qualitative case study element. The case study element took place over a period of three months - data was collected about the leadership behaviours of two headteachers using semi-structured interviews with a range of staff. This data allowed me to add to and develop extant descriptions of values-led leadership and its impact in schools.

A key finding of the study is that the 'place' for values-led leadership is influenced by the current accountability regimes (notably Ofsted). In this context, the study ends with descriptions of the positive impact of values-led leadership and an outline of a set of conditions needed for values-led leadership to thrive. I note that there is an incompatibility with the conditions needed for this approach to school leadership and the accountability measures in the early 2020s.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

<u>1.1 Background</u>

Headteacher supply in England is low, and turnover is high. A report commissioned by the Future Leaders Trust, Teaching Leaders and Teach First (2016) asserted that England would face a shortage of 19,000 headteachers by 2022. The recruitment crisis is also exacerbated by the high turnover. More headteachers than ever before are resigning or being removed from their posts, for example, nearly a third of school leaders appointed as secondary heads in 2013 had left by 2016 (Whiteman, 2016). More recently, NAHT (a school leaders' union) accessed data from the Department of Education that showed one in three (37%) secondary Headteachers who started their roles in 2015 had left by 2020. The data showed that every year since 2011, a higher percentage of leaders are leaving (BBC article, 2022).

There is some research that tries to unpick the reasons for this growing recruitment crisis. Research carried out by 'The Key' is referenced in 'Heads Up: Meeting the challenges of headteacher recruitment' (2016) and states 86.8% respondents believed headship was increasingly unattractive – at worst seen as a soulless job merely responding to the latest government policy. Yet this soullessness did not seem to be in evidence in key documents that defined the role of the Headteacher at this time. The preamble to the 'National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers' (DfE, 2015) states,

'The values and ambitions of headteachers determine the achievements of schools.' (p.4)

The preamble ends with, 'Headteachers, together with those responsible for governance, are **guardians of the nation's schools.'** The implication here being that there is plenty of room for 'soul' or character, individuality, human qualities and, most importantly, values-led leadership. Indeed, it was this document that first piqued my interest in pursuing further research. I have taught in English Secondary schools since 1997 and held leadership roles since 2003 and I wanted to further explore this tension between the role of the Headteacher's values in the leadership and direction of the school, and the demands of government policy. My focus is not on the increasing recruitment crisis or why fewer teachers aspire to be Headteachers but I am mindful that there would inevitably be links between these issues and my research. That there is a growing

shortage of school leaders is undeniable and I would argue that the question of the role of the headteacher's values in their leadership should be answered as a matter of urgency to help address this.

Interestingly, over the course of my research, the Headteacher Standards were re-written and re-released in October 2020. In this new document Headteachers are 'role models', they are 'influential' but have become **'custodians'** rather than **'guardians.'** Moreover, whilst they 'establish and sustain the school's ethos and strategic direction' they do so in partnership with others (e.g., those responsible for governance). It is possible that the shifts in these documents reflect the changes school leaders (and those who might have once aspired to be school leaders) have sensed in the role for a number of years. Indeed, my literature review starts with analysis of different incarnations of Headteacher Standards and I note that they shift and change with government policy; in many ways they hold Headteachers to account for the key policies of the day. These documents really take us to the heart of the challenge – phrases that state the Headteacher's values and ambitions are important but, when these documents are examined closely, there is an inevitable tension between such notions and the strong push to ensure school leaders enact government agenda and policy.

There is more. There is evidence that Department of Education endorsed leadership approaches are not ensuring strong student outcomes in comparison to other countries (Hill, Goddard, Laker & Mellon, 2016) and that different approaches to leadership need to be enabled and encouraged. This is also borne out by data from the school inspectorate; Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Ofsted inspection reports of schools that are deemed to be failing (inadequate or grade 4) always cite a failure of leadership. Twenty three percent of England's secondary schools were deemed to require improvement or be inadequate at the time of my research (Ofsted, 2022). My research aimed to investigate whether values-led leadership could be an approach that has a positive impact on English Secondary schools and be a key component in improving schools.

There certainly appears to be a growing appetite amongst school leaders for literature and articles about values-led leadership and ethical leadership. For example, In January 2019 the Ethical Leadership Commission published their final report, 'Navigating the

Educational Moral Maze'. The report was promoted by a large leadership union and several other leading educationalists. Since the report's publication, they have reached out to school leaders and governors to become 'pathfinders' and explore one of the paths (e.g., use their ethical audit). There has also been an increase in articles and books with titles that promote values-led and ethical leadership, for example, Roberts' 2019 'Ethical Leadership for a Better Education System' and Rees's 2018 'Wholesome Leadership', but as yet there appears to be a scarcity of research examining whether this kind of leadership can really have a place in our education system mindful of the tension with government agenda. There is also a scarcity of research into the impact of values-led leadership on a school. This is the niche and space for my research. I tested the water for a sense of the appetite for my research when I shared some of my initial ideas at a national conference (WomenEd) in October 2019. My session (entitled 'Another way to lead schools -values are better than bastards') was an optional session running at the same time as seven others yet I found myself speaking in packed room of delegates all seemingly keen to hear more. Equally, the participants in my pilot study and this study were keen to hear more about my research and work. Our current education system is dominated by a neo-liberal agenda and its related policy technologies notably marketisation, managerialism and performativity (Bates, 2011). But it seems many of the staff, students, families and leaders are ready to try something new. I think my research could play a part in examining values-led approaches to school leadership: what this 'looks like' and the impact on schools. Moreover, my research also seeks to explore a space or place for values-led leadership mindful of the tension with the government agenda.

As a Secondary headteacher this research is of profound personal interest and, I believe, an area that requires further exploration in the context of a growing crisis in headteacher recruitment and retention AND to give all our young people the best possible Secondary schools. Since 2003 I have served on leadership teams in three different schools in the same local authority. I have been a co-headteacher of one of these three school and the sole headteacher of another.   I was also the co-leader of a 'Teaching School' between 2014 and 2016; as part of this role, I supported leaders across the city and beyond. I have observed how the headteacher's leadership can set the tone for behaviour and interactions across the school community and I have witnessed leaders struggling to reconcile their values and externally imposed policy or measures. I have heard less over

the years when I speak to fellow headteachers about moral purpose and serving children and more about 'value-added', 'world class schools' and 'aiming for outstanding'. My experience before undertaking this research was that the headteachers who were feted and promoted advised tough approaches and quick fixes to turn schools around. They appeared to achieve strong student outcomes at any cost (high rates of exclusion, teacher burnout, less space to support children with special education needs). My journey towards this research took me from reading autobiographical-style books written by serving and former school leaders (e.g., Tomsett, 2015) to a desire to undertake some robust academic research exploring other approaches to leadership rooted in values.   That I might add some wisdom to the debate about school leadership and suggest a solution to the recruitment crisis was also appealing. Alongside that was the hope that I would not become part of the statistics; headteachers who leave the role long before retirement.

1.2 Aims & objectives

As stated in 1.1, there is a shortage of school leaders in England today and turnover is high. As I began my study, my working hypothesis was that establishing a place for values-led leadership in England's schools is one way to address the recruitment crisis. However, an exploration of the place for values-led leadership in our schools is important not just for its potential as an antidote to the recruitment crisis; there is also an emergent notion in the research to date (Hill, Goddard, Laker & Mellon, 2016**;** Armstrong, Bryant & Ko,2018) that values-led leadership is an approach that will lead to greater success for all in schools. My research also aims to further explore and develop this notion. As I note above, this is also of profound personal interest to me in my role as a Secondary Headteacher. Thus, my research questions are as follows,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

To ensure I could realistically add findings of weight and academic rigour to this seemingly large topic I have used an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998) and mixed methods research. An adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998) builds upon and adds to research carried out in this sphere to date – it adds the next layer to our

understanding. To be clear, Layder (1998) argues that research is not going to establish a finite truth, instead it will produce the 'latest stage' in the elaboration of theory. A mixed methods approach of quantitative research followed by qualitative research has proved be powerful too. My questionnaire (i.e., the collection of quantitative data) provided a data set that built upon the research I have examined to date by testing the hypothesis that there is more likely to be values-led leadership in a school with a higher Ofsted rating and has provided some answers to the first question. As I explore in chapter 2, this hypothesis come from the extant research on values-led leadership in schools to date (e.g., Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin and Collarbone, 2003 and Armstrong, Bryant and Ko, 2018). This research is seemingly always based on high-performing, highly rated and strong schools thus suggesting a link between Ofsted ratings and a place for values-led leadership. The survey data also enabled me to identify a school for the case studies and the collection of qualitative data. This qualitative data in turn allowed me to add my findings to other research carried out to date on the impact of values-led leadership. I develop this in detail in my 'Methodology and Methods' chapter.

An 'adaptive theory' approach (Layder, 1998) does not imply that there is no niche or need for my research; much of the research I seek to build upon and develop (even 'adapt') does not directly look at values-led leadership and its positive impact in schools; rather the leaders, schools and approaches that they conclude are the best are those where leaders appear to be driven by clear, well-articulated and shared values. Unlike other research to date, my research places an exploration of the place for, and the impact of, values-led leadership centre stage.

1.3 Definition of terms – what do I mean by values-led leadership?

Exploring definitions of 'values' and 'values-led leadership is part of my literature review but it is useful to share my working definition from the outset. Scholars with a specific focus on educational leadership define the word values as '*ethics*' (Haydon, 2007), or '*core beliefs about life and about relating to other people*' (Gold, 2004) or as *the key beliefs that underpin our morality* and therefore *how we treat and affect people* (Bottery, 1990). Some of the literature I explored used the term 'v*ision*' (and documents associated with vision such as School Development Plans or statements of ethos and aims) as an articulation of values (Haydon, 2007: George, Halpin & Moore,

2002). Equally, several studies examined leadership behaviours as a manifestation of values (Gold 2004: Armstrong et al. 2018). From all this literature, one could conclude that Headteacher values are a set of core beliefs or moral driving forces. Moreover, Heads articulate their values as a 'vision' for school and demonstrate their values in their leadership behaviours. However, I would argue we cannot separate a discussion about educational values from a discussion around the purpose of education because one cannot separate core beliefs or driving forces from a notion of the end game for all the young people in the school. Exploration of this in relation to the terms 'values' and 'values-led leadership' led me to this working definition; **the Headteacher's values are a set of personal beliefs or ethics AND core ideas about the purpose of education. These 'values' in turn set the aims and goals for the school and the Headteacher demonstrates their values through their leadership behaviours.**

There is one further thing to add to this. As I detail in later chapters, I drew on the Nolan Principles (1995) and the work of the Ethical Leadership Commission (ASCL, 2019) in my research design. In the bounds of my research, I therefore also have a notion of what these values are that drive the leadership behaviours; that they include for example integrity, honesty and service. Moreover, these documents have informed the leadership behaviours that I looked for in my research such as kindness, optimism and courage.

1.4. The shape of my thesis

This opening chapter articulated the journey into the research; both in terms of my personal and professional interest in the research questions and in terms of the context of the Headteacher recruitment crisis and research to date on values-led leadership in schools. I suggested further research into values-led leadership could both be part of the solution to the recruitment crisis and key to further improvement of England's Secondary schools. I briefly shared some of the extant literature that I explore in much greater depth in chapter 2, the literature review. In chapter 2, I also further explore a definition of 'values-led leadership' and return to policy documents, in particular, the Headteacher Standards. Iterations of these Headteacher Standards exemplify the context of government policy in which England's secondary headteachers operate. An examination of this policy documentation also serves to show the evolving government agenda.

The literature and policy documentation explored in chapter 2 also provided material for the design of questionnaire and case study questions that I detail in chapter 3, my methodology and methods chapter. This third chapter explains why this approach is taken by further developing comments made in this introductory chapter about the centrality of 'adaptative theory (Layder,1998) to my research. This 'adaptive theory' approach emphasises the strong links between the literature in chapter 2, my research design and methods (chapter 3), my findings (chapter 4) and discussion (chapter 5). There is necessarily a different tone/feel to my thesis as pertinent literature is used in the creation of my research tools (the questionnaire and case study questions detailed in chapter 3) and also plays a key role in my findings and discussion (chapters 4 and 5). This is because,

'The adaptive theory approach emphasizes that theorising should be a continuous aspect of the research process rather than be reserved for special junctures and/or occasions. Theorizing may therefore take place at any phase of the research process, including well before and well after the data has been collected.' (Layder,1998, p.25)

The 'Methodology and Methods' chapter, chapter 3, also justifies my mixed method approach. It grapples with the challenges of a mixed method approach and why I believed it to be suitable to the exploration of my two-part research question,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

Simply put, the first question best suited a quantitative method and the second a qualitative. However, I explore the epistemological and practical challenges of this approach to research in chapter 3. My two-part question shapes the 'Findings and Analysis' chapter (chapter 4) as I explore the quantitative data in response to the first part and the qualitative data in response to the second part. However, in the 'Discussion' chapter (chapter 5) I tackle the questions in reverse order and explain my rationale for doing so. This rationale is linked to emerging theories and further questions that arose as I analysed data and read more literature. A summary of my findings is presented in chapter 6, the conclusion. This chapter also briefly explores next steps for this research and how the seemingly more straightforward part of the research question, the first part, proved the most difficult and complex to answer.

Chapter 2 Literature and Policy Review

2.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this literature review is to critically examine the research and literature to date about values-led leadership in England's schools. The first section examines the context; the power and influence of the government Department of Education, their impact on schools and the scope for different approaches to school leadership in recent years. It is important to establish this context as the reality in which headteachers operate before turning to the extant literature that is partly dominated by theoretical discussions of values-led leadership. An initial and brief discussion of terms will set the scene for the second section (2.1-3 and 4.1-2) and is followed by an exploration of some of the work to date endorsing and establishing values-led leadership as a valid and positive leadership approach. I will make a brief reference to the large body of work on values-based leadership in spheres beyond education but focus on research to date in schools. This second section also unpicks research that suggests the impact of values-led leadership. The final section of the chapter brings the two key themes together and explores, in the light of government policy and expectations of headteachers, the challenges of taking a values-led leadership approach in England's schools today (and indeed for the past 30+ years). This section provides clues to the place for values-led leadership; the kinds of schools where headteachers might find a space to be a values-led leader. The chapter ends with a summary and two key ideas 'centre stage'. These two ideas from two pieces of research not only explore values-led leadership in practice (and in the context of the demands of government agenda) they also suggest leads to follow and build upon in my own research. This is very much in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder,1998) that I discuss in detail in chapter 3.

2.2 The context of education policy in England

The best clues to help us understand the interplay between school leadership and national policy can be found in the Department of Education documents outlining standards for Headteachers in England. There have now been four editions of Headteacher standards. The first edition was 2002 and the most recent 2020. Analysis of the language of each of the documents shows the shifts and changes in national

government ideas and the latest policy technologies enacted to make the desired or promised improvements.

Bates (2011) provides an excellent overview of the factors that have shaped education policy over 140 years. Bates explains that the 1980s and 1990s saw a significant erosion in confidence in public services and a growing doubt that an education would inevitably lead to employment. Bates (like many others) argues that this in turn led to a neo-liberal revolt against public services, the end result of which was a plan that sought to restructure them around a consumer model. Thus, the power of the market to improve education was at the heart of the Conservative government Education Reform Act of 1988. And the spirit has continued. Since then, a number of policy technologies (notably marketisation, managerialism and performativity) have been enacted and have formed a framework designed to bring about school improvement. Within this context the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) and the national standards for headteachers were introduced. Bates explains,

'With marketisation, school autonomy and a more business-like approach to the running of schools came the need for a new kind of headteacher and manager whose role was to facilitate the transformation and modernisation of the system'. (p. 96)

She goes on to add that this new form of leadership required the construction of new identities for headteachers, a process that was facilitated by the National College for School Leadership. The NCSL opened in 2000, the first Headteacher Standards were published in 2000.

It is to two subsequent editions of the Headteacher Standards that I turn to explore the interplay between policy and the space for different approaches to school leadership in England. I focus my analysis on the second and third versions as these are the Headteacher Standards that will have informed, even shaped, the leadership approach and work of the headteachers in my sample.

2.3 An examination of national education policy through two editions of the Headteacher Standards 2004 and 2015

The second and third versions of the Headteacher Standards (DfE, 2004 and DfE, 2015) were published in 2004 and 2015. Close analysis of these two documents demonstrates the government thinking that has shaped them. An examination and comparison of the choice of language in 2004 and 2015 supports the view that the headteacher standards,

designed to inform leadership practice, are merely a distillation of government policy at that time. It could be argued that they are not a description of a great school leader (based on an abundance of academic work); instead, a set of instructions for a school leader based on the ideas, legislation and focus of the government at that time. The shift in emphasis between 2004 and 2015 is of particular interest as it shows the change from the Labour government to the subsequent Coalition and Conservative governments. This is another key reason behind my selection of these two editions for my in-depth analysis.

Scrutiny of the 2004 'National Standards for Headteachers' reveals that it is, unsurprisingly, littered with the language of other key government policies and papers from that time. Most notably two white papers inform this document - 'Excellence in Schools' (DfEE, 1997) and 'Schools - Achieving Success' (DfE, 2001). The introduction explains that these revised standards *'incorporates current government thinking and guidance'* (DfE, 2004 p. 2) and goes on to state,

*'The key role that headteachers play in engaging in the development and **delivery of government policy** and in raising and maintaining levels of attainment in schools in order to meet the needs of every child.' (p. 2)*

The 2004 'National Standards for Headteachers' is longer than the 2015 version. There are six key areas. Each key area is further broken down into a list of expected knowledge and suggested qualities. There is also an accompanying list of suggested actions for each. Close examination of any of the 'six key areas' shows the impact of contextual factors and current government thinking. For example, key area two, 'Leading Teaching and Learning', clearly shows us new Labour policy (inspired as it was by national and global factors). A key part of marketisation at this time was to introduce even more meaningful diversity through the specialist schools' initiative. Schools across England became 'technology colleges', 'language colleges' or 'maths and computing colleges' (DfEE, 1997). Over time the Specialist Schools Trust (SST) grew from an awarding body for the various specialisms to a provider of continuing professional development, sharing the very best practice and hi-lighting 'next practice'. The key words/ideas of the SST are to be found throughout this section including 'personalised learning' and 'technologies'. Reference to models of teaching and learning are to be found here too – this is again a link to the work of SST and also to the National Strategies (DfE, 2011b) introduced in 1998. Equally, in this section and in others, we find references to the lever of performativity. The section includes

'benchmarks', 'assessment frameworks' and 'targets' but there are also multiple references to 'monitoring classroom practice' and 'tackling under-performance'. In 1999/2000 performance related pay was introduced (the Performance Threshold plus the Upper Pay Spine) and has been a feature of the accountability agenda ever since. We even have the beginnings of a notion of 'flexible curriculum' here in these standards and 'age not stage' thinking (formally introduced in 2006 in the report of the 'Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group', DfE, 2006). This was another way to diversify schools to give choice, or the appearance of choice, to parents.

Key area six, 'strengthening community', is also of interest to my mounting conclusion that these polices are not leadership literature to encourage personal reflection; rather summaries of key policy technologies of the time that the school leader must enact. This section reflects not just government policy but also ethical and global factors from that time. As in other areas, this section is rich with New Labour language of 'extended schools', 'community engagement' and the importance of networks. For example, '*Headteachers share responsibility for leadership of the wider educational system and should be aware that school improvement and community development are interdependent* '(p. 11). There are also (as in other sections) references to the Specialist Schools initiative and all the opportunities it created for sharing and developing practice for example, *'Collaboration and networking with other schools to improve outcomes' (p. 11).* The nascent academies programme is here too ('*Models of school, home, community and business partnerships', p. 11).* The Local Education Authority is mentioned in other sections but this was the era of Lord Adonis and early academisation inspired by American Charter Schools and intended to address underperformance and inequality. Early sponsors were businesses and businessmen (e.g., Sir Peter Vardy and the Emmanuel Schools Foundation) brought in to save failing schools but also to add to diversity of schools and aid marketisation. Finally, recent safeguarding issues and legislation loom large too in this section with guidance such as '*Work with other agencies for the well-being of all pupils and their families'* and *'Co-operates and works with relevant agencies to protect children (p. 11)'.* Both are clear references to the case of Victoria Climbie and subsequent 2003 green paper 'Every Child Matters' (DfE, 2003) and 2004 Children Act. The document is heavy with instruction after instruction for the headteacher clearly stating the government policies and ideas that they must put in place in their school. Hoyle and Wallace (2005), note that these standards absolutely

emphasise that a key 'part of the core purpose of the headteacher is to act as a transmitter of the central government vision underlying the aims and targets.'

'National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers' (DfE, 2015) was written and published eleven years later. The introduction explains that it has been updated as '*the context for headteachers changes constantly*' (p. 1). The forward to the report of the review of the standards confirms this by stating '*the English educational landscape that headteachers work in has changed substantially since the last Headteachers' Standards of 2004*'. This version is slimmer with just four domains. Clearly, in domain one, we see the wider policy (from both the Coalition and new Conservative government) that informs this document. The first line of domain one (qualities and knowledge) makes reference to '*providing a world class education*' for the children they serve (p. 5), a clear link to the DfE strategy 2015-2020 document entitled 'World Class Education and Care' (DfE, 2016). Indeed, the whole of the first domain and others are shaped by this document and its emphasis on 'outcomes not methods' and 'supported autonomy' (p. 2). This is all very much in keeping with the work of Michael Gove, for example it includes the idea of streamlining the National Curriculum (first declared in the 2010 white paper 'The Importance of Teaching' and then published in 2014) and the end of national strategies with their modelled approaches to teaching and learning - the Labour national strategies reviewed less than a year into the coalition government in March 2011 in 'The National Strategies 1997-2011' (DfE, 2011) and then largely abandoned. The first domain also includes reference to '*current knowledge and understanding of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally*' (p. 5). Here we see the impact of global factors on policy. Inspired by the structures in Finland, Gove introduced Free Schools in 2010 (again another fact of marketisation and parental choice). Equally, the dominance of Singapore in PISA ratings led to developments in the teaching of Mathematics - a key part of the 2014 English National Curriculum for Mathematics, (DfE, 2014) - and the work of the American author E. D Hirsch (1996) inspired Gove's considerable reform of GCSE and A Level qualifications. All this suggests that the 2015 standards are merely an updated list of instructions for the headteacher. New regime, new tweaks on a similar set of policy technologies …. new instructions.

We see the shifting and developing priorities of the new government in other domains too. In 'Domain two: staff and pupils', for example we see two key themes of the government of the time. Firstly, '*demand ambitious standards for all pupils,*

overcoming disadvantage and advancing equality' is linked to the increasing focus on social mobility at this time. In the government's 'Programme for Government' published by the Cabinet Office in 2010, the need to tackle inequality was clearly stated. The Pupil Premium (for students in receipt of free school meals) was introduced in 2011 and the need to close the achievement gap has remained a key factor influencing policy from 2010 to the present day. This domain also states that headteachers must '*hold all staff to account for their professional conduct and practice* '(p. 6). The new teaching standards were introduced in 2011 and aligned to the appraisal system. Gove and his successors also introduced changes to the speed and process for dismissal in a DfE document in 2012 (DfE, 2012) further raising the accountability stakes as part of performativity. This did little to ease the growing recruitment crisis in those years and we also see in this domain the (contradictory?) theme of identifying emerging talents and building aspiration.

2.4 Summary and discussion

There is not a wealth of literature analysing or discussing the Headteacher Standards. There are critiques of the language and organisation of the first edition (Orchard, 2002), discussion about how such sets of standards are created, taught and assessed in a number of different countries (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn & Jackson, 2006) and comments about what is lacking from the 2015 edition such as clearly started 'virtues' (Roberts, 2019). Roberts emphasises that the standards are the 'expectation that the state has' of Headteachers and notes that they contain 'buzzwords of the educational zeitgeist'. And it is clear that these two documents from 2004 and 2015 are completely shaped by the national educational pre-occupations of the day. The language mirrors the language of speeches and documentation (including white papers) of the government agenda of their context. As such they exemplify the neo-liberal agenda and show the tweaks and changes made to the policy technologies of marketisation, managerialism and performativity over time. Even more could be written here linking each phrase to the review, white paper or speech from the government and education secretary of the day. The same for the first set of Headteacher Standards (DfE, 2002) and the most recent set (DfE, 2020) too.   Hoyle and Wallace (2005) examine the 2004 standards (DfE, 2004) and the role they play in 'new professionalism'; a component of managerialism. In their book, 'Educational leadership ambiguity, professionals and managerialism', they define and exemplify how central government determination to

pass policies to improve schools has led to a growth of managerialism in education and they describe its negative impact on schools, teachers and headteachers. The headteachers in particular are 'piggies in the middle' between central government and their schools and whilst the language of these standards implies 'sufficient agency' for headteachers it does not exist in reality. They note the rhetoric of transformation in these standards and the seeming importance of the headteacher's vision, but conclude that,

'What initially appears transformational because of the visionary emphasis is actually more transmissional. Headteachers are to lead the visioning and associated planning process in compliance with central government derived aims and targets' (p. 136)

I return to the same notion – these documents are simply a list of instructions for the headteacher based on the latest government policies. It raises the question - is there really any room for the personal values of the Headteacher in the leadership of schools?

To further examine this notion, I searched for books or materials produced to support the implementation of the standards. The same year that 'National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers' (DfE, 2015) was published, Blatchford (2015) also published 'a practical guide'. The book takes each strand of each domain one by one and illustrates it with a vignette of a real school leader putting that standard into practice. Each of these is heavy with the weight of national and global factors that have shaped government policy and thus the standards. One great example is the story linked to domain 2, strand one ('Demand ambitious standards for all pupils, overcoming disadvantage and advancing equality, instilling a strong sense of accountability in staff for their impact on pupils' outcomes'). It is the story of Richard, a headteacher in a 'hitherto failing' north London Comprehensive,

'The pursuit of ambitious standards is a cornerstone. Richard begins his journeys of improvement with ensuring all staff and students are appropriately dressed … every day they come dressed to work in a business environment. They look smart to any visitor, November or June, complete with individualised name badges.' (p. 42)

Even here in the opening lines is a reference to an aspect of managerialism (rather than Richard's own values) - the September 2013 DfE guidelines *School uniform: Guidance for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities*. This guidance on school dress stated, 'the Department strongly encourages schools to have a uniform

as it can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone' (DfE 2013:4). Equally guidance on staff dress as part of the teacher standards is a key factor in this anecdote.

These short stories provide a picture of the diverse school system and leaders in 2015 – there are 3-18 schools, primary schools, secondary schools, faith schools, free schools, Multi Academy Trusts, CEOs, Executive Headteachers, National Leaders of Education, Future Leaders, Teaching Schools and more. Blatchford (2015) does also devote a chapter to the 144 words of the preamble of the headteacher standards. He compares the preamble to the code of conduct for lawyers and architects and key lines from the General Medical Council. Blatchford talks about the 'office' of headteacher and the 'leadership torch' and concludes the chapter with,

'Further, the 144 words have been carefully drafted to inspire society's confidence in headteachers and the teaching profession. In the same way that the doctors' mantra 'First do no harm' and the lawyer's affirmation 'safeguarding human rights' provide shared assumptions in those professions, so phrases from the preamble need to enter headteachers' intuitive vocabulary'.' (p. 28)

It is unclear as to whether this is an affirming message about the importance of the school leader's personal values at the heart of their recognised professionalism or an instruction for headteachers to adopt this prescribed set of values linked to current government policy and agenda. Analysis of the documents would seem to support the latter and disprove the former. Moreover, my examination of these key documents that guide school leaders suggests it is hard to find space for a leader's own values to guide their leadership and vision for the school. Headteachers are being instructed to enact an imposed vision. Moreover, the focus on accountability and outcomes surely diminishes the space for values-led leadership. In light of this, I next discuss literature defining and discussing values-led leadership. There is no doubt literature exists endorsing a values-led approach to leadership but I also I explore whether there really is a place for values-led leadership in England's schools today. Certainly, this picture of the context and expectations of headship exposed through this analysis of key policy documentation suggests that place may be hard to find. Or, at best, headteachers will be navigating a tension between values-led leadership and policy enactment.

2.5 Defining terms – what do I mean by 'values-led leadership'?

The entire chapter could be consumed by definitions of 'values' and 'values-led leadership'. I will attempt to establish a working definition in the context of educational leadership. First though I turn briefly to the literature about values-led leadership outside education. A review of general leadership literature (which largely has a focus on business leadership) provides some words for my definition via three constructs or types of values-based leadership (Copeland, 2014): authentic, ethical and transformational leadership. Authentic leadership is often defined as an approach linked to the importance of *character*, *being genuine* and having *high levels of emotional intelligence* (George, 2004); ethical leadership is all about *personal honesty, fairness and decent conduct* and the promotion of those behaviours in others (Brown, Harrison & Trevino, 2005) and transformational leadership focuses on the *intrinsic motivation* and *positive development* (including leadership development) *of those being led* in order to effect change and strong outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006) To add to this list of key words/definitions, the scholars with a specific focus on educational leadership define the word values as '*ethics*' (Haydon 2007), or '*core beliefs about life and about relating to other people*' (Gold, 2004) or as *the key beliefs that underpin our morality* and therefore *how we treat and affect people* (Bottery, 1990). Some of the literature I have explored uses the term 'v*ision*' (and documents associated with vision such as School Development Plans or statements of ethos and aims) as an articulation of values (Haydon, 2007: George et al, 2002). Equally, a number of studies examined leadership behaviours as a manifestation of values (Gold 2004: Armstrong et al., 2018). From all this literature one could conclude that **headteacher values are a set of core beliefs or moral driving forces.** Moreover, **heads articulate their values in a vision for school and demonstrate their values in their leadership behaviours.**

However, I would argue we cannot separate a discussion about educational values from a discussion around the purpose of education; one cannot separate core beliefs/driving forces from a notion of the end game for all the young people in the school. But this renders definitions even more complex. And the question of the purpose of education in Britain today does not have a simple answer. Some (for example, Bottery, 1990) even argue that the conversation about the purpose of education has ceased and we are building policy without clear aims except improvement in stated outcomes/accountability measures. If we study recent policy documents and government rhetoric, the purpose of education in England today could be mooted to be a number of things - a skilled workforce, economic prosperity (and independence), strong

British Values, high PISA ratings, the development of young people who are mentally and physically healthy and more. Moreover, if we accept West's (1993) point that the development of the comprehensive school and geographical catchment areas has put schools at the centre of their geographical communities, then it could also be argued that the purpose of education, and therefore values that drive the school and its leadership, might be slightly different in different communities. West's (1993) arguments are built around the notion that school leaders must have clear values but that those values should be co-created with the community to also meet the community's needs.

A working definition would then be that **the headteacher's values are a set of personal beliefs or ethics AND core ideas about the purpose of education for their school community. Heads articulate their values as a vision for school and demonstrate their values in their leadership behaviours. This is values-led leadership.** Moreover, as public servants, headteachers are guided by the Nolan Principles of Public Life (1995). As I explore below, the Ethical Framework for Educational Leadership (ASCL, 2019) built upon these principles, developing them for the context of schools and school leadership. As I discuss in detail in chapter 3, in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) I used these principles and virtues as the markers of values-led leadership in my survey design.

My discussion of the literature will identify and analyse studies that discuss if there is a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools. I will also discuss the available literature on how values-led leadership is enacted and its impact.

2.6 Support for values-led leadership in the literature

Praise and support for values-led leadership can be found in many books and articles about 21st leadership. In fact, the deficiencies of other leadership approaches have led to it becoming a genre of leadership in its own right,

'The emergence of the 21st century was plagued with extensive, evasive and disheartening leadership failures. Moral and ethical deficiencies were prevalent in many charismatic, dynamic and seemingly transformational leaders that had risen to prominence in both the public and private sectors. In response, leadership and management theorists began to place a renewed emphasis on the importance of ethics and morality in exemplary leaders, and a plethora of values-based leadership (VBL) theories emerged' (Copeland, 2014, p. 105)

Copeland (2014) (whose work is largely focused on business leadership) goes on to argue that the 'VBL' approach will also have great impact and that the emerging leaders that have a 'values-based dimension to their leadership' are more effective than their counterparts who lack this dimension. This is a view shared beyond the business sphere evidenced by the establishment of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life in the UK in 1995. The sole purpose of the Nolan Committee was to bring integrity back into public life. The summary of the Nolan Committee's first report identified seven principles of public life including 'integrity', 'objectivity' and 'openness'. As public servants, school leaders are expected to uphold this set of values. Further to this, a teachers' leadership union (the Association of School and College Leaders) developed an 'Ethical Framework for Educational Leadership' (ASCL, 2019) based on the Nolan Principles and the updated Headteacher Standards 2020 (DfE, 2020) also includes them. The appetite to discuss and endorse values for leaders to display or enact in the private and public sector is clearly in evidence.

Furthermore, there is a growing body of research on values-based leadership in education. As part of this body of research, there is also a consensus that values-led leadership has a pivotal role to play in education (Bottery, 1990; West, 1997; Haydon, 2007; Roberts, 2019; Day, Sammons & Gorgen, 2020). Some of this literature starts by unpicking different (recently favoured) approaches to school leadership to set the scene for a growing support for values-led leadership. It seems that instructional/pedagogical leadership and transformational leadership have long been held up as key approaches for school leadership. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) note that the language of transformation and transformational leadership has been centre-stage in central government policy and policy documents since the 1980s including the 2004 headteacher standards (Department for Education and Skills, 2004).   Transformational leadership was first identified as an antidote to other less high-impact approaches to leadership (such as transactional or laissez-faire) by Burns (1978) and developed by Bass (1987). Leithwood and Sun wrote about the potential power of this approach in schools from the early 1990s (e.g., Leithwood, Jantzi and Dart, 1991 and Leithwood, 1995). They noted,

'Unlike traditional models of leadership that are "transactional" in nature, transformational leadership theory argues that, given adequate support, organizational members become highly engaged and motivated by goals that are inspirational because

those goals are associated with values in which they strongly believe—or are persuaded to strongly believe.' (*Leithwood and Sun, 2012 p. 12).*

Indeed in 1992 Leithwood wrote an article for Educational Leadership explaining that instructional leadership had served education well in the 1980s and early 1990s with its clear focus on developing the curriculum and instruction to support and improve student performance but that a new approach was now needed. He went on to argue that this new approach should be one where power is manifested 'through' other people rather than over them; transformative leadership. It is no surprise then that charisma (and how to develop it) is cited as a key quality for leaders to develop in literature on transformational leadership. This, amongst other qualities and strategies, enables the leader to transform their organisation or school by engaging with and motivating others. Values are mentioned in some literature (e.g., above) but it is more often vision and the ability to share that vision and take those you lead together in pursuit of a shared vision and set of goals.

A number of studies (Day et al. 2001, Gold et al 2003) expose the weaknesses of transformational and instructional leadership approaches and present principled or values led leadership as the real key to successful and happy schools. Instructional leadership and its focus on just pedagogy is too transactional they argue. Even more worrying they expose 'manipulative leadership' as the dark side of transformational leadership with its necessary focus on change and improvement. Wider debates around transformational leadership include discussion around Adolf Hitler as an example of a transformational leader (Bass and Riggio, 2006); dark side indeed. Moreover, some argue (Hoyle and Wallce, 2005, Simsek, 2013) that it is not possible to be a transformational leader in education because of the very nature of the education system itself. They note that headteachers do not have that level of autonomy or power and that change, in the sense of transformation, can only be imposed externally. So transformational leadership is potentially impossible and both transformational leadership and instructional leadership unpalatable. Thus, in opposition to this 'manipulative and transactional leadership', the need for more care, more democracy and decent interactions render a values-led school leader much more appealing. Indeed, Wassenberg (1999, p.158) claims that "*the primary role of any leader [is] the unification of people around key values".* Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) add that leadership begins with the 'character' of leaders, expressed in terms of personal values, self-awareness and emotional and moral capability'. 'Moral leadership' where the

Headteacher acts according to a set of values or beliefs (and thus the critical focus of leadership is on the values and ethics of leaders themselves) has also been explored and endorsed (West-Burnham, 2001).

In response to some of this research the National College of School Leadership actively endorsed the need for values-led leadership in 2003 and even went so far as to craft this definition for English Schools,

'*Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. Successful leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision.*' *(NCSL, 2003p. 8)*

This definition was then absorbed by the educational establishment into its leadership development programme for Headteachers - the National Qualification for Headteachers or NPQH. The specified content for the first National Qualification for Headteachers reflected this NCSL definition with its emphasis on seven leadership behaviours such as awareness, integrity and respect that are clearly linked to personal values and ethics. Interestingly, the role of the values of the Headteacher have been reduced or downplayed somewhat in more recent incarnations of the NPQH but the key ideas remain. For example, the framework at the time of writing states that Headteachers must understand *'...how to set an ambitious vision for their school, and how to establish the culture and conditions in which staff and pupils are able to thrive. They must also maintain the highest professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards and Headteachers' Standards.' (DfE, 2020 p.7)*

Even if the word 'values' has been less centre-stage in more recent government documents (as noted in section 2 above), there is much support for values-led leadership approaches in the educational community. There have been a number of books ('how to' manuals) written by practising or recently practising school leaders that add to the body of literature praising and supporting values-led leadership. These 'how to' manuals seem to even go a step further and act as guides exemplifying how leadership can be values driven. Once such example is Mary Myatt's 'Hopeful Schools' (2016). This book is (according to the back cover) about 'the principles and values that she and great leaders exemplify'. There are 42 short chapters covering a range of topics and challenges faced in schools. Chapter 17 is 'The ethic of everybody' and unpicks the

importance of leaders in schools 'doing the right thing, for the right reasons for everyone'. There is also the key theme of 'hopeful not helpless.' The entire book is about school leaders being driven by strong values, clear ethics, unswerving morality. Another, oft quoted (by the Edu-elite on Twitter and practicing school leaders), is Tomsett's book, 'This much I know about love over fear.' (2015). This book is part autobiography and part guidance for Headteachers. It explains how to build school systems and structures for their staff based on 'love not fear' in order to motivate, support and ensure the best teaching and learning for students. The author's values permeate his description of how he led his school. Even more recent examples include 'Wholesome Leadership' (Rees, 2018) and 'Parklands: A School Built on Love' (Dyson, 2022) Support for values-led leadership in English schools today is seemingly everywhere – from academic research, to government publications and development programmes to popular leadership guides.

2.7 Summary

My first conclusion is that there is a relatively strong body of literature supporting, defining and advocating values-led leadership in education. The volume of books and articles have grown since the start of the 21st century possibly supporting Copeland's (2014) view of an increased appetite for this type of leadership as opposition or antidote to other less moral leadership approaches at the end of the 20th century. But does the literature go beyond applause for, and definitions of, values-based leadership? Absolutely – there is also research showing the impact of values-based leadership in schools.

2.8 Leadership, and values-led leadership, has a positive impact on learning

Leadership is widely recognised as important for school effectiveness (Daresh, 1998: Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore, 1995; Sheppard, 1996) and for school improvement (Stoll and Fink, 1996; Hallinger and Heck 1999, Day et al, 2020). Some of the research has looked in greater depth at the influence of leaders on learning too. For example, Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi 's research (2010) considered four ways (or pathways) that leaders can impact on student learning in their school. Their tentative conclusion was that the pathways that have the most impact are the 'rational path' and 'emotions path'.

Not only does this further emphasise the notion that there is a direct causal relationship between school leadership and school effectiveness, I would also argue that this begins to establish the impact of values-led leadership on school effectiveness. I argue this because these two pathways are most closely linked to values - they are all about building trust within the community, ensuring a positive climate for learning and establishing clear academic expectations.

Hill, Goddard, Laker & Mellon (2016) add weight to this notion that values-led leadership has an impact on school effectiveness. Hill et al. (2016) set out to answer the question 'why is the UK not getting a return on its investment in education?' The team hypothesised that the answer could be found in leadership. The team analysed the education, background, experience, actions and impact over seven years of 411 UK school leaders and went on to identify five categories of leaders – the surgeon, the soldier, the accountant, the philosopher and the architect. They discuss common characteristics (for example academic background) and behaviours of each of the five categories but made two observations of particular interest to me. Firstly, that surgeon leaders are most likely to be feted and financially rewarded for their quick actions and success. Secondly that the 'architect' was by far the best but seemingly going unnoticed. The approach taken by 'surgeon' saw results improve in the short term (but then slump again) but the 'architect' '*quietly redesigns the school and transforms the community it serves*' and '*much improves*' including student outcomes (p.5). The approach taken by 'the architect' who quietly, steadfastly engages all and builds for the future is informed by their understanding of great leaders of the past. They are described as '*insightful, humble and visionary leaders*' (p. 5). Immediate gains do not deflect them from their path. I would argue that this is actually values-led leadership. And (again), in the bounds of this research, it is demonstrably having an impact on student learning and school effectiveness.

More research on the impact of values-led leadership adds to this debate. Day, Harris & Hadfield (2001) were commissioned by NAHT to 'to identify, examine and celebrate good principalship practice' as an antidote to a climate that was critical of schools. The study focused on 12 cross-phase schools (identified as effective by Ofsted) and interviewed Headteachers, teachers, parents, governors and students. More than 400 interviews were undertaken. Analysis of the interviews uncovered a broadly shared understanding of leadership. The picture was complex but a key feature was the 'personal within the professional',

'Within the study, it became clear that the vision and practices of these principals were underpinned by a number of core 'personal values'. (p. 43)

The deeply, held personal values of these school leaders shaped their leadership and their schools. Interviewees discussed how these values were expressed in their communication, their interactions, their high expectations, their support for the development of all and more. The research concluded that this was 'post transformational leadership'. These leaders were driven by core values that permeated their thinking and actions. Moreover, they navigated demands, expectations and dilemmas posed by the educational context today and exercised 'values-led contingency leadership'. The school leaders in Day, Harris & Hadfield's (2001) study were not only having an impact in terms of student outcomes and Ofsted ratings but they also empowered staff, managed tensions and kept a firm focus on *'the betterment of the young people and staff who worked in their schools'.* Again, this was not just leadership having an impact on learning – it was values-driven leadership having an impact on learning.

Other studies support this position and add further dimensions such as the importance of values-led leadership for effective school improvement. Jackson (2000) focused on the Improving the Quality of Education for All (IEQA) approach for school improvement and explored how this work changed and shaped the school. Interestingly, Jackson noted that really effective school improvement necessitated a change in thinking about leadership from a more traditional transformational leader to values-led leadership. The research even suggested a more democratic approach to leadership based around clear and deeply held values was a key to school improvement. Although this study is based around the experience of just one school, themes of democratic or distributed leadership built around strong values leading to great schools can be found in other research (Bottery 1990, West 1993, Day et al, 2020).

2. 9 Summary

To conclude this section there is evidence for the existence and benefits of values-led leadership. There is evidence that shows leadership and, moreover, values-led leadership impacts on learning, positive outcomes and effective school improvement. However, does research show that values-led leadership has a place in all of England's Secondary Schools mindful of government expectations of school leaders demonstrated

in section one? Very much linked to this are the questions that arise in the literature about levels of headteacher and school autonomy too (e.g., Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). This next section examines these tensions and seeks to start to answer that key question.

2.10 The tension between national policy (as exemplified by the Headteacher Standards) and values-led leadership

There is research into the tension between national policy and values-led leadership. Sergiovanni's (2000) extensive work on the clash between 'system world' and 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1970) in schools is a good example. There is also research detailing the pressures of the neo-liberal agenda on school leaders and how they are able to lead. In their 2012 work on policy enactment, Ball, Maguire and Braun, sum up these pressures beautifully,

'The role and the work of schools and teachers have been increasingly prescribed by central government. Policy technologies – management, market and performativity – steer practice in the direction of what Barker (2010: 100) calls 'the relentless pursuit of the unattainable'; that is, constant improvement in examination results and other performances. What is being demanded of schools, their contribution to national economic competitiveness and cultural cohesion, is encoded in a litany of policy statements, documents and legislation; in short, a form of 'initiativitis' inscribed in a series of 'fast policies''. (P. 9)

This work goes on to explore in depth how different schools in different contexts respond to the enactment of not just one policy (as some studies do) but multiple and on-going policies; they capture the weight, complexity and relentlessness of central government policy in schools. The authors noted with interest the 'dearth' of talk about values in their data but the authors also note that they deliberately chose 'ordinary schools and avoided 'star schools'. They ponder in their conclusion if these 'star schools' might have more capacity for resistance. There is an interest mention of higher levels of 'emotional capital' in some schools (values-led schools with values-led leaders?) that enable these schools to better bear the weight and relentless of government policy.

 The interplay between policy enactment and valued-led leadership is thoroughly unpicked by Hammersley-Fletcher (2015). This research article starts to explore the notion that a values-driven stance taken by a headteacher is challenged, even abandoned

when the headteacher is under great pressure; pressure that invariably comes when they must implement a new aspect of a policy technology (e.g., performativity and performance related pay). This hypothesis is supported repeatedly in the literature on values and leadership. In the introduction to 'Values of Educational Leadership', Haydon (2007) boldly writes that *'Values are vital in education' (p. 5);* indeed, the whole book is a guide for leaders to help them unpick and consolidate their values. However, he then goes on to explore the purpose of education and reminds us of a central tension – these purposes or aims cannot be solely shaped by a school or individual leader because of the part played by government pursuing cultural or economic aims. Haydon cites Michael Fullan's key works on moral purpose and then admits that '*wider society puts constraints on the extent to which an individual leader can pursue his or her own sense of moral purpose'*. (p.43). Others agree, arguing that Headteachers are 'caught in a vice' between what they believe and external demands (Bottery, 1990; Roberts, 2019; Bottery, 2019). This bleak representation of school leadership brings to mind the 2018 BBC2 documentary 'School' filmed within three schools in the same Multi-Academy Trust across one school year. Episode 2 documented the Headteacher of a Secondary School, James Pope, making decisions for his school (increasing class sizes because of reduced funding) that were so far adrift from his own values he was visibly broken by it. The episode ended with him leaving the role and the school. He had not returned to Secondary leadership at the time of writing.

Even more sinister views can be found in the literature. Firstly, the view that Headteachers' do not now actually have their own values-driven vision; rather they have (unknowingly) absorbed and re-packaged government policy and now articulate it as their own (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012). Another is the claim the English school system had led to only 'bastard leadership' (Wright, 2001). This notion that it is not possible to hold a core set of values about education that is unaffected by the state and other challenges has some supporters. Wright argues that new managerialism has led to the 'subtle capturing of the leadership discourse' by governments, civil servants, leadership developers etc. Other literature (Bottery, 2019) supports this view explaining that all the pressures placed on leaders by the government have deliberately focused them on the 'how' rather than the 'why'. My own experience of the language used over time by fellow school leaders has exemplified this. Often termed 'buzz words', aspects

of the latest government policy agenda creep into leader's discourse ('quality first teaching', 'personalised learning' and 'school-led system'). Thus, heartfelt values are eroded or superseded over time. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) might categorise such leaders as 'true believers' is those who have 'internalized managerialism in language and in practice'.

More palatable than the automaton Headteacher or the 'Bastard Leader' (Wright, 2001), is the notion of having to 'give ideological ground' at times. This is a theme in several studies (for example, George, Halpin & Moore 2002). There are a number of case studies presented where a Headteacher has strong beliefs about an aspect of school life that is not so palatable to the local marketplace, for example not having a school uniform (West, 1997 pp. 38-39), and so we see the clash of Headteacher values with the neoliberal landscape, where policy technologies such as parental choice take away the Head's capacity to determine the direction of their school. George et al. (2002) conclude that this is 'strategic pragmatism'. But there is also a sense in their work of values as political resistance; values as the armour that allows you some measure of rebellion and subversion. For example, 'Passionate Leadership in Education' by Davies and Brighouse (2008) explored the drive to 'turn beliefs into reality'. Within this collection of insights, Southwarth's chapter ('Passionate work: towards a natural history of headship') explores headship at the start of the twenty first century. He explores '*clear sets of values and a strong sense of moral purpose*' and suggests '*the motives of ... headteachers are often deeply felt, strongly held and stretch far back into their own childhoods and school days*' (p. 155). He goes on to conclude that these values, and the passion to turn them into a reality for the communities they serve, not only drive headteachers but also sustain them and gets them through the demands and challenges they face. This suggests personal values are an armour to enable a headteacher to survive neoliberal education reform and its various policy technologies. Southworth cites the research of others (Fullan, 2003, and Flintham, 2003) that '*a leader's values and passion are the fuel that sustains them*' (p.172). Flintham's research (upon which Southworth builds) was a 2003 study of 25 headteachers, the majority of whom Flintham noted had an internal 'reservoir of hope' from which they drew in times of challenge and trouble. These 'reservoirs' provided a calm centre at the heart of each headteacher 'from which their values and vision flow and which makes effective interpersonal engagement possible no matter what the external pressures'. Flintham

noted that these headteachers in his study also acted as an external reservoir of hope for the school.   In contrast (but with a similar theme of ways to survive aspects of headship) Hoyle and Wallace (2005) developed the term 'principled infidelity'. In this approach school leaders,

'Have mediated government policies to render them congruent with the needs of students in individual schools in particular contexts.' (P. viii)

Their work (in their own words) uses irony as 'the organizing concept'. They develop a strong argument, supported by multiple contemporary cases studies, that subsequent governments' decision to improve education through central policy initiatives has both wildly reduced the autonomy of school leaders and achieved little. Teachers and leaders who best survive the onslaught of government policy do so with scepticism and pragmatism. And the hero headteachers of their book survive by 'keeping up the appearance of meeting the demands of managerialism whilst sustaining their professional educational values'. This is their 'principled infidelity'.

So, a Headteacher has a choice between 'bastard leadership' (Wright,2001) or a form of strategic pragmatism? The latter have some semblance of personal values driving leadership behaviour and choice (but not very much). This presents a very negative picture of school leadership in England's secondary schools today with very little genuine room for values-led leadership. There is other research that attempts to challenge the largely negative picture but it is still riddled with caveats (Campbell et al. ,2003 and Gold et al., 2003). These studies attempt to show the power school leaders have to filter education policy through their own strongly held values. My concern about the first study is that it only focuses on what the leaders say and the strength of their conclusion is only that the research 'suggests' that the six leaders interviewed have the capacity to be '*active rather than passive recipients of educational policy changes is suggested' (Campbell et al., 2003).* The second study is more convincing and stridently asserts,

'The school leaders in our case-study schools were clearly avoiding doing 'bastard leadership' by mediating government policy through their own values systems.' (Gold et al.,2003 p.131)

In this second study, Gold et al.'s (2003) ten school leaders discussed 'fileting' and 'mediating change' and adapting new policies and changes to fit their values. One of the more recent studies (Armstrong, Ko, Darren and Bryant, 2018) goes even further by

suggesting that leaders can actually build systems and structures that ensure their values drive the institution even in the current context,

'Such values-driven structures provide a platform by which principals create the conditions in which policy and reform can be managed and absorbed without compromising the core purpose and contextual priorities of these schools.'. (p.2)

This fascinating study focuses on four schools in England and four schools in Hong Kong. Interviews with colleagues across the school and leadership range helped the researchers to identify how structures to aid communication and decision making have ensured that the leader's values are shared and challenging government policy is absorbed and enacted without a resultant erosion of values. It was intriguing as it seemed to be suggesting a practical way for school leaders to ensure their values permeated the school community and were not negated by national policy. The key, the authors claimed, is a combination of 'connective' leadership and 'distributed' leadership (drawing on the work of Gronn, 2002, and Walker, 2012). This is something I explored and unpicked further in my research because it seemed to suggest a practical approach to negating the impact of national policy on values-led leadership. The key word that the authors use again and again is 'absorb'; building these structures enables the school to absorb national policy without abandonment of values. There is also a suggestion that building such structures enables the Headteacher to embed their values and ambitions through-out the school.

Another piece of research from the same project by Day and Gu (2018), contextualises their study with the statement,

'The evidence is unambiguous—the most effective leaders have strong moral and ethical purposes and a strong sense of social justice'. (P.3)

The success of the two school leaders in the study was attributed to their consistent alignment of their actions to their values. And these values had in turn been influenced by their early educational experiences. Both schools were very different and both school leaders held different educational values that had arisen form their own different experiences of education. But they both consistently applied their values to their leadership and to their enactment of policy and with great success. Biography and values-led leadership is another theme I explore later in this thesis. The authors also challenge Hammersley Fletcher's notion that education policy compels school leaders

to compromise their values to function but we are reminded through-out that these two men run 'outstanding' schools. There is robust evidence that values (stemming from backgrounds in this case) strengthen their leadership of these very strong schools (and possibly even maintain their high performance) but questions about schools that are not judged so strong remain.

The central question about whether there is a genuine place for values-led leadership in all schools persists. Gold et al. (2003) admits,

'What is not so clear, however, is whether current developments in the English education system, notably the emphasis on school outcomes and performance targets, will enable the kinds of educational values underpinning the practices found in our case-study schools to continue and flourish.' (p. 10)

Armstrong et al. (2018) and Day and Gu (2018) make a case that it can. From my search at the time of writing, theirs is one of the latest such studies and they conclude that values-led leadership is alive and well in four English Schools. But this is my major concern with such studies - the selection of participants. Gold et al.'s (2003) study is often school leaders 'whose leadership had been highly rated by recent Ofsted inspections' and then confirmed by Local Authority (LA) advisers. Armstrong et al. (2018) had worked to ensure a socio-economic mix but their schools were 'improved and effective' and 'high-performing'.   Again, this comes back to the notion of space or room for manoeuvre that I hypothesise is the luxury of only some Heads in some schools. West's (1997) research introduces another perspective around the amount of 'wriggle room' that is available in different contexts. She refers to a small-scale study that 'recognised heads and schools do not operate in a vacuum in relation to values' but acknowledged that 'the external context impacts upon the values of predetermines their room for manoeuvre'. She writes,

'The Head seeking to articulate and implement his or her vision has to start from a clear awareness of the school's context – both in terms of its community and its boundaries as defined by political decisions' (p.18)

Undeniably, the leader of a school in an Ofsted category is under pressure to demonstrate improvements quickly. And these improvements will be judged in terms of government prescribed accountability measures (currently Progress 8 and Attainment 8 with a focus on certain groups and student characteristics). The necessary measures to show these improvements might include rigorous performance management and capability procedures to hold all staff highly accountable to numerical outcomes rather

than teacher development. It might also involve curriculum manipulation to ensure better outcomes in certain areas at the expenses of curriculum breadth and equality of opportunity. As many of the studies suggest- this may well necessitate the abandonment of values. The notion that the space to lead in a certain way finds further support in the work of Greany and Higham (2018). They were exploring the impact of the 'self-improving school led system' on schools and noted, amongst other things, the impact on leadership behaviours. Leaders are under pressure to put the success of the organisation first, often above the well-being of children. The examples cited included a headteacher considering negative impact of asylum seeker children on measurable outcomes; the authors term this a 'constrained professionalism'. Their school leaders were pragmatic but saddened and stressed. Moreover, the authors' findings led them to the view that resistance to imposed change that challenged the values of the leaders was only possible if the school was performing well *('above minimum benchmarks'*) and at times, because of cooperation between local schools. These leaders, in a much more positive position as regards accountability measures, could still hold true to a set of values whilst navigating change.   They also shared conclusions around the impact of Ofsted creating 'local status hierarchies' where 'higher status' schools benefitted in myriad of ways (e.g., student numbers, opportunities and resources).   The theme of school autonomy is an under-current in all these studies. One might assume greater school autonomy in English schools would allow for greater instances of values-led leadership but it is a complex picture.   In 2014 Keddie surmised that 'contextual factors' were significant in unpicking the issue of school autonomy. In this study she explored the autonomy gained by a successful school with a high Ofsted rating when it first 'academised' and became free from Local Authority control. The outstanding Ofsted rating was the key to this choice and the resultant autonomy. In this context the autonomy or freedoms for the school leader to make some different choices in the best interest of the local community was real; school autonomy in the real meaning of the words. Moreover, Keddie discussed the moral dimensions of greater autonomy for school leaders; the choice to lead a school in way that really meets the needs of the children you serve or, conversely, to increase approaches that may not serve the children but might make the school look even better to the external eye. This is a fascinating notion; that the autonomy gained through outward success could allow for more of what could be viewed as values-led leadership or possibly the opposite. However, the literature on the interplay between school autonomy and freedoms for

leaders over the subsequent years of academisation and central government policy presents a gloomier picture. Indeed, school autonomy might be dubbed a 'mirage' (Hashim, Torres & Kumar, 2021) and Skerrit noted in 2020 that autonomy and accountability are now hand in hand. Ironically

'...with autonomy being accompanied by multiple layers of surveillance to ensure that said autonomy is being used to accomplish the ends of the prescribed goals of the neoliberal enterprise'. (Hashim, Torres & Kumar, 2021. p. 23)

Keddie and Holloway's 2020 research into two High School 'exemplary' principals in Australia and their work to use freedoms granted by greater school autonomy to pursue social justice goals, encapsulates the current situation with the notion of school autonomy rather well. There are seeming freedoms for these school leaders to make values-driven leadership choices but there are also high-stakes accountability measures. One of the principals describes their work as staying inside the box but pushing the sides as far as possible. Within this context of a 'mirage' of greater autonomy school leaders are actually still negotiating and mediating the pressures and inconsistencies of central policy all the time. Their capacity to be values-led rather than accountability measures-led exists in a 'tight space' and again we see a slightly wider space for stronger and better schools (the two 'exemplary' Australian principals).

To explore this growing concern further, I return to two of the most popular and fairly recent endorsements of values-led leadership – Myatt (2016) and Tomsett (2015). The context of these two authors is worthy of note. Tomsett's school was rated by Ofsted as outstanding when he wrote the book (and again October 2017). Student outcomes were also very positive at the time of writing his book (e.g., Progress 8 measurement was +.27 in 2017). This again points to an interesting research avenue around the possibility of values-led leadership in schools that are meeting current accountability measures and therefore under much less scrutiny. An existing alignment with the national agenda that creates a space for values-led leadership. Equally, Mary Myatt's website tells us that she is 'an education adviser, writer and speaker'. A Schools week interview (2017) reveals that she was a teacher for 10 years (entering the profession aged 34) who then moved on to working for the Local Authority and then moved into her current work training, writing, speaking and advising. Her work possibly shares approaches to leadership that headteachers reading may not be in a position to put into place.

Despite the optimistic support for values-led leadership in schools in so much of the literature there remains a worry about the practicalities and the role of context. The notion of values-led leadership in schools is endorsed by many and there is research that evidences the impact of leadership AND values-led leadership on learning. But I include the Myatt (2016) and Tomsett (2015) books in this literature review to signal this – is there really space in our schools for values-led leadership? Or is it only to be found in theory and books written by those with the luxury of no accountability or 'large room for manoeuvre'? This review leads to a focus for the current study; to test the notion that those leaders that can write about their values-led leadership (Tomsett, 2015) or the studies that point to an important space for values-led leadership (Gold et al., 2003, Armstrong at al., 2018, Greany and Higham 2018) are seemingly always of schools that already carry a high-Ofsted rating or are 'high-performing'. The answer to this is seemingly not to be found in current research and warrants further investigation.

2.11 Final thoughts and two key ideas to pursue

A body of literature has established that values-led leadership is good (Bottery, 1990; Gold, 2004; Day et al., 2001, Armstrong et al. 2018, etc). Another body of literature showed it can have impact and positive outcomes in business and schools (Copeland, 2014; Day & Leithwood, 2008; Hill et al., 2016, Day et al., 2020 etc). However scant attention has as yet been paid to how and when can that happen in all English Secondary Schools. Although there is research on the tension between neo-liberal reforms and values-led leadership there is still relatively little on how, where and when values-led leadership triumphs. Possibly only in certain contexts and situations – schools with strong Ofsted judgements that are not under regular scrutiny -Gold et al.'s, (2003), 10 outstanding leaders' schools, Armstrong et al.'s, (2018), 'high performing schools. To conclude, it seems there is endorsement of, but not a firmly established space and place for, values-led leadership in all English Secondary Schools today.

So, my first research question remains,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**

There is also a need for more research into what values-led leadership really 'looks like' in English secondary schools and the potential impact. This is my second question,

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

The research to date indicated leads for me to follow – Hill et al.'s (2016) 'architect leader' is an interesting concept. Hill et al. (2016) set out to understand why the UK was not getting a decent return on their investment in education; the UK invests more than other countries and yet student outcomes are not as strong. Their research started to get to the heart of the tension between values-led leadership for schools and the leadership approaches needed to enact government education policy and succeed in the face of the UK's accountability measures. They suggested that the demands to both implement and respond to government policies and the accountability measures in place have created 'surgeon' leaders. These surgeon leaders are celebrated and rewarded by the government (achieving an 'undeserved reputation') because they achieve quick successes in terms of student outcomes. But the research notes that in the UK '*we're appointing, rewarding, and recognizing the wrong leaders'* (p.1). The surgeons enact the policies and show quick improvements and impact; but it is not sustained. It is not real. In contrast, under the architect's leadership 'examination results start improving in the third year of their tenure and continue improving long after they've left.' (p. 1). These architects are '*strategic, transformational and inclusive thinking*' and '*visionary, unsung heroes.*' (p.5). And yet the architect and their approach to school leadership is not recognised or rewarded. The research team even note, '*we need to understand more about the Architect leaders, how they're developed and the key decisions they take, so that we can create more of them in the future.*' (p.7).

This research was not without controversy. An article in the TES in 2016 summarised some of the critiques of the work of Hill et al. (2016). The team were criticised for making some significant claims without sharing details of their methodology and there were questions around how generalisable the claims made were without an open account of methodology (George, 2016). Responding to these arguments and extended version of the paper (Hill et al., 2017) was published with a section on methodology. There were further challenges to the paper. Allen (2017) set out to examine whether claims around subject background could be corroborated. Using school workforce data from 2010 and GCSE outcome data for a period of 5 years, she concluded (from the 'quick and dirty analysis') that 'subject background of school leaders is not an important factor in explaining variation in school performance'. She also raises doubts about the claims that surgeons are typically paid more and leaders with subject

backgrounds linked by the research to architects typically enter the profession later. However, it is important to point out that Allen notes her research is driven by the notion that strong links between subject background and the best Headteachers could change recruitment processes. There is concern that the findings must be robust before undue attention is paid to them by, for example, governing bodies. And it is right that claims of this magnitude should be scrutinised but Allen uses a wider data set – she examines all schools and the original research looked at academies in special measures. She is, in truth, open that she is not trying to replicate the research but investigating whether the claims can be upheld by a wider data set (although she only uses one of quite a number of metrics the original work used to measure impact). However, the descriptions of the leadership behaviours of the architect leaders, mindful of the academic criticisms of the article, are still of use and interest to me. In the context of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) theoretical constructs such as the 'architect', which are developed in the empirical phases of a research study, are rendered not problematic by doubts raised around methodology used by the original researchers. As I explain chapter 3, in the adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998), the researcher builds on theory, develops it and moves it on. Further examining, and building upon, the notion of the 'architect' as an example of high impact values-led leadership in action is a key part of my research.

Alongside the research from Hill et al. (2016) there was another strand of interest. Could it be that values-led leadership is enacted by building strong systems and structures around core values that become part of the school's DNA and provides focus, structures and capacity for the school to grow and thrive (Jackson, 2000: Gold et al, 2003: Armstrong et al., 2018)? This would certainly align with some of the most recent research on building systems and 'multi-layered (or connective) leadership',

'In which policy and reform can be managed and absorbed without compromising the core purpose and contextual priorities.' (Armstrong et al, 2018, p. 2).

The importance of connective or distributed leadership as an essential component of how values-led leadership is enacted warranted further exploration too.

In the next chapter I explain the methodology and methods deployed to address my two-part research question and the centrality of an 'adaptive theory' approach that used theories examined and analysed as part of this literature review to inform my research design.

Chapter 3 Methodology & Methods

Part A Methodology

3.1 A Methodological framework to fit my ontological and epistemological assumptions and a two-part research question

- To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?

- Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?

My first challenge was to identify a methodology that would best enable me to explore the two parts of my research question. These deliberations about methodology generated questions about my theoretical framework, my ontology and epistemology that I explore and explain in this chapter. These intellectual struggles also led to changes over time to the research questions themselves; initially I focused on the impact of values-led leadership in the second question hoping to present an 'outcome' or endorsement. But as my research progressed, and I moved on in my thinking, it became clear that adding to the descriptions of values-led leadership I had encountered in my reading, and that inspired and shaped my own research, was just as valid. This may seem an odd comment but it speaks to the struggles and reflections I describe in the first part of this chapter.

3.2 Establishing a methodological framework and mixed methods approach

I struggled with a theoretical framework from the outset. Mine is social not scientific research and the methodology deployed in the research I read (and have referenced) was largely qualitative - most frequently case studies and semi-structured interviews. Research paradigms in these studies tended toward interpretivism or critical theory with no claims to objectivity or empirical findings. They were clearly inductive – tentatively generating theories from their research. Yet I was not ready initially to jettison a more positivist approach; I wanted to objectively find some 'laws' that explained the possibility of values-led leadership in some schools and document its impact. This is clearly not possible - positivism in social research has been much derided (e.g., Shutz, 1962, Habermas, 1970) but exploration of realism and critical realism helped me move

forward in my thinking. Bhaskar (1989) suggests *we will* only be able to change the social world if we understand the structures at work that generate those events and discourses. Furthermore, these structures are not discovered through observation but through the practical and theoretical work of social science. My research could uncover the 'generative mechanisms' that are enabling values-led leadership or leading to a positive impact upon the school.

Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach suggested the next step, drawing on a form of positive realism that supported my approach and thinking. His work was aimed at social theorists who '*wish to give their ideas extra weight by grounding them more firmly in empirical evidence and data'* (Layder,1998. p.1). Layder's ideas also helped to resolve the 'inductive or deductive' debate for me (i.e., was I generating a theory about values led leadership or testing a theory?) and provided a comfortable theoretical framework. Layder (1998) rejects both the naivety (and seeming objectivity) of positivism and also the naivety (and total subjectivity) of interpretivism. He argues that social research should be based on both objective and subjective components. This is at the heart of his adaptive theory – research is not going to establish a finite truth, instead it will produce the 'latest stage' in the elaboration of theory. In this approach, my data and theory would build on **and** adapt pre-existing theory. Firstly, building on (and further defining/exploring) the tentative theory that there is a place in some schools for values-led leadership (Campbell et al., 2003 and Gold et al., 2003.) and secondly, building on/further exploring theories (Hill et al., 2016, Armstrong et al., 2018) about what values-led leadership 'looks like' and its impact. I develop these ideas further in my discussion of research methods in the next section.

I had a similar struggle when I considered methods. I felt the first part of my question would lend itself to a quantitative approach and the second part to a qualitative. This seemed to be a problem – possibly two incompatible methods of research. A mixed method approach is challenging in other ways too – it is time-consuming and necessitates analysis of very different types of data sets. However, I read on to find out more about a 'mixed methods' approach. Blaikie (2010) explains and examines the use of mixed methods and finds origins in the work of Charles Booth. As a history graduate, I love the idea this approach can be traced to Charles Booth's study on 'The Life and Labour of the People of London' (1903), where statistical data was combined with interviews and participant observation. As we see in Booth's work, the mixed method approach combines quantitative and qualitative approaches and can be justified for a

number of reasons. My justification for using mixed methods is that this approach will 'help answer research questions that cannot be answered by one method alone' (Blaikie, 2010, p. 218). Building on this, the work of Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) identifies four major types of mixed research. My approach could come under the heading of 'explanatory'. Blaikie (2010) explains,

'The explanatory procedure is the most straightforward kind of mixed methods research and comes in two forms: a quantitative phase produces results that need to be elaborated or explained and this is done by a follow up qualitative phase; or a preliminary quantitative phase is used to provide the basis for selecting participants for the major qualitative phase'. (p. 225).

However, this is only partly the case as I sought to also use the initial phase of the research to help to test one hypothesis within my larger research question. Again, I explain this further below (also see figure 1).

The literature on a mixed methods approach to research also raised again the troubling question regarding ontological assumptions. It could be argued that the two approaches being 'mixed' might be each associated with different ontological assumptions. (Blaikie, 2010). Blaikie (2010) noted that mixed methods and the potential for a clash between ontological assumptions necessitates 'considerable awareness' and the 'ability to keep the various (assumed) realities separate'. For answers I returned to Charles Booth. He wished to document the living conditions of the working classes in London. His 'mixed methods' provided a document that led to change. There was seemingly no clash of ontological assumptions in his work. Reassured by this I tentatively concluded a mixed methods approach does not represent an ontological clash but simply an approach to collecting more data and building on current theory with the latest findings which is very much in line with 'adaptive theory' (Layder, 1998). I explore this in the context of my reading and research in the next sections.

Thus, my mixed methods research design was determined. Through-out the first part of this chapter I use iterations of this figure to show the development of my methodology and methods.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Research Question One – To what extent is    │
│  there a place for values-led leadership in   │
│  England's Secondary Schools?                 │
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                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Quantitative research            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Data is used to address research question one│
│  Data analysis identifies schools X and Y for │
│  qualitative research                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Research Question two – Where it can be found,│
│  how is values-led leadership enacted and what │
│  is its impact?                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Qualitative research             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1 - Mixed method research design

3.3 Decisions on the mixed methods used - why a survey (questionnaire) and a case study (of semi-structured interviews)?

The next decision in my research design was linked to the research tools – which quantitative research tool and which qualitative research tool would serve my research best? For my quantitative research I chose a survey, more specifically a questionnaire, and I explore the design of the questionnaire in the next section. The rationale for the choice of survey was as follows. The quantitative part of my mixed methods research serves two purposes; to test a hypothesis around the greater likelihood that values-led leadership will be found in schools with a good or better Ofsted judgement and to help select schools for the qualitative research. It is a cross sectional research design as I collected only one sample of data from a number of cases and the data was then analysed to detect patterns of association - primarily the link between Ofsted outcomes and high indicators of values-led leadership. A questionnaire can be relatively simple and can also be a relatively quick and efficient way to collect a larger body of data than other tools.

The best research tool for the qualitative part of my mixed methods approach (and the second research question) seemed to be case studies. Firstly, a case study has an emphasis on 'an intensive examination of the setting' (Bryman, 2008) or 'a research approach that examines the relationship between the people and the structures in which they work, live and learn' (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013). The initial survey provided data that I then combined with a more in-depth exploration of each school. There is debate over the validity or more specifically the 'generalizability' (Bryman,

2008) of a case study as it is focused on one (or in my case, two) setting(s). However, Yin (2009) challenged this notion and distinguished 5 types of case studies. I would argue that my use of case study falls into the category of 'critical case' as it allowed me to again test my hypothesis (suggested by the literature and the survey data) that values-led leadership can only flourish in good or outstanding schools (NB there have been different categorisation of case studies since Yin's work but whatever the name – another example is Stake's (2010) 'instrumental case study' – there is clearly support in the literature for a case study approach that seeks to confirm or further explore an existing hypothesis). Secondly, and more importantly, the case studies enabled me to also explore (and describe) what values-led leadership looks like explore its impact. Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) warn about the 'attending imprecision' in literature about definition and use of case studies. They note that a case study is 'a combination of the case, the research approach and the research report'. Clearly case studies can be used for a wide variety of 'cases' and suit a variety of research approaches, I understood their words of warning but am confident that my case studies of leadership in two schools allow me to be both 'descriptive' and 'instrumental' and thus sit well with my research approach inspired by adaptive theory (Layder, 1998).

My case study consisted of a number of interviews with the Headteacher and several other members of staff – a member of the senior leadership team, a middle leader, a teacher and a member of support staff. This is because I cannot gather data on how values-led leadership is enacted by just interviewing the Headteacher. I needed to find out, by talking to a cross-section of other staff, what the Headteacher's leadership looks and feels like to them. And then to use this data to build up a more rounded picture. The choice of colleagues in different roles and at different places in the school hierarchy is deliberate – to harvest data from a variety of colleagues and see if that allows a rounded picture of the Head's leadership to emerge. The interviews were semi-structured interviews with similar questions used with each of the participants. These were single interviews (i.e., no follow up questions/visits were planned). The rationale for this is simply time (mine and theirs) and this was certainly an even more pressing issue in the context of a national pandemic.

As noted, several times already, mixed Methods research is seemingly not an easy choice. It involves different methods of data collection **and** analysis. As a mixed methods researcher you are neither aligned with the quantitative camp or the qualitative camp and by using both methods of data collection **and** analysis it might be assumed

you have to grapple with the potential clash of epistemological or theoretical assumptions - sometimes dubbed the 'paradigm wars' (Waring, 2017) – and the practicalities of two different methods. However, there is certainly a strong tradition for mixed methods research and I feel I can demonstrate an alignment with the aims and approach of my research and that of other mixed methods research approaches.

Digging deeper into Booth's (1903) approach provided more inspiration and parallels. Charles Booth's key concern was 'exactly how the poor lived, exactly how discontented they were, how concretely they might be helped' (Fried and Elman, 1968: xvi). Booth employed multiple methods of data collection and analysis – a mixed methods design that included what we would now recognise as methodological triangulation (i.e., the '*use of more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked'.* Bryman, 2008, p. 717). His work included analyses of existing census data, qualitative topographical descriptions, detailed qualitative descriptions of the people's behaviours and their habits within their contexts (often from interviews). Booth even had first-hand experience of the living conditions of poor families by occasionally renting a room in their homes! His was a concurrent approach rather than my sequential one and obviously on a much greater scale and more multi-faceted. However, there are still parallels to draw. For example, just like Booth's early reading and data trawls, my reading of the studies on values-led leadership carried out to date, provided both additional data for my research and source material for my research design. A key hypothesis gleaned from data collected by others was that there seems to be more of a place for values-led leadership in good or outstanding schools (as discussed earlier). Consequentially, my survey questionnaire was designed to test and further develop that hypothesis (a fuller explanation of the survey design can be found in appendix 5). In my research, as in Booth's (1903), these 'meaningful answers' will hope to test a hypothesis about where values-led leadership is likely to occur and be followed up by spending time in selected schools, trying to get a better understanding of values-led leadership 'in action' with the hope of providing some ideas or examples for other school leaders and thus 'advancing our understanding 'of values-led leadership. This complements Layder's adaptive theory (1998). The unhelpful dichotomy of data analysis as mining knowledge or constructing knowledge is challenged too – surely, we are mining, constructing and building upon a body of literature and knowledge with the goal of improving research and even practice. Certainly not on the grand scale of

Charles Booth with his aim to improve the lives of the poor, but hopefully to add to the debate and offer practical advice. I would argue that the mixed methods approach to both collection and analysis fits my research aims and questions. However, my survey data, unlike Booth's, is not being used to make statistical claims but to test a hypothesis and to help to identify a case study school.

Clearly there are some tentative parallels with my mixed methods research and that of Charles Booth's (1903) but the scale and use of the quantitative data is quite different. So next I looked at more recent examples of mixed methods research in education. Biesta (2017) declares a mixed methods approach to research to be pragmatic- i.e., a research choice that is driven by the aims, objectives and research questions not by choice of research paradigm. And there are definitely examples of robust research projects in education where mixed methods is a pragmatic choice to get to the heart of an issue the researchers wish to explore. One such example, 'Becoming a Teacher' (Hobson, Malderez, Tracey, Homer, Ashby, Mitchell, McIntyre, Cooper, Roper, Chambers, and Tomlinson, 2009), explores teachers' experiences of ITT, induction and early professional development. Their mixed methods approach included an annual survey of participants and a follow up case study of a sub-sample. In the chapter on research design, the authors acknowledge the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches and explain that the quantitative elements enabled them to 'comment with confidence' on some of the themes that came from the smaller qualitative data set. But they go on to explain that the advantage of the qualitative data set was it enabled the researchers to explore a 'lived experience' - just like my case study school. This is a strong justification for mixed methods research and I am heartened to find support for my approach within educational research that has status and impact - 'Becoming a Teacher' (Hobson et al, 2009) includes a section on implications for trainers, schools, headteacher and policy makers and did have an impact on practice. However, this approach does not fully align with **my** mixed methods approach. The scale of the survey (4790 participants in wave 1) enabled triangulation and statistical claims. But, as I explain in more detail below, I am not aiming to make statistical claims with my survey data; it occupies a different place in my research design underpinned by slightly different theoretical assumptions to those underpinning this research. Practicalities also play a part – theirs was a large government funded project and mine is small scale doctorate research.

Possibly my approach is more in line with the VITAE project (Day, Stobart, Sammons, Kington, Gu, Smees, Mujtaba, 2006). This project, funded by the DfES aimed to 'investigate factors contributing to variations in teacher's effectiveness'. Much as the 'Becoming a teacher' (Hobson et al, 2009) project the research spanned a number of years and included a large number of participants (300). An initial questionnaire was designed, inspired by the literature in a similar way to my own study, and completed. The data was then analysed and used to develop the interview schedule. This schedule included the selection of the case study schools, again like my 'step two'. A final mixed methods study in education is' Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools' or DISS (Blatchford, Basset, Brown, Martin, Russell, Webster, 2009). In this study they use quantitative and qualitative data and approaches to address two different aims (two different research questions). Again, this offers some support for my approach as I am using different approaches to help me to answer two questions. However, the scale is very different to my own. I acknowledge that I cannot use my survey sample to make statistical claims about the values led leadership and good/outstanding schools in a similar way that the DISS project (Blatchford et al, 2009) was able to make claims about the types of support staff in schools; but again, I reiterate that this is not my intention. In the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) I am using the survey data to explore a hypothesis about where we find values-led leadership and to identify a school for the case study.

So, I conclude this section on the theoretical challenges of mixed methods research with a note that there is a strong tradition of mixed methods research that both provide context and support for my choices. However, the role played by quantitative data in my research is different to those detailed above– I am not seeking to make statistical claims. My approach finds some support in the work of Tashakorri and Teddlie (2009) who note that mixed methods data analysis techniques should **not** be dictated by the underlying epistemological orientation. Rather they stem from the research purpose. Andres (2012) work on the use of surveys also supports the notion that survey data can be used for much more than simply to make statistical claims based on large samples. My survey data analysis will build on a hypothesis about where values-led leadership is found in school AND allow the selection of the case study school.

3.4 Layder's adaptive theory and designing the mixed methods research tools


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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Research Question One – To what extent is there a │
│  place for values-led leadership in England's      │
│  Secondary Schools?                                │
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┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Headteacher questionnaire (sent out widely with an aim to   │
│ gather at least 30 returns)                                 │
│                                                             │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Data is used to address research question one               │
│ Data analysis identifies schools X and Y for case study     │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Research Question two – Where it can be found,   │
│  how is values-led leadership enacted and what is │
│  its impact?                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

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│ Case study of     │
│ schools X & Y     │
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Figure 2 – My mixed methods research design (survey then case studies)

As the figure illustrates, I planned two steps to my research with a research question for each. The quantitative data from step one (the survey) served two purposes. It enabled me to tentatively analyse the extent of values-led leadership in each school and use these findings to address research question one. The findings also enabled me to select two schools to use as case studies to address the second question. Thus, the sampling is purposive as I will only approach Secondary Headteachers to complete the questionnaire.

Step two is qualitative research (case studies) driven by the second research question with a focus on describing values-led leadership and exploring the potential impact of a values-led leader. The case study element focused on two schools and involved in-depth interviews with the Headteacher, one other member of the senior leadership team, one middle leader, one main scale teacher and one member of the school support staff.

As noted above, the tools (survey questions and case study questions) used in both steps are informed and shaped by the extant research. And the purpose of my research is to build upon and add to the current theories. Let me expound further with some detail on the design of the research tools.

Step one – 'Quantitative' research (survey) seeking to address,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**

The research to date suggests a tentative hypothesis. Some studies (Campbell et al.,2003 and Gold et al., 2003) indicate there is a place for values-led leadership. An examination of the selection of schools for their studies indicates they might be schools that have the opportunity to be driven by values rather than external goals. These schools tend to have good or better Ofsted judgements and are under less external scrutiny. The first part of my main study will aim to test this tentative hypothesis (i.e., links between higher Ofsted grades and a space for values-led leadership) by surveying Secondary Headteachers. My hypothesis suggests that the surveys may well find a link between schools with higher Ofsted grades and values-led leadership. It also suggests that there might be a correlation between schools with lower Ofsted grades and 'bastard' leadership (Wright, 2001).

The survey design was important and careful consideration had to be given to each section and question. I designed four main sections to the questionnaire (see appendix 2). As I designed the questionnaire, I wrote a rationale document to record, explain and justify my survey design. The full document is appendix 5 and I have briefly explained and justified my design below. In section 3.6, I also explore the outcome of a pilot of my quantitative research which was very useful in honing the survey and jettisoning a fruitless exploration of websites.

Survey section one – about you, your current role and your experience to date

The aim of this section was to gather information about the participants and the school. As I explore in the 'rationale' document (appendix 5) some of this data is necessary to confirm the Ofsted judgement but some of the other data may or may not indicate interesting leads and the beginnings of patterns building on the extant research. For example, the links made by Hill et al., (2016) between values-led leaders and curriculum backgrounds or the length of time serving as a headteacher.

Survey section two – reflecting on your work as a leader this school year

This section begins to unpick what drives the behaviour of school leaders. The research indicates we understand what drives a school leader by observing their behaviour (Gold, 2004; Armstrong et al 2018). I aimed to understand this behaviour by asking the participants to identify some key decisions taken this year, what lay behind

their decision making and how happy they were with decisions taken. I created the list of drivers/factors behind their decisions for the first supplementary question very carefully. I mixed key words and phrases from the 'Nolan Principles of Public Life' (1995) and the Ethical Leadership Commission's 'Framework for Ethical Leadership' (2019) with key phrases/words from DfE policy documents to help me start to unpick what drove their leadership - values-led or 'bastard leadership' (Wright, 2001). The second supplementary question asks the leaders to identify their level of happiness and confidence with each decision (using a Likert scale). The literature identifies an aspect of values-led leadership where leaders try to be guided by their values but often must abandon them under pressure (e.g., Hammersley-Fletcher, 2013). I aimed to explore this a little with the questionnaire – my hypothesis being the leaders might identify one or more decision that they feel uncomfortable about and may have chosen a higher frequency of 'bastard leadership' words and phrases in explaining what drove this decision.

Survey section 3 – you as a leader

This section of questions was inspired by the approach taken in the authentic leadership questionnaire (Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa, 2007). They use a series of statements starting 'as a leader I' and the respondent identifies the extent to which that is true. In creating the statements, I again used the Ethical Framework list of values and virtues and the words/phrases harvested from policy documentation just as I had done in survey section 2 (and refined and updated this list to address some issues identified in the pilot – see section 3.6). Here, I hoped to gather some data about each participant's philosophy of leadership and how they saw themselves as leaders. This would provide interesting data to compare with section two. As I explore in the Findings and Analysis chapter, the tension between leadership drivers revealed in survey section 2 versus these 'self-reported' drivers proved interesting.

Survey section 4 – Your school's values and priorities

I had initially planned to compare the information shared in this section with the documentation on the website exploring whether the key decisions the leader has identified are linked to stated school priorities. And also, whether there was a consistent sense of the school's values. However, the pilot study led to a change in plan – the analysis of websites was simply not fruitful. I chose to leave this section so I

could use the data from the fourth section of the survey in prompts for questions in the case study with the headteacher.

How many survey responses?

The decision to aim for around 30 surveys deserves some explanation. When I first immersed myself in the literature about quantitative analysis, I got lost down a number of 'rabbit holes'. Much of the literature I read about quantitative data analysis (Blaikie, 2010, Bryman, 2008) discussed sample size and statistical significance. A study of 30 questionnaires cannot meet these tests. When I started to consider this possibility, I found myself drawn into considerations about what quantity of surveys I would need to collect to make this data valid in the sense of statistical significance. I started to think I would need to gather a second sample using a probability sampling approach from which I might be able to generalise about all headteachers in English Secondary Schools. I set about calculating the number of current Secondary headteachers in England and started to consider the calculation $p < 0.05$ in order use my data to generalise about secondary school leadership. And then I realised this was the very heart of the challenge of survey data analysis as part of a mixed methods study in education; even with a greater quantity of surveys I still would **not** be trying to make statistical claims, I would still simply be looking for support for a hypothesis and the ability to test some other hypotheses in the literature that has inspired and supports my research in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998). Thus, my data is valid when bearing in mind its purpose. It provides a data set that builds upon the research I have examined to date (testing the hypothesis that there is more likely to be values-led leadership in a school judged 'good' or outstanding') and therefore fits with an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998).

Thus, my research tool for step one (the survey) was crafted with adaptive theory in mind (Layder, 1998). It was inspired and shaped by the research and my aim was to harvest data that would build on and develop current theories. The case study questions were planned in a very similar way.

Step two – 'Qualitative' research (case studies) seeking to address,

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

The second step of my research tests the hypothesis formed by an examination of the literature (backed up by the surveys) that each school is (at least in part) succeeding (in

terms of Ofsted judgement and student outcomes) because of the values-led leadership of the headteacher that permeates and drives all that happens in the school. The plan was to explore how the leadership of each school 'works' and I further unpick participants' understanding of the drivers behind the Headteacher's decisions and actions.

The question design for the semi-structured interviews was just as careful as the survey design and went through several iterations with me working backwards and forwards between my question design and the literature that was both informing the questions and providing a base for my research to build upon. The full set of questions can be found in appendix 4 and is also explored in the data analysis section below. The question design was key to achieving these two aims – to harvest a rich description of values-led leadership and its impact both of which would build on the extant theory.

The case study necessitated a different set of questions for the headteacher and the other participants. In both sets of interviews, the first question used some of the material from the survey design around drivers for decisions and actions,

(For the headteacher)

One key aspect of the questionnaire was identifying some of the biggest decisions you have taken in the past 12 months and then the drivers behind that decision (i.e., why did you do what you did). Can you talk me through a decision and why you took those decisions in a some more detail?

(For other participants)

Can you identify a major decision that was taken by your Headteacher over the past 12 months and share with me your understanding of why that decision was taken?).

Moreover, in keeping with Layder's (1998) adaptive theory approach, I also designed questions to further unpick some of the ideas and approaches linked to Hill et al.'s 'architect' (2016) and Armstrong et al.'s (2018) leaders 'building webs of connection and communication' based on their values. Let me explain that a little further with an example. Hill et al.'s (2016) notion of the architect leader was developed from their examination of 411 school leaders. The 'architect' is described as a leader who quietly, steadfastly engages all and builds for the future. Their approach is often informed by their understanding of great leaders of the past and they are described as '*insightful, humble, and visionary leaders'* (Hill et al., 2016 p. 5). Immediate gains do not deflect

them from their path. The research notes that the architect, driven by their beliefs or values, re-designs the school to creates the right environment for staff and students to thrive including tackling poor student behaviour and improving teaching and leadership though mentoring and coaching. So, this will lead me to ask about the pace of change, the priorities for change and descriptions of the leadership behaviours they have repeatedly observed in their headteacher.

For example,

(For the headteacher)

What things have you developed and put in place to take you towards that vision?

Tell me about the pace of change and the priorities for change?

(For the other participants)

What came across as/were their priorities for change and what was the order and pace of change? Describe how the change happened?

It is important to state here that the centrality of the 'architect' to this hypothesis means that all those interviewed should ideally have been working for that headteacher for several years (5 or more). Equally, the schools identified for the case study will need to have had that headteacher for at least 5 years. I was aware that managing the selection of participants could present some challenges. My plan was always to share with the headteachers the range of types of colleagues I seek to interview and ask that she/he share a message from my asking for volunteers (with the only caveat being length of time served alongside the headteacher). My hope was that this would prevent any selection of participants by the headteacher (I explore how this happened in practice below). However, I was aware there could be issues around about who volunteered and the lens through which they view the school and their headteacher. So, I crafted my questions carefully and used techniques trialled in the survey namely asking the same thing in two ways is key to trying to negate some of these concerns (or more accurately designing question with 'overlap'). For example,

Can you identify a major decision that was taken by the headteacher (HT) over the past 12 months and share with me your understanding of why that decision was taken?

How would you describe the HT as a leader? What words spring to mind?   What does that look like? Describe their leadership behaviours?

Also asking, as the final question, *'can I ask why you kindly volunteered your time to answer my questions*?'* was a careful addition to the design.

Thus, my research tool for step two (the semi-structured interviews for the case studies) were also crafted with adaptive theory in mind (Layder, 1998). It was inspired and shaped by the research and my aim was to harvest data that would build on and develop current theories.

3.5 My mixed methods approach to data analysis

Mixed methods research requires a mixed approach to data analysis. My 'explanatory sequential design' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) is in some respects the most straightforward mixed method approach that allows a sequential approach to data analysis and worked well for my research questions. In this design there are two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative. The quantitative (numeric) data is collected and analysed and then the qualitative data are collected and analysed. The second data set builds upon the first (and in my case answers a second research question). This qualitative data and its analysis 'refine and explain the statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth.' (p. 104, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Often mixed methods studies explain the priority or dominance of one of the two approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, Biesta, 2017). In my research the qualitative phase would probably have priority because it provides more in-depth explanations of the results obtained in the quantitative phase (so it would likely be a quan-QUAL study). I am not sure how useful it is to label my mixed methods work in this way but it helps to locate it within a range of mixed methods research designs.

Whilst there may be some agreed mixed methods research designs such as the 'explanatory sequential design' referenced above or other approaches such as mixed methods 'concurrent or convergent design', there are 'no typical methods for data collection in mixed research' (Biesta, 2017). Again, the mixed method researcher must return to their aims and questions and chose the methods that best help them answer the questions. It follows that 'there are also no typical methods for data analysis' (Biesta, 2017). The analysis simply must be congruent with research design and its overall purpose. I explain my approach to analysis for both research questions below.

Step one – 'Quantitative data analysis (surveys) seeking to address,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary schools?**

As I began to explore in the previous section, there is far less debate around, and certainly not a wide range of approaches to, quantitative data analysis. The literature implies that epistemological assumptions have been addressed already in the choice of research methods (choosing a survey for example over an unstructured interview) and so much of the literature on survey data analysis jumps straight into the practicalities (Blaikie, 2010, Bryman, 2008). Certainly, the literature discusses the different types of analysis that can be used such as univariate descriptive, bivariate descriptive, explanatory, inferential etc (Blaikie, 2010, Bergin, 2018) but there is not the plethora of approaches and theories we find when exploring the analysis of qualitative data. Once I had grappled with the theoretical challenges that underpin the choice of mixed methods and found a justification for my quantitative survey data collection and analysis within my mixed methods research as outlined in the previous section, I was content to follow a process to work with my data to generate, interpret and evaluate some results.

When it comes to processes for working with and analysing quantitative data there seems to be an agreement (Blaikie, 2010 Bryman, 2008, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) that certain steps need to be taken. The literature also identifies a need for the deployment of a statistical software package. I opted to use SPSS software and chose to take the following 6 key steps (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011),

1. Preparing data for analysis
2. Exploring the data
3. Analysing the data
4. Representing the data analysis
5. Interpreting the results
6. Validating

Often in qualitative analysis such steps may be simultaneous and iterative; but for the purposes of quantitative data analysis, they are often taken step by step as shown above. My analysis of the survey data will ultimately be bivariate descriptive as I am primarily seeking to establish whether positions on one variable (Ofsted grading) are likely to be consistently associated with positions on another variable (behaviours linked with values-led leadership). In the Findings and Analysis chapter, I also explore the degree to which other variables vs the total number of values led leadership behaviours identified as

drivers behind 3 big decisions identified in the survey vs 'self-reported' leadership behaviours).

Step two – 'Qualitative' data analysis (case studies) seeking to address,

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

Unsurprisingly, I was influenced by the approach to qualitative analysis that Layder (1998) promotes. He describes his analysis of semi-structured interviews with actors and explains how his analysis differed from an entirely inductive approach such as grounded theory that begins with open coding. The difference lay in the fact that he was starting his analysis with some prior theoretical ideas. He explains,

'Thus, the search for new codes and concepts goes on in tandem with the use of extant theoretical assumptions and relevancies' (p. 57)

This is, of course, his adaptive theory approach that is key to my work. In this section (and below in the Methods section) I explore how his work was the starting point for my qualitative analysis of the interview data; searching for new codes alongside the application of codes linked to the theories expounded to date, for example Hill et al.'s (2016) 'architect'. But this approach was certainly not the 'norm' either in the literature about qualitative analysis of interviews or in some of the research I had explored in my literature review. As Tierney and Dilley (2002) note, the qualitative interview has perhaps become more prevalent in education research than any other field. Moreover, the 'grounded theory' analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 2003) of this interview data also seems to be somewhat centre-stage (and firmly in the inductive camp). Certainly, in the research I had read that uses only interviews as data for case studies - for example, Hammersley Fletcher's Values' Driven Decision Making (2013) - grounded theory is the approach used in data analysis. And yet the notion that coding begins in the data did not 'sit right' with my research. Even the 'constructivist' grounded theory approach' (Charmez, 2006) that allows for sensitizing concepts or the researcher's interest and perspectives, did not adequately provide a suitable approach. But this then brings me back to my opening line – I was not aiming to replicate their approaches; to feel I could adequately contribute to this field of research their research *forms part of my data too* and it both inspires and informs my research as I aim to '*combine the use of pre-existing theory and theory generated from data analysis*' (Layder, 1998, p.1). I describe how I used this approach in practice in the data analysis section below.

<u>3.6 Learning from the pilot study</u>

I had carried out a pilot study to test the first draft of survey before I embarked on the main study. I approached 3 local headteachers within my Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and asked them to complete the survey. The ease of access to these colleagues was a key driver for this but my MAT also includes schools (as many do) with a variety of Ofsted judgements (at the time it was one 'outstanding', one 'good', one 'requires improvement' and one 'inadequate) so I knew it would give me a good variety. The pilot indicated that sections one and two of the survey worked well. In section two of the survey, the 3 main questions (each with two supplementary questions) proved to be sufficient. I harvested useful data and in discussion with the participants they agreed the questionnaire was not over-long. However, carrying out the pilot study and analysing the data also indicated the need for some refinements were needed that I duly made. For example, when I came to analyse the data, I found the mix of values and other factors worked well in section two of the survey but the mix of values and 'other' statements in the section three ('you as a leader') provided fewer rich data as there was an over-abundance of values statements and a lack of clarity with two of the statements (even I had to go back and check my planning notes). I reviewed and revised this section of the survey for the main study.

Grappling with the format of the questionnaire taught me some key lessons for the main study. Initially I had planned to use SurveyMonkey - I have prior knowledge of SurveyMonkey and the easy download of data into excel was appealing. However, creating anything more than a simple survey is expensive. It would have been unethical to use the logon to the school subscription so I had to rethink the format of the questionnaire. After experimenting with other free software and becoming increasingly concerned about the amount of time remaining, I created a word survey and emailed and posted it to participants. One completed it electronically and it was swiftly returned. The other two completed on paper and posted them back. Unfortunately, both envelopes got lost for a number of weeks which was worrying and I resolved to email surveys to participants for the main survey. I also learned some further lessons from the pilot study about quantitative data analysis. It became apparent that an investment in survey software was needed so I secured and used SPSS. Coding the data and then teaching myself how to use SPSS software was a steep learning curve. There may be less debate around quantitative data analysis but there are some real intricacies in terms

of identifying and coding variables and deciding on approaches to analysis – univariate, bivariate, multivariate etc. However, I reached some positive conclusions too. Despite the fact a small data set was produced and analysed, I had a growing confidence in the questionnaire as a tool (after some tweaks) and an excitement to use it and gather the data for the main study.

I had also planned to incorporate a study of school websites into my research. However, I soon realised that I may be making too great an assumption about the link between website content and the values of the headteacher. There are other studies that include analysis of school websites as part of their research, for example, Coldwell, Greany, Higgins, Brown, Maxwell, Stiel, Stoll, Willis & Burn, (2017). Indeed, this study claims analysis of websites can '*provide a strong indication of values*' (p. 36) although they also discuss the issue of audience and conclude the data must be used alongside other strands of the research. Carneiro and Johnson's 2014 study used ethnic museum websites to examine construction of ethnic identify. They adapted Pauwel's (2012) approach for quantitative and qualitative analysis of websites. This approach is not entirely relevant to my study as they analysed websites in their entirety. They also noted the challenges of using websites for research as they are always 'under construction' and constantly changing. My pilot identified other issues. Interestingly, the school where values-led leadership seemed to be most in place (from the data harvested from the survey) had the least indication of values-led leadership within the minimal documentation on the website. The language of the vision statement was heavy with 'Ofsted', 'Progress 8', 'school to school support' etc. This led me to ponder how far the website content was linked to the context of the school and the audience. Does a simple website with only small amounts of clear detail about vision indicate the headteacher does not have that much to say, or, does it actually reflect the readership? This particular school from the pilot is in an area where levels of adult literacy are lower and numbers of parents with English as an additional language are higher – it is possible this might have a greater impact on the amount of documentation detailing vision than other factors. I might not be aware of this contextual information in the main study and this may lead to unhelpful conclusions. So that led me to question the validity and reliability of this data and I decided not to use it in my main study.

I was not able to pilot the semi structured interview questions. Attempts were scuppered by the pandemic; firstly, in the sense that the my 'day job' as a Secondary headteacher

became even more all-consuming and secondly as my access to other schools was limited by the restrictions. Instead, I worked closely with my supervisors to hone my questions and ensure the quality of the research tool. We debated and discussed each question and I heeded their wisdom, for example, adding prompt questions if participants struggled to answer question 4 on leadership approach and inspiration (by asking '*What other clues are there about their leadership approach (e.g., how they talk about the school, the community, the students, the staff?)* Also, as noted above and in subsequent sections, my 'adaptive theory' approach (Layder, 1998) meant that there was possibly more precision in the crafting of the questions when compared with the semi structured interview questions I used for Masters research into women in headship, for example.

The pilot also enabled me to make some tweaks and refinements to the supporting materials that I used for both the quantitative and qualitative research. The information sheet referenced research into 'values-led leadership' which I subsequently removed. This is not intended to deceive; it is a way to avoid eager participants supplying the answers they think are being sought. Instead, I noted in my communications and information sheets that I am researching approaches to leadership.

3.7 Ethical Issues with values

Bryman (2008) states clearly the four areas in which ethical concerns particularly arise (p. 130),

 '*Whether harm comes to the participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception'.*

When I started planning my research I felt 'black and white' about the ethical considerations. I focused on informed consent and privacy (anonymity). My questionnaires posed no issues around deception – this was no Milgram (1963) experiment – and my research was not pharmaceutical so there was no chance of physical harm. I felt sure I could address any ethical issues and avoid any ethical transgression. However, through my reading and carrying out my pilot study, a number of further considerations have presented themselves. Ethical transgression may be associated with certain research methods (for example, disguised observation) but that should not lead to an assumption that 'ethical concerns only reside in some methods but not others' (Bryman, 2008). For me it became clear that my main ethical challenges would be presented by relationships – my relationships with my participants and with my research.

3.8 The more straightforward ethical considerations – informed consent, data security and anonymity.

I had decided to use non-probability sampling - more specifically convenience and purposive sampling for my quantitative research. This was due to time constraints and accessibility. Moreover, as noted previously, I am not making statistically generalisable claims, I am aiming to uncover patterns and mechanisms. I needed a relatively quick and full response to my survey – the aim being 30 questionnaires - but I also wanted a good cross section of types of Secondary Schools represented (size, MAT vs Local Authority, geographical location etc). I had initially thought I would approach some MAT CEOs to ask for their support with my research and if they would broker the involvement of their headteachers. I did do this (and enlisted the support of my CEO to ask fellow CEOs) but I also decided to make a plea for participants via Twitter. There is a growing body of literature on the usefulness of Twitter to recruit participants. Sibona, Walczak, & White Baker (2020) note that researchers can recruit survey participants via 'many modes', and Twitter may be 'a viable alternative' to more complex, more time-consuming, or more costly methods. Moreover, it has 'certain potential replicability' advantages. Other research into the use of Twitter to recruit participants, notes how useful the public and 'open' nature of Twitter is to researchers and the helpfulness of the 'retweet' function that can spread your tweet far and wide (Wasilewski, Stinson, Webster and Cameron, 2019). Wasilewski et al (2019), also suggest it is best if you already have a Twitter account and can attract some high-profile Twitter uses to retweet your recruitment plea thus helping you to recruit from an even wider pool. I was able to do this, for example, through my links to colleagues and organisations (e.g., WomensEd) with large numbers of followers and wide networks. I use Twitter regularly and my Twitter feed and biography shows I am a Secondary headteacher. Over time I have followed (and am followed by) other school leaders and those with an interest in education and school leadership. My account is private but I changed my settings for a month to enable me to connect with those that responded to my plea for participants. The plea itself was simple,

I tweeted several similar versions and asked contacts and networks to retweet on my behalf (e.g., WomensEd, fellow educationalists who are prolific and popular on Twitter).

When willing participants responded (either via Twitter or via email), I shared a copy of the information sheet that detailed the purpose of the research, how I would use and store their data, their right to withdraw and other key information (see appendix 1). As my research tool was a questionnaire, I did not include a separate consent form as it was made clear that their engagement with and completion of the questionnaire would serve this purpose. I also included this note on the top of the questionnaire,

Please also note that your completion of this questionnaire also serves as your consent to take part in this research. The participant information sheet details how I will use this data and the efforts I will take to anonymise my findings and store your data security. The sheet also tells you how to withdraw your consent and the timeline for doing so.

I was pleased by how many quickly agreed to participate (it took me less than a month to gather sample of 30 surveys) and somewhat surprised by how little they were concerned by the use and storage of their data. None raised further questions.

The right to withdraw was detailed on the information sheet (I asked that they contact me within one week of completing the questionnaire if they wish to withdraw). They all had my contact details (and those of my supervisors) on the information sheet. None of them contacted me to withdraw from the study. The information sheet also detailed the care I would (and did take) with their data.

Of the 30 surveys received 17 came from recruitment approaches via email and 13 came from approaches via Twitter. Interestingly the Twitter recruitment was much easier – I

(and others including my CEO) sent over 20 emails to individuals and organisations whereas I only posted 5 tweets! Moreover, the Twitter recruitment got me participants form as far away as Cornwall supporting the research on the usefulness of Twitter to participant recruitment (Wasilewski et al., 2019; Sibona et al., 2020).

Obviously, the selection of the case study schools was linked to the analysis of the survey data (and I explore that selection later on). I had added into the survey this question,

> Please add **your email address** below if you are willing to consider being contacted for a case study

I was lucky that in 24 out of the 30 returned surveys, the headteachers had indicated that they were willing to be contacted. The other colleagues that I interviewed had not however. The path to the involvement of two schools in the case study warrants some further discussion below but in terms of informed consent I followed clear protocols. Appendix 3 shows the consent form for the semi structured interviews that was collected for each participant before the interview. Again, the right to withdraw was carefully detailed and none of the participants chose to do so. I was asked one or two questions about anonymity in the interviews; mostly around 'will my headteacher be able to identify me in the study' and I was able to re-assure them that this would not be possible. Just as in my pilot study, I observed that participants are mostly very casual about their data but I worked hard to emphasise the importance of their comfort in participation and to encourage them to engage with the materials I prepared to let them know what I would do with their data.

I also do not believe it is possible that contextual data about each school *(Ofsted judgements, gender/length of service of headteacher)* could be used to identify them by someone reading the study. Participants are not sharing very sensitive data via the questionnaire (i.e., it is largely around decision making and drivers for recent decisions) but that is not to say it could not be deemed somewhat sensitive data as it seeks to unpick aspects of leadership that could be seen as personal and I have included questions about gender and age. However, my commentary inked to the quantitative data would not expose any school. Equally the case study schools are anonymized.

A final point about the sample, in December 2021 the percentage of English Secondary Schools in each Ofsted category was as follows,

Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
20%	56%	16%	7%

Table 1 – Percentage of English Secondary Schools in each Ofsted category (Ofsted, 2022)

This shows that the sample for the survey was loosely in line with the spread of Ofsted judgements at the time,

	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding & good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	RI & inadequate
National distribution	20%	56%	76%	16%	7%	23%
My sample	27%	42%	69%	27%	4%	31%

Table 2 – Percentage of English Secondary Schools in each Ofsted category (Ofsted, 2022) shown against my survey sample

This was not contrived as my approach to sampling was non-probability sampling – more specifically convenience and purposive. As is describe above I used contacts and Twitter to recruit my headteachers. However, it is useful to see this data and note that the numbers in each category are loosely in line with the national picture and that no one category was wildly over-represented in my sample.

3.9 Ethics and the insider researcher

My instinct is that involvement was beneficial to the participants. I hope involvement in my study gave them the opportunity to reflect on their leadership and what drives their decision making. Schools are very busy places and there is little time for leaders to reflect. One participant actually told me he had found completing the survey 'enjoyable and cathartic'.   Equally, comments from those involved in the case studies included,

- *'Ooh – that was thought provoking.'*
- *'For me doing what I believe is right stands head and shoulders above all the rest of the descriptors. I have to be able to sleep at night and justify my decisions to a range of tricky stakeholders. I have to be able to put my hand on my heart and say I have done what was right.'*
- *'I enjoyed completing your survey - it made me think!'*

However, there were certainly ethical challenges too. Initially my concerns centred around a general fear I think school leaders have of being continually judged. I worried

the participants would be wary of another person making judgements about their leadership. However, they were all unconcerned about any negative consequence of completing the questionnaires and did so willingly. But my concerns about informed consent lingered. Homan (1991), observed that implementing the principle of informed consent is 'easier said than done'. This is largely because it is impossible to present all the information needed to make an informed decision. The information shared with the surveys included information around how the questionnaires will lead to the choice of case study, what data will be collected in the case study, the content, readership and audience of the research etc. Equally, the information shared with the case studies was carefully written so as to inform and re-assure and I always ensured that the information was clear and understood.

A larger issue is that of taking sides. Some sociologists argue that it is impossible carry out research that is not affected by our personal sympathies (Becker, 1967). I think the issue is even deeper in my research (despite my earlier comments on positivism, realism and objectivity). I am an 'insider researcher' or am stepping between the roles of insider and outsider. Being an 'insider' brings me access and I have contextual knowledge that helps me to understand the data. However, viewing the leaders and their schools as a researcher renders me, in part, an 'outsider'. And possibly positions me as a threat; a judge. Does gaining access as an 'insider' and then collecting and analysing as an 'outsider' pose ethical considerations? Cain (2014) writes about her experiences as primary school headteacher carrying out research on primary school heads – a very similar situation to my own. She wrote about viewing the research initially through a 'subjective lens' (insider) but then taking recourse in literature and the research and theories of others to develop her 'outsider' skills. This fits well with an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998) but does not fully address questions about ethical concerns. Others that have grappled with the challenge of 'insider' researchers have pointed out the increased ethical concerns posed by methods such as ethnography (Humphrey, 2012) which is not an issue for me. Equally 'role duality' (headteacher and EdD researcher) is an issue but as I did not carry out my research in my own school or my own MAT it presents less of an ethical challenge. However, the literature also celebrates the positives of 'insiders' and simply counsel the need to be aware of the potential ethical dilemmas, maintain integrity and be well-supported (Cain, 2014: Humphrey, 2012; Holian and Coglin, 2012).

3.10 A brief conclusion on my methodology and summary of 'part A'

Choosing a mixed methods approach was definitely a 'pragmatic' one for me at the outset (Biesta, 2017). It seemed to be the best way to answer my questions. But beneath that seemingly simple choice were so many theoretical and epistemological assumptions that I needed to explore. Despite the established body of mixed methods research in education (and the appeal of the work of Booth, (1903) the seeming quantitative-qualitative dichotomy did need to be addressed again and again. For example, in the case of the analysis of the pilot quantitative data, when I began to research the survey data analysis, I was reading about quantitative data analysis and was quickly pulled into a world underpinned by positivist assumptions where I became concerned about statistical significance and creating results that could make statistical claims. But that is absolutely not my theoretical perspective; my data is not solely quantitative and the survey data was never intended to make statistical claims. So, I had to return to the re-examination of my epistemological assumptions and all the reflection I had done when grappling with methodology. As noted above, I had to look to literature/research to justify and locate my survey analysis in mixed methods research underpinned by critical realism and adaptive theory (Layder, 1998).

Thus, this first section (part A) is in part somewhat of a journal of my on-going intellectual struggles. But the outcome was a resolution that a mixed methods approach using these research tools was the right way forward.

Part B – Methods

3.11 Data collection

3.12 Carrying out the quantitative research

There are mixed method research designs where the quantitative and qualitative research happen simultaneously, for example 'convergent design' Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017. This was not the case for my research. The 30+ surveys had to be gathered first. As I note above, I used connections and social media to spread my plea for participants as wide as I could. In around three weeks I have received 30 surveys all by email. The table below gives an overview of some of the characteristics of the participants who returned surveys.

	Questionnaires completed	Male HTs	Female HTs	Good or Outstanding schools	5 years or more in current school	NPQH completed	'Architect' curriculum background*	School in south of England (i.e., not Midlands or north)	Willing to be contacted for further research
Totals	30	23	7	19	16	21	6	12	24

NB This = typically History or Economics at university (Hill et al., 2016)
Table 3 - An overview of characteristics of the Headteachers who returned surveys.

 Four of the surveys returned were completed by CEOs rather than headteachers and, alas, as I started to prepare, code and analyse the data I realised that this data could not be included (for example because they were not leading one school with one Ofsted judgement). I had been clear that I was seeking Secondary headteachers but these CEOs (who had all formerly been Secondary headteachers) were keen to help and I simply thanked them for their data. I did consider seeking a few more questionnaires but felt that the sample collected in the three-week window contained data that could be compared as they were all completed in the same relatively short timeframe; additional questionnaires collected a month or two later would not. I was particularly minded that the first batch was collected in June and I was considering collecting more in September – in the lifecycle of a school these represent very different contexts. The former is the end of the year, reflections, review and celebration and the latter is beginnings, new challenging, setting a vison.

3.13 Carrying out the qualitative research

As I explain in the Findings and Analysis' chapter, data analysis of the survey led me to two schools – school 8 and school 18. Both headteachers had been in role for 5 or more years (as noted earlier, this period of service to school is a key component of the 'architect'). Moreover, these headteachers had indicated in their responses that they would be willing to be involved in the case study. School 8 is local and School 18 is further afield and I simply made contact requesting I follow up the questionnaire and was pleased when they both agreed. For my case study of school 8 I was able to make several trips to the school to carry out those interviews over a number of weeks. In contrast, school 18 was further away and I was invited to spend one day there carrying out all of the interviews. Interestingly, despite the massive rise in use of Microsoft Teams, Zoom or similar to carry out meetings and have conversations since the outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020, only two of the participants (school 8) was keen to conduct their interview in this way. The other interviews were face to face.

I have explored the ethical challenges relating to my positionality in the section above and noted the need for integrity so as not to blur the insider/outsider lines. It is undeniable that this research starts with me - who I am and what I do – but I have taken great pains to find a theoretical framework and methodology that can include both subjective **and** objective components. Focusing my case study on the rich interview data rather than trying to capture other data from the visits (and grapple with my own perceptions of, and reactions to, this other data) is much more in keeping with my overall approach- this is not an ethnography (Hymes, 1977). However, as I noted in chapter 2 (specifically 2.1), school development plans can be an articulation of values and my final question was to ask if the headteachers of the case study schools will share these documents with me. There is a note of caution with this, as my exploration of websites revealed sometimes these documents tell you more about the context than the values of the leader (for example, a school such as School 8 in a growing Multi Academy Trust might have an approach and proforma imposed on them by the CEO and Trustees).

Managing the selection of participants presented some challenges. My plan was to share with the headteachers the range of types of colleagues I sought to interview and ask that they then share a message from me asking for volunteers. My hope was that this would prevent any selection of participants by the Headteacher. I suggested (via email) once I had secured their agreement that a message with staff was shared by a school bulletin or similar to recruit volunteers. I offered to craft and share the note. However, this did not work in practice as in both cases the headteachers tasked their PAs with recruiting/enlisting the participants! Their selection seemed to be based on who might be willing and who was available. Plus, I had asked that the participants had worked with the headteacher in that school for some time. I don't believe this approach to the sampling created any major issues; the responses to my first and final question did not indicate the participants had been selected for any particular unusual loyalty to the headteacher and the anonymity that they knew they would be afforded led to candour.

	School 8	Place in order of interviews	School 18	Place in order of interviews *(NB all same day)*
Headteacher	Headteacher A	1	Headteacher B	1
Senior Leader	Assistant Head	4	Assistant Head	3
Middle Leader	Head of Science	3	Head of History	4
Classroom teacher	Teacher of |Science	2	Teacher of MFL	2
Support Staff	Headteacher PA	5	Child Protection Officer	5

Table 4 – Some characteristics of the participants and order of interviews

I took notes during the interview and recorded them to ensure I did not lose data. I also kept brief field notes on my visit to school 18. I did not do so at school 8 as I carried out the visits over a series of weeks. The intense day at school 18 leant itself more to keeping field notes and as it was also my second case study that I carried out after transcribing the interviews from school 8 I was able to record anything that struck me as I carried out the interviews.

3.14 Data analysis

3.15 Working with my data step one – the challenge of preparing the data

My first step was **preparing the data for analysis.** This involved coding (assigning numerical values to each response) and creating variables. I had already created simple codes for the different responses (decisions and factors that drove them) and recorded my data onto an SPSS workbook.

The first section of data collected by the questionnaire relates to biographical information about the school leader and the school's Ofsted judgement. A key hypothesis that I am testing with the questionnaire is the notion there is more likely a place for values-led leadership in a good or outstanding school. By asking for the name of the school I was then able to use the Ofsted data base (and the school website) to confirm the current rating (and previous ratings). The other questions in this section gathered data that I was aware may (or may not) be useful. For example, I was aware that there may be interesting correlations between the length of service as a headteacher and values-led leadership (Hill et al., 2016). There may also be links between the age of the headteachers and their approach to leadership or the training they undertook to prepare for the role (although this, along with gender, did not prove to be an avenue I

explored). Finally, whilst the questionnaire is not the primary tool to explore the impact of values-led leadership (that will be the case study of a school identified from the analysis of the questionnaires and websites) the research by Hill et al. (2016) on types of school leaders used data on subject backgrounds and length of time in school prior to headship (i.e., career changers who quickly moved into leadership were associated with a certain leadership approach). With this in mind I had included questions about subject background and length of time in teaching.

Consequentially, the data collected by section one of the survey was comprised in part of nominal or categorical variables that cannot be rank ordered (i.e., to have English as your curriculum background is not 'more of something' than having ICT as one's curriculum background). However, the data collected about age and length of time in school leadership might be ordinal variables to be rank ordered - these questions were included (as noted above) to see if they led to any interesting patterns or hypotheses to be explored further in literature, other data sets or even the qualitative study. Finally, the Ofsted gradings are most definitely ordinal variables (1 is high).

The next section of the questionnaire generated data about the types of decisions taken as a headteacher and the 'drivers' (or *reasons)* behind the decision making. As noted in 3.4 above, this section of the survey starts to try to unpick what drives the behaviour of school leaders. The research indicates we understand what drives a school leader by observing their behaviour. I aimed to understand this behaviour by asking the participants to identify some key decisions they have taken this year and what drove their decision making. I was unsure at this stage in my work as to whether the kinds of decision they have taken would be very useful data; it might simply place the surveys in their context as all leaders noted at least one major decision around managing the risks of Covid 19 (as the 'pandemic years' were sadly the context of my research). Certainly, of greater interest was the four drivers they identify each time. Were they the same for each decision? If so, does this indicate their decisions driven each time by a core set of values? Or will different decisions be driven by different things? As I explain earlier in this section (and in appendix 5), I created the list of drivers/factors behind their decisions very carefully.

When starting to prepare this data and input it to SPSS for analysis Bryman's (2008) cautions came to mind.

Coding the leadership decisions was fairly straightforward – these were simply nominal/categorical variables with no rank order – making a decision about the curriculum is not more or less than making a decision about the budget. However, the data on the 'drivers' behind the decision making absolutely carried different weight. As explained previously, I had randomly distributed 'drivers' that indicated values driven decision making (and therefore possible values-driven leadership) with drivers that indicated a less values-led approach. In my original coding these values-led drivers were coded with a V (e.g., V1 as opposed to a simple numerical code for a non-values driver). This coding did not work for SPSS. Only the values-led drivers needed to carry a value so that I could then establish which of the respondents had seemingly scored higher and one could possibly infer they were a more value driven leader. This could then be examined against their school's Ofsted rating (to test the hypothesis that there is more likelihood of values-led leadership in a school with a good or outstanding Ofsted judgement). To resolve this problem, the data I inputted became a 'score'; if the respondent had indicated one values-led driver out of the four drivers they chose they scored 1, if they indicated two values-led drivers they scored 2 and so on. This in turn generated a 'TotalScore' for behaviours that indicated values-led leadership. By giving a score I created ordinal variables (or rather variables that I treated as ordinal).   I had then to also add zero as a possible score rather than missing data. I was fortunate that there actually turned out to be no missing data but I did need to be ready for respondents to omit information (for example age is a typical example of missing data as respondents chose to not share that information) and to record that accordingly in SPSS with a code that showed a distinction between missing data and a score of zero.

One might question my decision to give a simple score of one for each values-led driver. I did reflect on this for some time before I settled on the same score for each. This is simply because the research that informed the survey design did not indicate a hierarchy of values-led leaderships behaviours; it simply indicated the kinds of behaviours that would be/had been displayed by values-led leaders. To conclude, each score is only a rough calculation and these 'V's are simply artefacts of the survey rather than a measurement with a pre-determined value. To be clear; in my analysis I am treating

these scores as indicators not as 'objective measures' which is very much in line with an adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) and critical realist approach.

As a final note on the analysis of this section of the survey, linked to each decision question was a short question asking the participants to rate their confidence with the decision. I had used a Likert scale where 5 was high confidence. In analysis I was keen to try to explore the relationship with confidence with the decision taken and how great a part values-led factors had played in the decision making. The literature identifies a potential 'side' of values-led leadership where leaders try to be guided by their values but often must abandon them under pressure (e.g., Hammersley-Fletcher, 2013). I aimed to explore this a little with the questionnaire data – my hypothesis being that the leaders might identify one or more decision that they feel uncomfortable about and may have chosen a higher frequency of 'bastard leadership' words and phrases in explaining what drove this decision. I was not entirely sure that the 'score' out of 4 for the previous question and the rating out of 5 on the Likert scale would work in analysis (for example, if attempting multivariate analysis). It became clear as I analysed the data that this was best done on a small scale, i.e., looking at only one leader at a time. I explore this further in my Findings and Analysis chapter.

The final section of the questionnaire, section three, asked participants to reflect on their own leadership style and identify how frequently they behaved in the ways listed (the 'self-reported' values-led leadership). Again, there was a mixture of behaviours that might indicate values-led leadership and those that might not. And again, my initial plan for coding was unhelpful as I had coded with and without 'V's. To rectify this and allow me to input data into SPSS, I took a similar approach to coding the data from section two – all participants received a score for this section totalling their frequency of values-led behaviours. This was the 'TotalSelf' score. This created ordinal variables for analysis.

3.16 Working with my data - steps two and beyond

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) recommend '**exploring the data**' as the next step in quantitative analysis. They explain this is 'visually inspecting the data' and 'reading through all of the data to develop a general understanding of the database'. As I inputted the data into SPSS, I started to see some general trends which led me to some tentative **analysis of the data** (stage 3). I thought I could see, for example, positive links between high scores for decision making (i.e., more values-led factors) and higher Ofsted grades.

However, as I explain in detail in the Findings and Analysis chapter this did not prove to be simple.

The final steps are **representing the data**, interpreting **the results** and **commenting on validity.** The first and second are key to my results and discussion chapter but I did want to comment on validity as part of my discussion of data analysis. That is because **validity** is an interesting and key discussion in the context of my mixed method research and the size of my quantitative data set. This small data set of questionnaires is not 'statistically significant' (30 Headteacher questionnaires). I am also not collecting it for the purposes of methodological triangulation. As noted earlier, the notion of triangulation arises in discussions of validity and can be a rationale for mixed methods research (Bryman, 2008). However, my survey data is not serving that purpose – it will not confirm or complete the other data gathered. It could be argued that notion of a 'realist survey' adds to validity to my research or enables a 'kind of' triangulation. Schonenboom (2017) explores this 'extension' to the realist interview' and explains that the realist survey tests a correlational model. In my case this might be the correlation between schools with better Ofsted scores and a greater likelihood of values-led leadership. She claims that the realist survey allows for greater 'generalizability' of outcomes. However, I am unsure about this as this 'realist survey' would seem to be more 'open' than my survey. Yes, I am testing a hypothesis about values-led leadership, but I am not openly asking participants to state if they agree or disagree with that notion. In 3.6, I briefly explore the problem caused in my pilot by indicating that my survey research was investigating values-led leadership as that might skew participant responses. Blaikie (2010) discusses other threats (and solutions) to validity which for my study might include 'selection bias' and 'experimenter expectancy'. I think the tweak to the wording that came with the questionnaire and my carefully worded emails and tweets recruiting participants went some way to addressing the latter. Selection bias is trickier. It could be argued that school leaders who respond to requests to complete a questionnaire on their leadership are more likely to be reflective. Moreover, another researcher could use the same recruitment approach and questionnaire and get a different participant group of Secondary Headteachers. However, my overview of the characteristics of the respondents does show a good spread in terms of geography, age, academic background. There are fewer female participants but that is in keeping with the proportion of female Secondary Headteachers nationally which is 40% (DfE, 2022). Equally (as shown in table 2 above) the proportion of good and outstanding schools is

roughly in keeping with the national data from December 21 when 76% of all Secondary schools most recent judgement was good or outstanding (Ofsted, March 22). This analysis of participant characteristics goes some way to addressing concerns about validity (and replicability).

Possibly the most important point is that my data is valid when bearing in mind its purpose. It provides a data set that builds upon the research I have examined to date (testing the hypothesis that there is more likely to be values-led leadership in a school judged 'good' or outstanding') and therefore fits with an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998). This could also be identified as an estimate of 'a level of construct validity' for my results (Bryman, 2008) as I am drawing on research/ideas that suggests there is a place for values-led leadership in good schools. The results also allow me to identify schools for the case study. The data is valid in so much as it has a level of 'construct validity' and will enable step two of the research.

<u>3.17 Working with the qualitative data step one – codes and pre-codes linked to adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) and Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)</u>

Not only do I believe that we '*never enter research with a mind clear of theoretical ideas and assumptions'* (Layder, 1998), in my quantitative analysis I also wanted to actively used these theoretical ideas and assumptions as the first point of entry into the data. Just as I explain in the previous section that these theoretical ideas and assumptions shaped the questions for the interviews (and indeed the surveys), they also informed the codes or, in the words of Layder, the 'pre-codes' for my data analysis. These '*pre-codes'* are the '*conduits to extant theoretical ideas that can be brought to bear on emerging theory'* (Layder, 1998 p. 55). Thus, I approached my qualitative data analysis with this epistemological orientation in mind. And I then found my next steps and 'road map' in Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (2006). They define Thematic Analysis (TA) as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' and are clear that it is not an approach linked with one epistemological stance; rather '*thematic analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks'* (p. 81). How one works through the data *will* be guided by an epistemological stance but TA is a 'broad church' providing a useful approach for different researchers approaching qualitative data analysis from different standpoints. What is important, however, is for the researcher be clear on their epistemology and describe the 'how' and

the 'why' at each step (i.e., actions they take and the reasons for them through-out the analysis process). Consequentially, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases as a road map to my data analysis as it is compatible with a critical realist, adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998).

The first 'phase' laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) is familiarising yourself with the data. However, as noted above, my approach to data analysis is also influenced by Layder's adaptive theory (1998). To re-iterate, a key idea in adaptive theory is that research is not going to establish a finite truth, instead it will produce the 'latest stage' in the elaboration of theory. In this approach, my data and theory would build on and adapt pre-existing theory (Layder, 1998). So, my first phase of analysis began with re-immersion with the literature review and pre-existing theory to help me to generate the initial themes for my coding. Influenced by Hill et al. (2016), Day et al. (2001), Armstrong et al. (2018), Jackson (2000) and Gold et al. (2003). I identified the following themes,

- The 'architect' leader
- Driven by values
- Navigating the tension between government policy and values
- Connective/distributive Leadership as a way build strong systems around values
- Headteacher's values permeate the school
- Links between Ofsted rating/Ofsted & accountability and amount of room for values-led leadership

Next some work was needed to turn these themes from the literature into user friendly codes. It was important for the validity of my work that the codes that came out of, for example a theme such as 'The architect leader', could make sense to anyone looking at my data (and I explored this with my supervisors). The 'architect' is one word that encapsulates so much of Hill et al.'s (2016) research into 411 school leaders. As I explore in the 'Literature and Policy review' chapter this word describes a number of behaviours and characteristics; it even encapsulates academic background and likely inspiration. There is also a sense of what the 'architect' is NOT in the original work as this type of leader is explored in contrast with four other 'types' (Hill et al., 2016). The sense of what the leader is *not* is quite hard to factor into questions for a semi-structured interview and codes. As noted in an earlier section (3.4), I had already used some core ideas about the 'architect' to create the questions for my interview, I now had to go back into the literature to capture the key components in my codes. This led to the following,

- The Architect 1 - <u>quietly redesigns the school</u> and transforms the community it serves. Much improves (including student outcomes).
- The Architect 2 - <u>quietly, steadfastly engages all</u> and builds for the future
- The Architect 3 - Is informed by their understanding of <u>great leaders of the past</u>.
- The Architect 4 - '<u>insightful, humble and visionary</u> leaders'
- The Architect 5 - <u>Immediate gains do not deflect them from their path</u>

The next step was to immerse myself in the data from the case study interviews. In part this began when I carried out the interviews, I kept a simple field diary to note any thoughts and themes. This was particularly of use when I carried out the interviews for case study two. Firstly, because I carried out all the interviews in one day – it was clearly more convenient for the staff involved for it all to happen in one day and, as it was further afield than school 8, this was a better arrangement for me. Moreover, I had already completed the interviews of the school 8 study and had transcribed those interviews before I went to school 18. This meant that the field notes were richer; noting comparisons as well as re-occurring comments/threads. Transcribing interviews from audio files is also a key part of this first phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that the transcript must be 'true' to its original nature. To capture this much listening and re-listening is required so this first phase does lead to a level of familiarity with the data. And in my case, the fact that all the school 8 interviews were carefully transcribed by middle of January, and my visit to school 18 took place at the end of January, allowed for some good first notes in my field diary.

This enabled me to add sub-themes, for example,

Theme	Sub-themes
Headteacher's values permeate the school	*HT values include community values (ie they embrace some of the community's preexisting values) *Positive and regular interactions with students *Decisions driven by what is right for ALL students

Table 5 - Example of additional subthemes

All of these themes and sub-themes became codes (or 'nodes' in NVIVO) that I could start to bring to the transcripts. But, just as importantly, reading and re-reading of the transcripts led me to generate of some possible further codes to add to the list of themes and sub-themes for example,

Additional Themes	Sub-themes
Trust in expertise (within and beyond the school) and empowerment linked to this trust	
Visibility (of the HT) and connections beyond the school (or MAT)	
Driven by values	*Expressed in decisions *Shown in care for staff

Table 6 - Example of additional subthemes and codes

Thus, phases two and three from Braun & Clarke (2006), 'generating initial codes' and then 'searching for themes' were already well underway. Moreover, my particular approach with a heavy nod to adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) had meant that coding data and then collating codes into themes had been done in a way that was fairly unique to my theoretical approach. Themes led to codes that I brought to the data and reading of the data added to and developed the list of codes and thus themes. I also added another code into the list just to have a place to put the sections of the transcript that did not seem to fit any of the codes. These were just for nuggets of interviews that seemed important or interesting but I was not sure why. Appendix 7 illustrates this process. It shows the interview transcript of the Headteacher of school 8. The first two screenshots of NVivo shows the text of the interview carefully analysed and coded. What is not visible in this text was the how many times I interacted with this text when new themes and therefore codes and nodes had emerged from reading and rereading the transcripts (and, at times, the literature). The final screenshot shows one theme (the example is 'Headteachers values permeate the school'). Within this data are chunks of texts from the interview with the Headteacher of school 8 and all other interviews.

3.18 Working with my qualitative data - next steps

The next step was to take all of this analysis and, informed by phases 4 and 5 of Braun & Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis ('reviewing themes' and 'defining and naming themes') brought me to a final list. I noted that one of the themes/codes that had been generated from a review of the literature had no data at all assigned to them. This was the case for an aspect of the 'architect' (Hill et al., 2016), *'Architect 5 – immediate gains do not deflect them from their path'*. This is possibly because there were no questions to capture this notion (i.e., of short term and headline-grabbing successes that are valued more highly than thorough and focused change). Indeed, I

wonder if this appears in the descriptors of the architect as a point of comparison with the 'surgeon' for example who invests heavily in quick wins (i.e., next year's Year 11 results) and certainly it is implicit in 'Architect 1' and 'Architect 2', building real change in a steadfast way. I also pondered 'Architect 4 – insightful, humble, visionary' because the data coded in this way could have felt contradictory as it was often staff describing an individual who had excellent knowledge and understanding AND a vision for the future informed by further knowledge but who was also 'decent' and 'approachable'. But maybe this absolutely is the heart of the 'architect' as a model of a values-led leader: someone with almost awe-inspiring levels of knowledge coupled with humanity and humility.

I also reviewed and tweaked three other themes. I had 'connective and distributive leadership' running as one these and 'trust in expertise and empowerment' running as another. As I reviewed the coded data, I realised that these had become muddled. The empowerment of colleagues and trust for their role-related expertise is at the heart of distributive leadership (Harris, 2013) so there was work to do to merge these codes and themes. What was then left in the 'trust in expertise …' code actually linked more with useful connections each leader had forged outside the school and/or the wisdom that they gained from reading research or working with experts beyond the school. I updated this theme to better reflect that; 'valuing connections and expertise beyond the school' and added it to the 'other' section. There was also more data in the transcripts around the tensions between values and policy so I divided up mentions of Ofsted and 'room for values and other policy considerations.

The final code list was as follows,

Theme	Sub-themes
The 'architect' leader (Hill et al., 2016)	*Architect 1 – Quietly redesigns the school and transforms the community it serves. Much improves. *Architect 2 – Quietly, steadfastly engages all and builds for the future *Architect 3 – Is informed by their understanding of great leaders of the past *Architect 4 - Insightful, humble and visionary leader
Connective or Distributive Leadership as a way build strong systems around values (Armstrong et al., 2018)	*Strong links between leaders of different levels for decision making and communication *Build capacity in staff through good links between different leadership levels *Empowerment of colleagues and trust for their role-related expertise *Positive accountability
Democratic leadership	
Driven by values	*Values expressed in communications, interactions and expectations *Values expressed in support for development of all *Values expressed in decisions *Values expressed in support for staff

Headteacher's values permeate the school	*HT values embrace & include community values *Interactions with students *Driven by what is right for ALL students *Positivity
Link between Ofsted and room for values	
Navigating the tension between policy and values	
Valuing connections and expertise beyond the school	
Other	*The figurehead

Table 7 – Final codes list

From here I was able to put together my findings as two case studies in the next chapter.

3.19 Final thoughts on my data analysis

An overview of the findings and analysis can be found in the next chapter. But before I turn to that, a final note on data analysis and my research. The passivity of grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was never going to suit my approach to data analysis. Thematic Analysis was more in keeping with my epistemology and associated methodology but even this did not fully suit or work with 'adapted theory' (Layder,1998) that always felt an essential part of my approach. I come back to Booth (1903) not just for his mixed methods but because he was also standing on the shoulders of others in his research, delving deeper into hypotheses and ideas that were already shared and adding to that research conversation. Safe within this paradigm, my approach to data analysis felt right, possibly less likely to be skewed by researcher bias and thus safer for a somewhat inexperienced researcher.

Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

4.1 Overview of the shape of the chapter (and the next)

The nature of my research design necessitates a certain narrative approach or shape to this chapter. Firstly, the quantitative research seeks to answer research question one. But, as figure 1 shows (and I explore in the previous chapter), I also used this data to identify my case study schools.
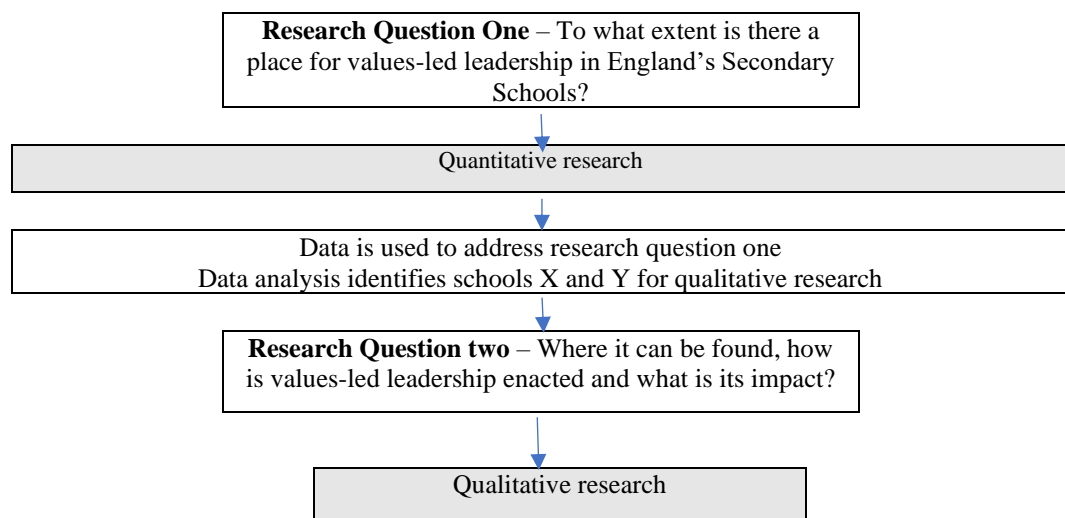
Figure 1 – Final mixed method research design (reproduced from page 43)

Therefore, at the start of this chapter, I have presented my findings from the quantitative data along with some analysis in response to research question one. I then move on to discuss the data with a particular focus on how the surveys led to the selection of the case study schools. My 'explanatory sequential design' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) necessitates this approach so as to avoid this chapter becoming disjointed.

What then follows is a presentation of the findings from the qualitative data in response to research question two. There is an argument for writing up findings from case studies case by case (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013), and for that reason, this chapter includes a brief narrative on school 8 and then school 18. Each is a 'bounded' case (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013) and each provides a description of how values-led leadership is enacted and some initial analysis on its impact in these two case study schools.

I have used iterations of figure 1 through-out the chapter to signpost my approach.

Findings and analysis part one

<u>4.2 Quantitative data – the survey data and research question one</u>
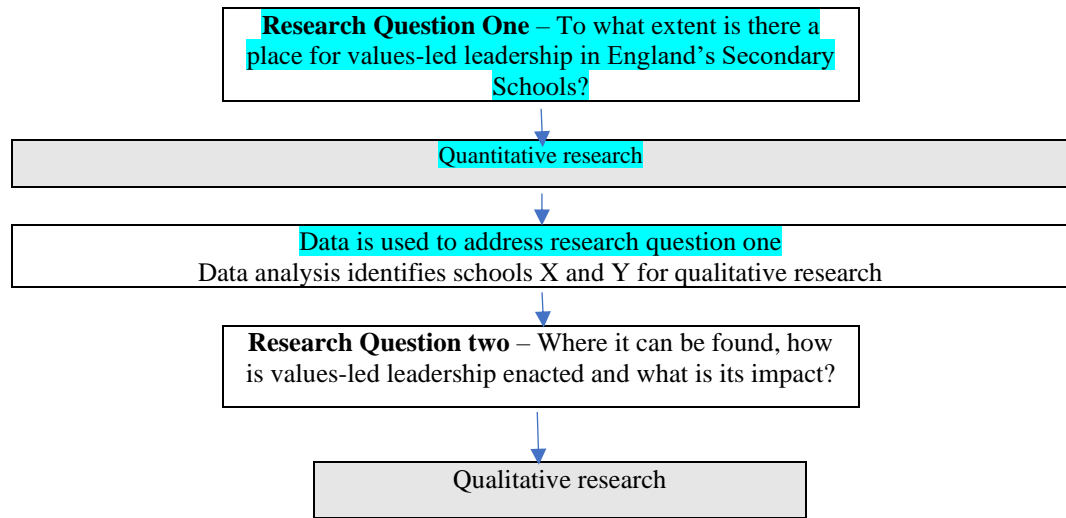
Figure 3 – Mixed method research design: focus on the findings from the quantitative data and research question 1

A hypothesis from the literature (and discussed in detail the Literature and Policy Review chapter), is that the space and place for values-led leadership is the luxury of only some Headteachers in some schools. They tended to be 'stronger' schools. This opened an interesting research avenue around the possibility of values-led leadership only in schools that are meeting current accountability measures and therefore under much less scrutiny. The first part of my mixed methods approach, the survey, further explored this hypothesis. As I explain below, I used data from the survey alongside each school's Ofsted judgement (my chosen measure to identify 'stronger' schools).

A further word also on the choice of 'Ofsted category' as a point of comparison of 'stronger' and 'weaker' schools. I have chosen Ofsted category and subsequent monitoring as an indication of levels of accountability vs freedom as Ofsted is the body that holds school leaders to highest and most public account. School leaders are also held to account by others; local governing bodies, CEOs/Trustees if they are in MAT, the Local Authority if they are not in a MAT, and other groups including parents. However, it is hard to glean the *levels* of accountability each school faces from each of these and, as noted above, the most public scrutiny and accountability (and subsequent

lack of freedom in terms of focus of change or timeline for change) comes from Ofsted (Greany and Higham, 2018).

 A further note also on why I have grouped 'good' and 'outstanding' and 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' schools together. My rationale for this is the accountability and scrutiny that comes with each categorisation. This has changed with each update to the Ofsted orders but at the time of writing under the 2019 Ofsted orders, schools rated 'inadequate' would have regular 'monitoring visits' and a further inspection after 30 months (as opposed to every 4 years for a 'good' or 'outstanding' school) (Ofsted, 2019). There can be up to five of these 'monitoring visits' (Ofsted, 2019) between each inspection with the first being within 3 months of the inspection where the poor grade was decided. This is also the case for schools rated 'RI' twice in a row. It would be fair to say that this forces both the pace of change and the focus of change in the school. The latter because schools in these Ofsted categories are given clear areas to improve in both Ofsted reports and subsequent monitoring visit reports. In contrast to this, 'good' schools and 'outstanding' schools are currently subject to a lighter touch and less intense 'section 8' inspections (Ofsted, 2019) – this type of inspection is now classed as 'ungraded' (Ofsted, 2022). So, unless there were serious safeguarding concerns, a school in these top categories are less likely to have a grade change and would get an element of warning that things need to improve and then have the chance to do so (NB this warning would come in the form of a comment from the inspection team noting that '*x, y and z needed attention*' to maintain the positive grade in the next inspection). Indeed, from 2012 until November 2020, 'outstanding' schools were subject to no further scrutiny of inspection unless a serious concern was raised. 'Outstanding' schools judged outstanding since 2015, are also subject to the shorter 'section 8' or 'ungraded' inspections as are 'good' schools. To put this into the context of real schools, at the start of 2022 in Sheffield, there were a number of 'outstanding' Secondary schools that had not been inspected for around ten years. This can be compared to schools judged 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' who may be receiving annual visits from Ofsted and thus we have a much clearer picture of the different pressures for headteachers of schools in different categories.

As noted in the Methods and Methodology chapter (section 3.4), I devised the survey to further explore the link between values-led leadership behaviours and Ofsted category. Figure 4 below represents the data. 'TotalScore 'is the total number of values led

leadership behaviours that were identified as drivers behind three big decisions identified in the survey (see section 3.15). The higher the score, the more of the drivers behind decisions indicated values-led leadership.   This data is from section 2 of the survey. This section starts to try to unpick what drives the behaviour of school leaders. The research indicates we understand what drives a school leader by observing or noting their behaviour. This behaviour can be somewhat understood by asking the participants to identify some key decisions they have taken this year and what drove their decision making – their 'drivers'. I created the list of 'drivers' very carefully. They were a mixture of values-led 'drivers' (based on the Nolan Principles, 1995, and Ethical Leadership characteristics, 2019) and non-values led 'drivers' based on language from DfE policy documents (*see further detail in appendix 5).* Participants selected the 4 main 'drivers' for each decision from a list of 19 possible drivers. 6 of these drivers indicated values-led leadership. Participants could score up to 4 points per decision for the inclusion of values-led drivers. The highest possible 'TotalScore' (for three decisions) was 12.
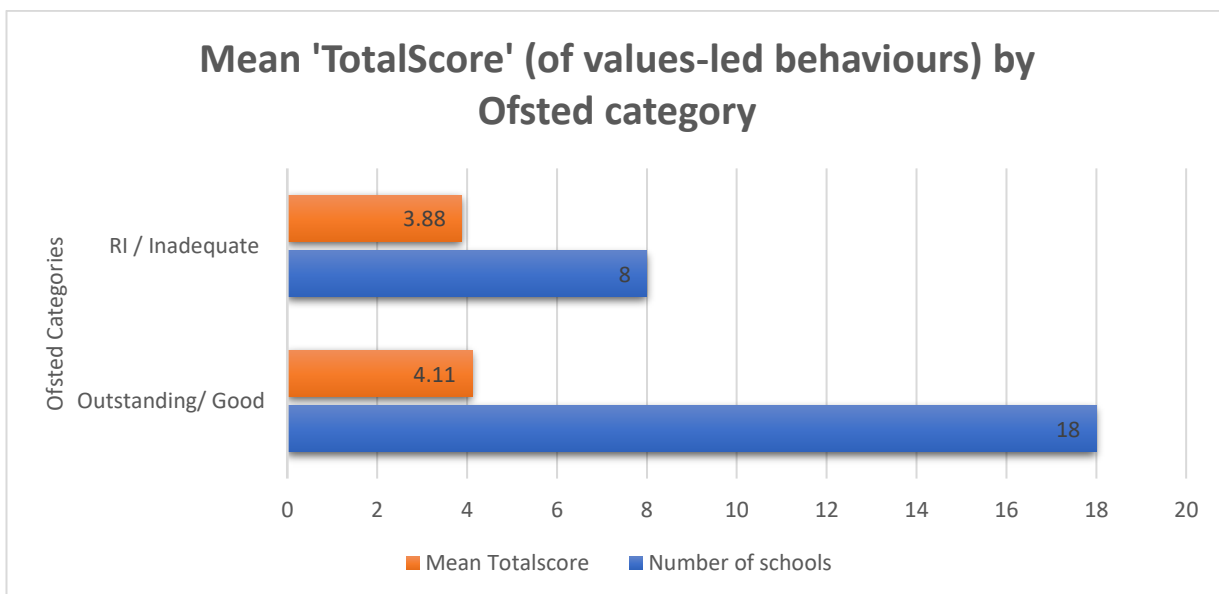
Figure 4 – Bar chart showing mean 'TotalScore' by Ofsted category and number of schools in each Ofsted category in the survey

 Figure 4 presents the mean 'TotalScore' for each Headteacher in each of the four Ofsted categories. It also shows how many schools in each Ofsted category were in my sample. In figure 4 I have grouped together the top two Ofsted categories

('outstanding' and 'good') and the lower two Ofsted categories ('requires improvement/RI' and 'inadequate'). I explore the rationale for this grouping below.

 The highest mean 'TotalScore' is linked with the Ofsted ratings of 'outstanding' and 'good' (4.11 out of a possible total of 12). However, figure 4 only shows a very small difference between this mean 'TotalScore' and the mean 'TotalScore' for the schools linked with the poor Ofsted ratings (3.8 out of a possible total of 12). This warranted some further examination. Turning first to the schools with the highest Ofsted ratings, within this group of 18 schools there was quite a wide variety – the highest individual score (for 'TotalScore') was 9 out of a possible 12 in an outstanding school with a long-serving Headteacher (school 3). Interestingly, this school was graded 'outstanding' in 2017 and so has not faced Ofsted since that date (at the time of data gathering/writing). The school was judged 'good' at the previous inspection in 2013. From that we can conclude this school and headteacher have not faced the level of external scrutiny faced by other schools judged to be in lower Ofsted categories.   The lowest individual score in the 'outstanding and good' group was a score of 2 out of a possible 12 in three of the 'good' schools (schools 18, 22 and 26). This is shown in table 8 below.

S	3	1	8	11	16	17	mean	15	21	23	4	5	6	9	12	24	18	22	26
T	9	6	6	6	6	5	4.11	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2

Table 8 – Showing 'TotalScore' for the outstanding and good schools in order from highest to lowest. School number (S) is shown at the top with TotalScore (T) out of 12 below.

With the exception of a '0 out of 9' and a '1 out of 9' for two schools currently graded as Ofsted 'RI', the scores for school 18, 22 and 26 are the lowest scores in the data set. Taking these three scores out of the data set would render the mean as 4.53 for the 'good' and 'outstanding' schools.

This decision can be justified by a closer examination of each of these schools. This type of scrutiny is appropriate for an 'adaptive theory' approach (Layder, 1998) and the 'continuous nature' of adaptive theorising. One of the three schools (school 18) was judged as 'good' by Ofsted in 2018. This was a short inspection following the full inspection in 2014 where the school was judged 'good'. This 2014 inspection saw the school move from 'requires improvement' to 'good'.   The headteacher had been leading that school since 2011/12 and the school was quite quickly put into a low Ofsted category (RI) and kept under close scrutiny following his appointment. It was his first

headship. Interestingly the headteacher had a 'TotalSelf' score (*NB 'TotalSelf, as first explained in 3.15 shows the incidence of self-reported values-led leadership behaviours from section 3 of the survey*) of 26/30 which is amongst the higher scores (8 Heads in the sample had a 'TotalSelf' above 26). This suggests the headteacher <u>believes</u> their decisions and behaviours to be driven by their values but that was not corroborated by the detail selected on the key drivers behind the three big decisions in section 2 of the survey – i.e., they believe themselves to be a values-driven leader but the drivers selected when reflecting on three real leadership decisions taken of late indicate otherwise. This makes school 18 of interest (see below for further details) but also adds an extra layer of detail to table 8. This is a headteacher who served their first years of headship under different levels of accountability to many of his peers in the 'good and outstanding' data set. That school and headteacher may not have enjoyed space and place for values-led leadership for the first few formative years of his leadership. Another similar pattern is found in school 26. This school was rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2017. This inspection took the school from 'requires improvement' to 'good' (NB that report shows 'no previous inspection report' because the school became an academy). The school had been judged as 'requires improvement' in 2010 after a number years in 'special measures' (equivalent of current 'inadequate'). The headteacher had been appointed Co-Head at the school in 2013 and became sole headteacher a couple of years later. Again, this was their first headship and thus their formative years of headship were in a school with a low Ofsted judgement. The headteacher of school 22 had only been in post for one year at the time of completing the survey. The school they lead is a 'new' school having, at the time of the survey, been recently created by merging two local schools. This is not quite the same as the formative experiences of the headteachers of schools 18 and 26 but it does speak to a Headteacher managing a school in very different circumstances to the other headteachers in the data set. To be clear, I carried out a similar analysis of the leadership journey vs Ofsted judgements of the other school leaders in this set and these three headteachers (18, 22 and 26) are anomalous. For example, the Headteacher of school 17 had been in post for 5 years at the time the survey was completed and school 17 was judged 'outstanding' in 2008 and had not been yet inspected again. The Headteacher of school 24 had been in post for 6 years at the time the survey was completed and school 24 was judged 'good' in 2012 and 2016 and had not been yet inspected again. The Headteacher of school 4 had been in post for 4 years at the time

the survey was completed and school 4 was judged 'outstanding' in 2014 and had not been yet inspected again.

Breaking the data down further into 'outstanding' and 'good' shows a higher mean score for the outstanding schools (4.4 for outstanding schools vs 3.9 for good schools) The 11 'good' schools did however have a higher 'TotalScore' than the 7 schools rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement (3.9 for good schools vs 3.7 for RI schools). Interestingly, the groups of schools in a lower Ofsted category included 7 schools judged currently as' RI' and only 1 as 'inadequate'. The 'TotalScore' for the school (school 7) currently judged 'inadequate' was 6 which is amongst the higher scores. The school was judged 'RI' in 2017. The current headteacher joined the school in 2019 and the school was judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in November 2019. The school then joined a Multi Academy Trust and so now, as a 'new' school, officially has no Ofsted rating. As such the school is not under the same scrutiny as a school judged 'inadequate' that did not subsequentially become an academy and join a Trust (the equivalent of an Ofsted 'get out of jail free' card). It is the new headteacher's first headship and he will be held to account by the Trust but will not be subject to the usual schedule of Ofsted monitoring visits and shorter timeline for inspections. Mindful of the examination of the three seemingly anomalous 'good' schools, is there a similar pattern emerging here? There is not the scope in this thesis to explore the impact of Ofsted categories (and all that goes with them) on Headteachers in their formative years but there clearly is an argument for digging beneath the data in figure 4 and noting that whilst the presentation of the two sets of data does not show an overwhelming difference between the space for values-led leadership in different categories of schools, when we dig deeper the hypothesis that headteachers are more likely to have the space and place for values-led leadership in 'stronger' schools does still stand. There is clearly nuance around those early years and the kind of leadership that is necessitated by pressure of accountability measures. I was able to explore this a little more in my case study of school 18.

4.3 Summary of the findings from the quantitative data and research question one

Overall, the 18 'outstanding' and 'good' schools do have a higher mean 'TotalScore' compared to the schools rated by Ofsted as 'requires improvement' and inadequate'. The one 'inadequate' school is somewhat of an outlier but this notwithstanding, the

survey data does seem to support the hypothesis in the literature that we are more likely to find evidence of values-led leadership in schools enjoying a higher Ofsted rating. However, the difference between the two mean 'TotalScore' was small which warranted some further examination and some further data around historic Ofsted judgements and the dates when the headteacher was first in post. Exploring this information about several of the 26 schools whose survey data appeared slightly anomalous uncovered a possible nuance to the link between Ofsted judgement and the 'space' to be a values-led leaders; that the first Ofsted category of the headship plays a key part. I was able to explore this further in my analysis of the qualitative data and the case study of school 18.

Moreover, there was a greater difference between the schools in different categories when looking at another aspect of the survey data – mean 'TotalSelf' scores.
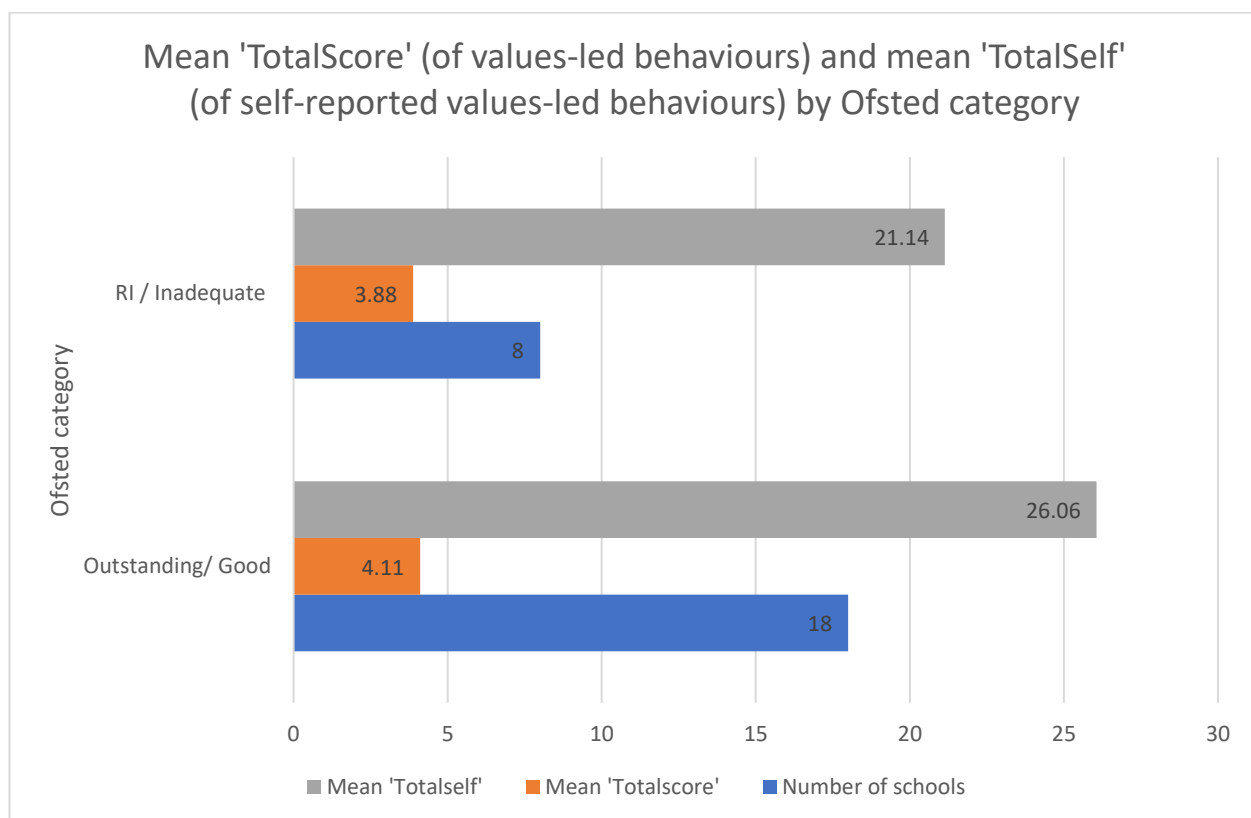
Figure 5 – Bar graph showing mean 'TotalScore' and 'TotalSelf' for the schools grouped by Ofsted category

Figure 5 shows the mean 'TotalSelf' as well as mean 'TotalScore'. 'TotalSelf' is the score of self-reported leadership behaviours from section 3 of the survey. I explain how this score was generated in section 3.15. I added this data to create figure 5 as a note of interest. It suggests not only might we find more values-led drivers behind decisions

and leadership behaviours in higher rated schools, the school leaders also would describe (or 'self-report') their leadership behaviours as more likely to be values-led. Conversely in the schools in the lower Ofsted categories, headteachers are less likely to self-report values as drivers behind their leadership behaviours. This might be demonstrating an awareness that values-led leadership is not an option for them as they face a pressured timeline for school improvement imposed by regular monitoring visits and re-inspection.

As a final point, I had pondered in the previous chapter (and when designing the questionnaire) if the 'confidence with decision' answer might reveal anything of interest. More specifically I had noted that this data might help me to explore the relationship with confidence with the decision taken and how great a part values-led drives had played in the decision making. The literature identifies a potential 'side' of values-led leadership where leaders try to be guided by their values but often have to abandon them in certain situations or under certain pressures. Alas, the data collected from the 'how confident and happy were you with that decision?' did not yield anything useful. 69% gave the same confidence rating for all of their decisions (i.e., they did not indicate they were less confident and happy with some decisions that others). Equally the average (mean) confidence and happiness rating for all decisions was 4.4 from this Likert scale,

Q How confident and happy are you with that decision?

Please tick/hi-light a number 1 to 5 where 5 is *'very confident and happy with the decision. It was absolutely the right decision'* and 1 is *'not confident or happy. You doubt the decision taken'*.

1	2	3	4	5

Either these headteachers are all very confident and happy with all their decisions or the data collected was not fruitful.

I went a little further with my analysis looking in more detail at a group of 9 Headteachers that had contradictory TotalSelf and TotalScore results (NB they are group A below - *Self-concept strongly values-led, behaviours weakly values-led).* I wondered if here I might find evidence of leaders who try to be guided by their values but often have to abandon them under pressure– my hypothesis being the leaders might

identify one or more decision about which they feel uncomfortable and may have chosen a higher frequency of 'bastard leadership' (Wright, 2001) words and phrases in explaining what drove this decision. This group of 9 headteachers had certainly self-reported values as drivers behind their leadership behaviours (TotalSelf) but this did not correlate with their choice of drivers behind three real and recent decisions taken (i.e., TotalScore). I recorded the number of values-led drivers they indicated were behind each of their decisions. This is shown as D1V, D2V and D3V in the table below. There was a total possible score of 4 for each of these. I have then shown their 'confidence and happiness' score for each of the 3 decisions. This was out of a total of 5 (as per the Likert scale shown above).

School	D1V	Confidence	D2V	Confidence	D3V	Confidence
2	1	4	0	4	0	3
4	1	5	1	5	1	5
9	1	5	0	5	2	5
15	2	4	0	4	2	4
18	2	4	0	4	0	4
21	2	4	2	4	0	4
22	1	5	1	5	0	5
25	2	5	1	4	1	5
26	1	4	0	5	1	5

Table 9 - An examination of the 'confidence/happiness' scores for 9 of the headteachers with each decision

Only on two occasions do any of the headteachers indicate a lower level of confidence/happiness with a decision that ALSO happens to be seemingly less values-led. However, these same headteachers also show higher levels of confidence/happiness with another decision that was seemingly also less values-led. I looked back at the surveys themselves and it what not clear that when making these particular decisions the headteachers felt under particular pressure. For example, both D2V and D3V for headteacher 2 were around redesign (DV2 was redesign of structures and DV3 was redesign of system) but obviously, I would have needed to explore this further with follow up questions. Mindful of that, I used this data set again briefly when considering my case-study headteachers. However, I also concluded it had not proved particularly fruitful.

4.4 Quantitative data - The role of the survey data in selecting the case study school.

The data from the survey served two purposes. As noted above, it enabled me to tentatively analyse the extent of values-led leadership in each school and use these findings to address research question one. The findings also enabled me to select two schools to use as a case study to address the second question.
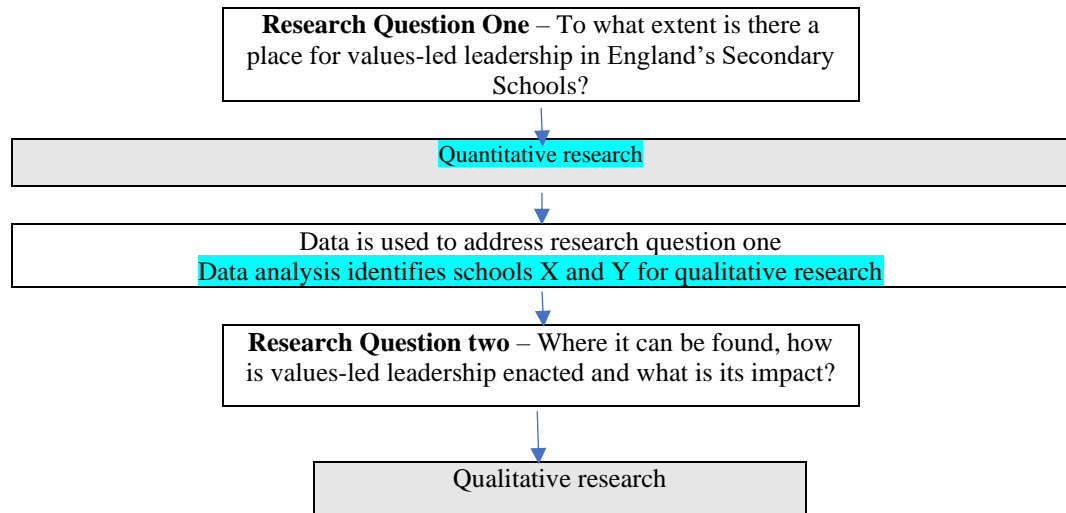
Figure 6 – Mixed method research design: focus on the findings from the quantitative data and identifying case study schools

Figure 7 (below) was key to the selection of the two case study schools. It shows all 26 schools arranged by the 'TotalSelf' and 'TotalScore' of the headteachers. Where two schools shown at the same 'dot' it indicates that their scores where the same for both measures (i.e., 26 |& 18, 8 &16 and 5,12 & 16).
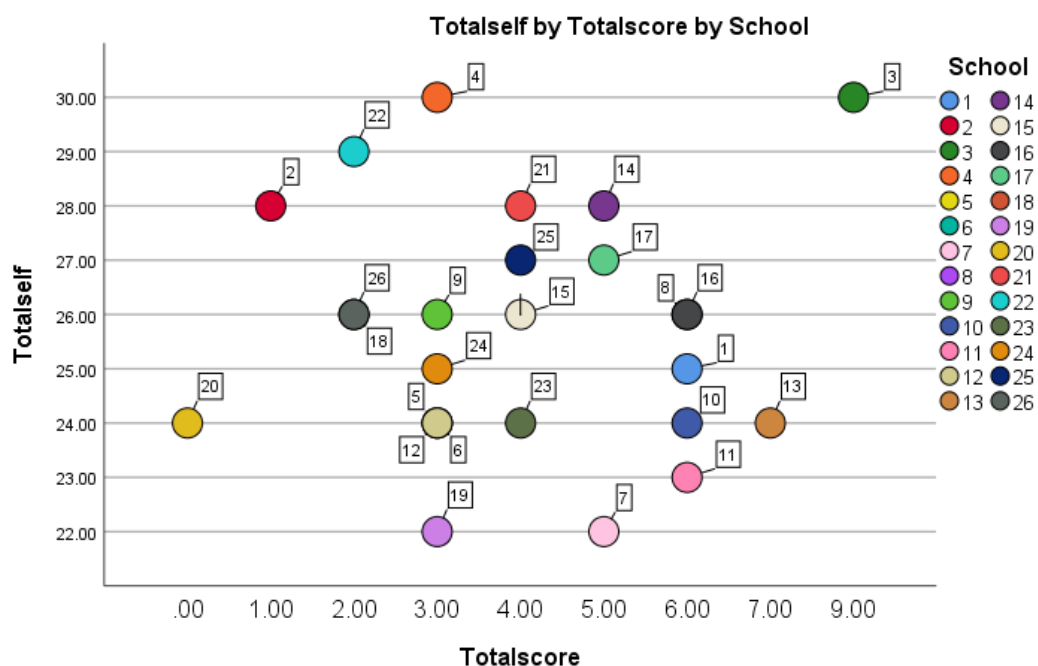
Figure 7 – 'TotalSelf' and 'TotalScore' by school

Firstly, to explain the two axes. As noted above (and in section 3.15), 'TotalScore' is the total number of values led leadership behaviours as drivers behind 3 big decisions identified in the survey. The higher the score, the more of the drivers behind decisions indicate values-led leadership. This indicates their **behaviours (in the case of these decisions) were more likely to be values-led.** The total score (for 3 decisions) was out of 12. As explained above and in section 3.15, 'TotalSelf' is the score of self-reported leadership behaviours from section 3 of the survey. The highest possible score here is out of 30. This indicates **that their self-concept is that they are values-led**. It is interesting data to compare with the data from section two of the survey, i.e., 'TotalScore'. Will the words they chose to explain what drove their decisions be consistent with how they view themselves as a leader?

To better analyse this data and finalise my choice of case study, I divided the diagram into four quadrants. Figure 8 below shows a description of what assumptions could be drawn from the survey data about the headteachers in each of the quadrants. Quadrants B and C feature headteachers where there is alignment in their two sets of scores, quadrants A and D show misalignment in the two sets of scores.

TotalSelf	**A** = Self-concept strongly values-led, behaviours weakly values-led	**B** = Behaviours and self-concept align: strongly values-led
	C = Behaviours and self-concept align: weakly values-led	**D** = Self-concept weakly values-led, behaviours strongly values-led
	TotalScore	

Figure 8 – Categorised groupings for the Headteachers based on survey responses to section 2 and section 3 of the survey.

Figure 9 below then shows the application of these quadrants to the data set. I have placed the vertical line at just over 4 as the mean 'TotalScore' for all categories of

schools was 4.03. The horizontal line sits at a 'TotalSelf' score between 25 and 26 because the mean 'TotalSelf' was 25.69.
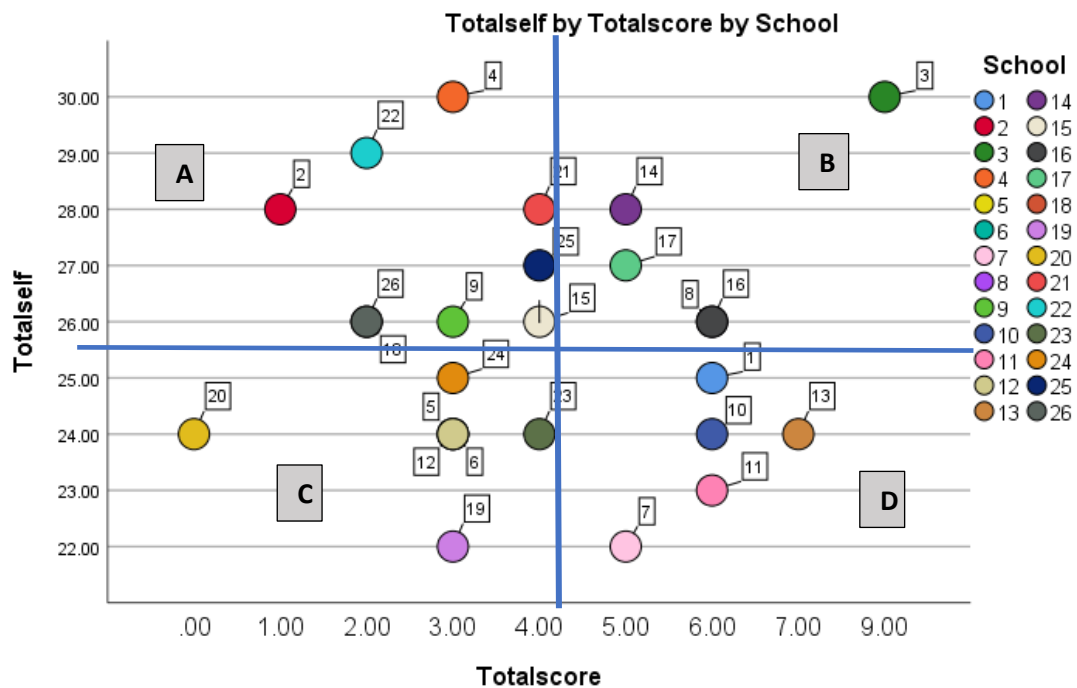
Figure 9 – 'TotalSelf' and 'TotalScore' data for Headteachers grouped by quadrant

As noted in figure 6, the top right section of the scattergram (**B**) shows schools where responses from section two and section three align, i.e., high incidence of values-led leadership as shown in the drivers behind big decisions AND high incidence of values-led leadership in self-reported behaviour. In this quadrant we firmly see **school 3** (Ofsted = outstanding). We also see **school 8** (Ofsted = outstanding) and **school 16** (Ofsted = good) with slightly higher 'TotalScore' and **school 17** (Ofsted = outstanding) with slightly higher 'TotalSelf' score. Interestingly, we also have **school 14** (Ofsted = Requires Improvement 2019, Good 2014 … headteacher joined in 2017).

The bottom left section (**C**) also indicates alignment but in a low incidence of values-led leadership shown in both section 2 and section 3 of the survey (behaviours and self-concept). Here we see **school 5** (Ofsted = outstanding), **school 6** (Ofsted = good), **school 12** (Ofsted = good), **school 19** (Ofsted = requires improvement), **school 23** (Ofsted = good)**, school 24** (Ofsted = good) and **school 20** (Ofsted = requires improvement). A very mixed group.

The Headteachers in the top left (**A**) and bottom right (**D**) quadrants have misaligned scores. In the top left section (**A**), **School 4** (Ofsted = good) shows lower incidence of values-led leadership when identifying drivers behind big decisions BUT self-reports high incidence of values-led leadership when reflecting on own leadership behaviour. This is also the case for **school 2** (Ofsted = RI), **school 21** (Ofsted = outstanding), **school 25** (Ofsted = RI**), school 15** (Ofsted = good), **school 9** (Ofsted = outstanding), **school 26** (Ofsted = good), **school 18** (Ofsted = good) and **school 22** (Ofsted = outstanding).

In the bottom right section **(D), School 7** (Ofsted = inadequate), **school 10** (Ofsted = requires improvement), s**chool 11** (Ofsted = good), **school 1** (Ofsted = good) and **school 13** (Ofsted = requires improvement) show higher incidence of values-led leadership when identifying drivers behind decisions than in self-reported leadership behaviour. In section D there are five schools, two of which were judged good (**school 1** and **school 11**) and two of which were judged RI (**school 10** and **school 13**). The final school in this data set is **school 7** (Ofsted = inadequate) that I discuss above as an intriguing anomaly (see section 4.2).

This data is also collected in the table shown below (table 10). There is little of note here except a suggestion that the greatest positive alignment of both sets of scores indicating values-led leadership are to be found in the quadrant with slightly more schools judged good and outstanding (**B**). And it is only slightly more in quadrant B which could be argued is a challenge to my hypothesis. However, as I discuss in my analysis at the start of this chapter and in subsequent chapters, this data set notes the current Ofsted judgement of the school and, as I explored the data further there was a developing theme around the Ofsted category in the formative years of headship too.   I explore this further in the case study of school 18 and in reflections on the literature (e.g., Day, 2009).

Quadrant	A	B	C	D
	Self-concept strongly values-led, behaviours weakly values-led	Behaviours and self-concept align: strongly values-led	Behaviours and self-concept align: weakly values-led	Self-concept weakly values-led, behaviours strongly values-led
No of 'outstanding' schools	3	3	1	
No of 'good' schools	4	1	4	2

% good & outstanding	78%	80%	71%	40%
No of 'requires improvement' schools	2	1	2	2
No of 'inadequate' schools				1
% RI and inadequate	22%	20%	29%	60%

Table 10 -Summary of schools by Ofsted judgement in each of the 4 quadrants

The data from the survey presented in the scatter diagram (figure 9) was key to my selection of the case study schools.   Willingness to be involved and location were also key factors – a number of Heads had indicated that they did not want to be contacted for the case studies in their survey responses. Moreover, as noted in section 3.4, I did need to try to use schools where the headteacher had been in role for five years or more.

Mindful of the data and the constraints noted above, I selected **school 8** as one of my two case study schools.   School 8 is in quadrant A (figure 9) and with the exception of school 3 (NB the Headteacher who completed the survey for school 3 retired in the summer of 21), schools 8,16, 14 and 17 show the greatest alignment at the higher end between 'TotalScore' and 'TotalSelf'. Location and willingness to be involved played a big part in the final decision. For example, schools 8 and 17 were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted, school 16 was judged to be 'good', so all were of interest. However, school 16 is in Cornwall and the Headteacher noted on their survey that they did not want to be involved in the case study part of my research. School 17 was local and the Headteacher willing but also soon to leave to become a CEO.   In contrast, school 8 is also local and the Headteacher and other colleagues were willing to be interviewed with no immediate plans for departure.

I selected **school 18** for my second case study as a contrast. As I note above (section 4.2), this school and headteacher had already piqued my interest. The 'TotalScore' is amongst the lowest in the data set whereas the 'TotalSelf' is comparatively high (and the same as the headteacher of school 8). In keeping with the literature, we might expect the 'TotalScore' to be higher – this is a school with a 'good' Ofsted rating where the headteacher should have the freedom to be a 'values-led leader, so what is behind this survey data? Possibly, as I note above, the fact that the first years of headship for this leader was under a 'requires improvement' judgement has had an impact.

	TotalSelf	
	School 18 **A** = Self-concept strongly values-led, behaviours weakly values-led	**School 8** **B** = Behaviours and self-concept align: strongly values-led
	C = Behaviours and self-concept align: weakly values-led	**D** = Self-concept weakly values-led, behaviours strongly values-led
	TotalScore	

Figure 10 – Categorised groupings for the headteachers based on survey responses to section 2 and section 3 of the survey with case study schools displayed in their grouping/quadrant.

Possibly an investigation of a school judged at the time of data gathering 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' would have served as a better contrast but opportunity and expediency have had to play a part in the case study research. School 18 is in a different Local Authority to School 8 but it was not too great a distance away for me to travel to for my interviews. Moreover, the headteacher agreed to let me carry out my research. And this study very much depends on the support of the headteacher as the case study interviews are discussion around colleagues' understanding of their headteacher's leadership behaviours and the impact of those behaviours on them and their work. Finally, as the table below illustrates, there were a number of points of contrast that were of interest.

School	Most recent inspection	Previous inspections	No of inspections in past 10 years	Headteacher (HT) years in post	HT academic background	HT 'TotalScore' (12)	HT 'TotalSelf' (30)	School type	Urban or rural	Size
8	Outstanding (2013)	Good (2011) Good (2008)	One	5 (2017)	Science	6	26	11-18	Urban	1400
18	Good (2018)	Good (2014) RI (2012)	Three	10 (2012)	PE	2	26	11-18	Rural	1800

NB All this information pertains to the time of interviews – December 2021 and January 2022

Table 11 –Showing points of contrast between school 8 and school 18

Findings and analysis part 2
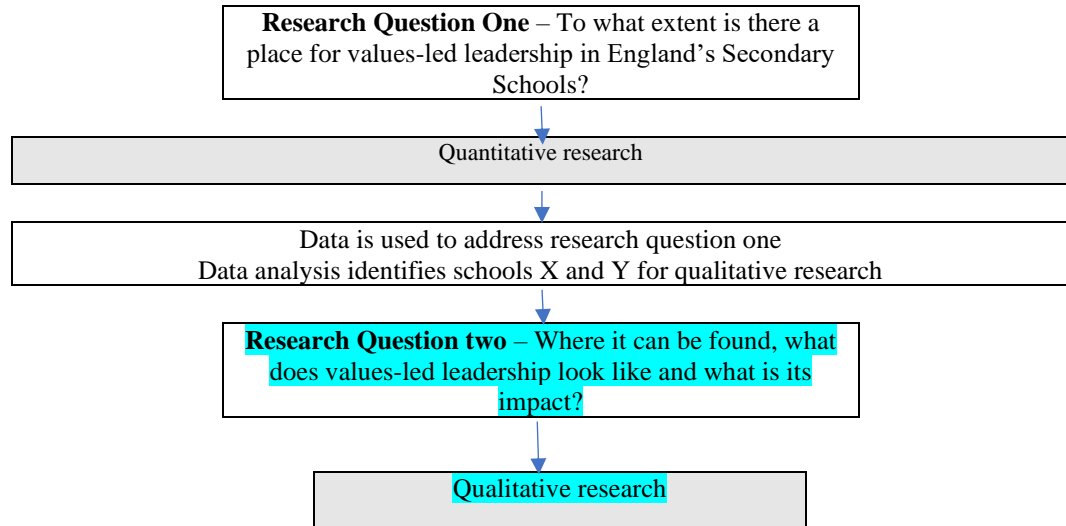
Figure 11 - Mixed method research design: focus on the findings from the qualitative data and research question 2

4.5 Qualitative data – case study 1, school 8: **an architect in action**

School 8 was judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in May 2013. The previous inspections were both 'good' in 2011 and 2004 respectively. The current headteacher ('A') joined the school in January 2017. As noted in the discussion of the survey data above, the headteacher of school 8 is amongst the individuals with the greatest alignment at the higher end between 'TotalScore' and 'TotalSelf', i.e., high incidence of values-led leadership as shown in the drivers behind big decisions AND high incidence of values-led leadership in self-reported behaviour. In simple terms, when he is reflecting on what drove major decisions, he chose drivers linked to values rather than government policy. For example, when unpicking the top 4 drivers behind his decision to restructure staffing he chose 'kindness' and 'what he believed to be right based on own experience' as two of his four drivers. He also has a high 'TotalSelf' score which means when asked what motivates his decisions as a leader, he chose answers that indicated optimism, accountability and equity/fairness were 'always' important. This indicates his drivers are his values rather than policy. This alignment suggests he believes himself to be driven by a set of underlying values ('TotalSelf') and this is

borne out when he is asked to reflect on the drivers behind a number of decisions ('TotalScore'). His confidence/happiness rating with each decision taken was '5'. This is the highest possible score he could attribute to his happiness and confidence with each of the decisions taken.

A series of interviews with him, an Assistant Head, a teacher of Science, the Head of Science and his PA (see table 4 in section 3.13) provided further data about his leadership approach. I also examined the School Development Plan which supported a strong theme of distributed leadership that ran through all the data and is in keeping with values-led leadership. The picture presented by the data was not of a leader who was simply deft at delegating but one who truly distributed leadership; empowering those with responsibility to lead as the expert in their sphere. The School Development Plan was very simple; it was a table with six main sections or rows. Each row was linked to one sphere of school leadership, for example curriculum or safeguarding, and had no more than three sub-sections. The headteacher explained that behind each sub-section was a senior leader who had more detailed plans and was empowered to lead that aspect of school life. He commented,

*'My overall philosophy of leadership is employ experts, **trust them** and listen to the advice they give you.'*

This was supported by data from the Senior leader,

*'We have expert staff (who have) been here a long time, **we trust them**, we go to them first for the knowledge.'*

*'I think he does it in a way as well by **trusting** all his senior leadership team so actually each one of us has got little projects that is going. I'm running a whole new QA process, S has come in and is running a whole new safeguarding and SEN process, C is then doing a whole new PPL and anti-racism school mark'*

And other colleagues who were interviewed noted,

*'He knows that the structures are in place and everybody knows what they need to do and he **trusts** that they will do it.' (Support staff)*

'And I know that he …. to his Deputy Heads, will literally just give them complete autonomy on things and kind of 'report back to me when it is finished' (Support staff)

'But I think he … just really left us to be managed by the Head of Science and the Head of Chemistry and Physics.' (Teacher)

Many of the interviewees struggled to avoid comparing this headteacher to their predecessor. It was in these contrasts that some clear descriptions of his leadership

behaviours emerged. Certainly, 'the architect' was in evidence (Hill et al.,2016). In part this was through descriptions of the leader as a person ('positive', 'genuine', approachable' and even 'quiet' or 'in the background') coupled with descriptions of a leader who had expert knowledge as indicated by these comments,

*'But then A's kind of 'technology hat' which is his really big … you know, this guy **knows everything** on it. I would say 'he has written the book on it' but he genuinely has!' (Support staff)*

*'He is very 'on it'. Is that a word? But what I mean by that is he is not always there obviously but he **knows everything** but, in the background, he just seems to be milling around and he's got an eye on.' (Senior leader)*

Moreover, there was evidence that the headteacher was using this expert knowledge to carefully redesign the school, bringing change at an appropriate pace - i.e., not too fast and this more of an 'architect' than a 'surgeon' (Hill et al., 2016) and engaging the community to ensure they came with him and supported the changes. The redesign included comments from the headteacher and others about staffing re-structures, improving the infrastructure for technology and ensuring consistency. Even more significantly there was also work underway to expand the school and increase numbers as indicated here,

'But I mean the major thing is expansion at the moment for us … and the sheer volume of work that must be involved in that, I can't even fathom. And it's quite awe inspiring really.' (Support staff)

Both the headteacher and other staff focussed on openness and clarity of communication to engage the community, as indicated by these quotations:

*'Not 'do this because I am telling you to'… do this because I have made the case that **I am trustworthy** and my decisions are sound and you are happy to follow me.' (Head)*

*'He has always been very **open and honest** with staff and communicated that … so that staff are aware why decisions have been made.' (Senior leader)*

Interestingly, the headteacher talked about the challenge of an 'outstanding' school. He did not acknowledge the space it gave him to lead the change at a calmer pace but he did mention the need to engage the staff who were not always convinced things had to change:

'I didn't come in and stand in front of them and say 'this school's a load of rubbish and you need to pull your socks up' because it just would not be true. They would say 'who are you flexing your muscles' you know; you would not get their consent to do that.

But, incrementally over the last five years this school is hugely stronger than it was five years ago.'   (Head)

The headteacher of school 8 started his career as a science teacher and there was not much data from the interviews about inspiration from great leaders of the past. However, colleagues did comment on his interest in sporting heroes, particularly cyclists, and there was a sense in his interview of the influence of the headteachers he had worked for. For example, he talked about the 'servant leadership' that was a key theme in his previous, catholic, school. Finally, there was a wealth of data about his values and how they underpinned his decisions. For example,

'So, what was driving it I guess was fairness. Trying to do what was right.' (Head)

'But I want the school, by whoever's measure, to be as good as it can possibly be but particularly ... particularly based on how we treat the vulnerable and what we do for the vulnerable.' (Head)

Those who worked for him echoed this,

'I think he was doing what he genuinely thought was the best thing for the staff and for the students and taking the advice of an expert.' (Middle leader)

There was a strong focus across interviewees on his leadership in relation to morale and wellbeing. Colleagues talked about 'being able to breathe' again and how morale had improved under this Headship. Other comments included,

'I think staff wellbeing has gone up the agenda quite significantly.' (Middle leader)

'I genuinely feel that the majority of staff do not feel stressed. And I think that is due to the way A leads the school and that trust in, trustful environment.' (Senior leader)

And their respect for the Head and the role of headteacher was evident,

'But you know he is GREAT Head.' (Support staff) (their emphasis*)*

'I think how a headteacher runs the school changes the mindset of staff, how the staff mindset is then affects them in the classroom which then affects the quality of the curriculum and the delivery of the teaching.' (Senior Leader).

Both an improvement in staff morale and wellbeing AND an increased respect for the role of headteacher could be seen as a tangible impact of values-led leadership. There also were other tangible successes that could be seen as the positive impact of values-led leadership. For example, colleagues talked about a necessary expansion of the school as it is heavily over-subscribed. Equally, student outcomes remain strong (although the pandemic has made it harder to judge schools' success in this way). There was a clear focus on the success of the most vulnerable students too,

*'I think he is very passionate about **social mobility**. That comes across when I am speaking to him about students.'* *(Middle leader)*

*'In terms of like values, you know he makes those clear, what's the most important thing is the kids, **every child** gets you know a fair crack at education.' (Teacher).*

4.6 Case Study 1 commentary; an architect in action

Overall, I would suggest this case study enabled me to hear descriptions of an 'architect' in action. Here was a leader who was re-designing and improving key aspects of the school ensuring he engaged the community and secured their support. He had a clear vision for improvement and development but that clarity was coupled with humility. Pace of change was steady and not rushed. There was an acknowledgment that the pandemic had slowed some of the planned change but that it had also pushed some of the developments on (such as greater use of technology for communication with families).

The headteacher's colleagues also described a strong example of distributive leadership. There was a real emphasis on trusting and empowering others to work towards a shared vision for improvement. And I was able to understand how leaders could build 'values-driven structures' that enable the school to 'absorb policy' (Armstrong et al., 2018). This came through most strongly in comments around decisions linked to Covid 19 Department of Education guidance and how decisions taken by the Headteacher were supported and understood by colleagues. This likely links with how confident and happy the headteacher feels about the decisions he takes.

There was some interesting data on the importance of connections beyond the school. For example, comments by the middle leader on the importance placed on guidance from public health experts during the height of the pandemic, comments made by other colleagues about research-informed practice and inspiration taken by the headteacher from union leaders. This warrants some further reflection. These connections and expert voices had been sought rather than imposed. A school with a lower Ofsted grade would not have had the opportunity to seek out expert voices of their choice; guidance and experts would have been imposed. I think it was clear that the freedoms afforded to this school and its headteacher by its current Ofsted grading (and thus reduced pressures from external interference) had enabled the values-led leadership I saw in

action.

4.7 Qualitative data – case study 2, school 18**: growing into an architect**

School 18 has been subject to a number of Ofsted gradings in recent years. In November 2006 school 18 was judged to be an outstanding school. The next inspection was not until November 2012 when the school was judged to 'require improvement' (grade 3). The headteacher (B) who was the focus of my case study took up their Headship in 2012 shortly before that Ofsted inspection. In 2013 a 'monitoring visit' took place and April 2014 there was another full inspection. The school was judged to be 'good'. In May 2018 Ofsted carried out a short inspection visit and confirmed the school to be still 'good'. At the time of writing, they were awaiting their next inspection. There was a real sense of the imminence of this inspection and the work currently going on to prepare for it when I visited to carry out my interviews.

The 'TotalScore' for the headteacher of school 18 is amongst the lowest in the data set whereas the 'TotalSelf' (26 out of 30) is comparatively high (amongst the top eight). When he was reflecting on what drove major decisions, he chose drivers linked more to government policy than values. For example, when unpicking the top 4 drivers behind his decision about what to include in the curriculum he chose drivers such as 'closing the gap' and 'providing a world class education'. His scores reflecting on his confidence and happiness with each decision were slightly lower than the average but still fairly high and consistent – he put '4' out of a possible 5 for each. Yet he has a high 'TotalSelf' score which means when asked what motivates his decisions he ticked 'as a leader I always' for statements linked to optimism, personal accountability, reflection/experience and equity/fairness. This indicates his drivers are, at least in part, his values. So how did the qualitative data add to this mixed picture?

I interviewed the headteacher first, then interviews with a teacher of MFL, an Assistant Head, the Head of History and the Child Protection Officer provided further data about his leadership approach (see table 4 in section 3.13). I also examined the School Development Plan. The headteacher explained that the School Development Plan had been designed by his Head of School (he had recently promoted his Deputy to be Head of School as he was working one day a week out of school). The headings of each of the sections are the Ofsted headings. The headteacher explained he was not entirely sure

he would have constructed it in this way but the next Ofsted inspection is, he feels, imminent and he felt his objection was purely 'cosmetic'. In school 8, the structure of the School Development Plan had been emblematic of distributed leadership but that was not the case in school 18. However, there was other evidence of distributed leadership. In these quotations aspects of distributed leadership such as autonomy with accountability, flexibility and delegation are noted,

*And I think the big thing that we introduced was high levels of **autonomy** alongside high levels of accountability. So, one of the things that I would say that, er, I sort of live by here is that I will give my Heads of Departments and middle leaders absolutely everything that they want in any way that I can but then I will hold them to account for outcomes for young people. (Head)*

*'The big word is always **'flexibility'**, giving people flexibility to do things. That's a double-edged sword ... maybe ... sometimes it's easier just to say 'this is the way I want you to do this, there are lots of ways of doing it but this is the way we are going to do it'. But that's not the values of the school.' (Head)*

'B delegates in a different way to the way D (previous Head of a different school) would have done ... B will leave a lot of the 'History' to me whereas D would not have done that.' (Middle leader).

But was the Head's leadership slightly more unpredictable in school 18? One participant described a level of 'uncertainty' in some interactions with the headteacher. Indeed, there was a thread in a number of the interviews that the headteacher took different personas in different contexts of which the sharpest persona was taken when holding colleagues to account. For example,

'I think it's about having several different kinds of ways of behaving. So, it's almost about being able to have two or three different types of relationships with the same person.' (Middle leader)

'He is very good at that side of things but he is also very good at ... making sure that a member of staff, pupil or whatever, knows that you are not happy perhaps with something that has happened.' (Senior leader).

This was a point of contrast with the data about the headteacher of school 8. There was more reference here to the visibility of the headteacher of School 18. A sense of a larger persona and 'figurehead'. However, 'the architect' was in evidence too. There was a real sense that the headteacher had 'modernised' the school and built better systems. One example of this, that came up in both the headteacher's interview and a that of a long-term member of staff, was the move from memos in pigeonholes to the

wide use of email. There were other examples too and one participant summed it up like this,

'What I think he has done more than anything is drag us into the 21st century in every shape and form.' (Support staff.)

There was also evidence in the interviews that he had also improved and updated structures and re-focused the energy of the staff thus redesigning the school over time. This is a key aspect of the 'architect (they 'redesign the school' to create the 'right environment for its teachers' (Hill et al., 2016) and we see in these comments the interviewees talking about re-structuring SLT and wider staffing structures, tightening up behaviour systems and more,

'So, I know he had to restructure the school (staffing) and that will have involved a lot of hard conversations to make the books balance.' (Middle leader)

'Because he (had) come into a school that probably hadn't got as tight policies and procedures as it needed and he tightened that up and made teaching and learning the focus that it should be' (Senior leader)

'I think the whole thing on looking at every child academically. Nobody can slip through the net; I think they clearly (were) doing previous to that.' (Support staff).

One other key aspect of the architect's work is that they have a focus on the school being the right school for its community (i.e., understanding the particular needs of this group of students from this area) whilst also understanding that the school they lead plays a part in educating the children about bigger issues and widening their horizons. These two themes came across in the interviews. Firstly, this was one of a number of comments about the Headteacher nurturing links between the school and its community,

'We had big plans for a big 50th anniversary celebrations for the school which some of it didn't pan out because of Covid and some of it did like we had a massive festival on the field on a weekend. Which again, B is out, he is visible as part of the community even though he does not live directly in this area he is still a very clear, active member of this community.'.

Secondly there was a strong theme around ensuring the school met the changing needs of the school community. This was clear in comments made by 3 colleagues about the work done of late on equity and diversity. For example,

'Especially over the last year and a half, the work that has been done around ...inclusion and diversity in our school - not just of different races and religions but also you know trans, LGBT - the work around all that has been absolutely massive, which

obviously reflects what's going on in society but it's clearly been something that's been needed.' *(Teacher.)*

A number of comments (including from the headteacher) suggested that the headteacher had retained aspects of the school, for example the approach to assemblies, that long-standing members of the community valued. Three of the four participants had either attended the school or lived locally meaning that their children had or would attend the school. They spoke of a real affection for the school locally and it was clear that the headteacher had embraced this but also navigated changes carefully mindful of what was held dear to those in the building and beyond. One of the four participants talked about the community's response to the poor Ofsted judgement noting that it did not change local feeling about the school or the view that this school was the right (even preferred) choice of Secondary School.

Reflections on the 'redesign and transformation' (Hill et al., 2016) were positive. Clearly this cross-section of colleagues had been engaged in the changes too. There was a sense of understanding of, and commitment to, the changes. Some of this came through a positive relationship with the headteacher evidenced by comments such as,

'Well, he is passionate about it. So, he takes you on that journey with him.' *(Senior leader)*

'I felt like, after meeting him several times, he trusted me, respected my opinion and if I had got a problem, he listened to it.' *(Support staff).*

When considering the other 'aspects' of the architect again participants struggled to think of the headteacher mentioning great leaders of the past who had inspired him. There was mention from him of sporting heroes (his curriculum background is PE) and of peers in the education community (evidence of him too seeking connections and inspiration beyond the school). The 'humble visionary' was in evidence though. 'Approachable' was used a lot but just as frequent were mentions of his vision and tenacity, for example,

*'I think one of the things I admire most about B and respect, is he is very good at **forward thinking** and I know the majority of the decisions, or I think the majority of the decisions he makes, is because he is thinking forward.'* *(Senior leader)*

*'But it would be the same if it was something that was mentioned on an SLT minutes ... and he would want to know that that **had been followed up**.'* *(Senior leader)*

*'I don't mean ruthless but he had got **his vision** and actually this school, they need to start using email, they need to start doing this ... and he enforced it. It wasn't questionable, we had to do it. And rightly so.'* *(Support Staff).*

His values were evident in what he said and what others said about him. The headteacher himself mentioned several times the importance of listening to others and taking their views into account when taking decisions,

'My experience is that the more you talk those through with a group of people, often the better the decision that you make. And also, you get a collegiate responsibility around that.'

Other participants mentioned that they felt listened to and would be heard out by the headteacher.

'But also, you can challenge him, you can say to him 'well, I don't really think that' and he listens.' (Support staff).

Participants were also able to quickly identify why the headteacher did what he did; what drove his decisions.

*'Results are, as a Headteacher you know, ridiculously important but I think one the things B is also good at is looking at what is **genuinely for the best** of our pupils and our staff as well.' (Senior leader)*

*'B decided to do that because it was **what was right** for the students.' (Teacher).*

In a similar way to school 8, the positive effect of the headteacher's values-led leadership was demonstrated in how the participants felt about working at the school. They were very positive, warm and open when talking about the headteacher. They noted how accessible and approachable he was. They were positive about changes and made comments such as,

*'(it is) **accountability in a safe non-toxic way**.' (Middle leader)*

*'But it's **how the staff feel to work for B** which then changes their mood and their approach to the students and so on down the line.' (Teacher.)*

There was respect for the role of headteacher too. One participant and another colleague I spoke to even expressed the desire to become a headteacher one day. When asked about the importance of the headteacher words such as 'crucial' and 'very important' were used. Other comments included,

'The rest of the team don't represent the school well if the headteacher isn't leading that team and ultimately … is the figurehead of the school.' (Senior leader).

Many other 'positives' about the school are in evidence (e.g., over-subscribed, strong student outcomes) that could also be seen as the impact of the headteacher's leadership.

An interesting final point, is around evolution of leadership. The headteacher himself commented,

*'And so perhaps one of the things that I have not reflected on until this conversation is that my style now comes from a confidence that I have gained over a 10-year period and **perhaps 10 years ago, the way in which I managed changed and went about change in the school would have been very different.** Probably much more impatient – with due reason to be I would say.'*

But this was also mirrored in comments from others. For example,

*'I think I have noticed perhaps **more recently** on SLT as well that he is very good at saying ... why we are making that leadership decision'* (Senior leader).

Is this just a headteacher changing and growing with experience? Or possibly evidence of a headteacher being able to become more of a values-led leader as the space is provided by a better Ofsted grade. These key points of similarity and difference are further explored in the next chapter.

4.8 Case Study 2 commentary; growing into an architect

It is possible case study 2 is an example of a headteacher who has developed into an 'architect (Hill et al.,2016) over time and most likely once the school had achieved a 'good' Ofsted grading in 2014. Certainly, the descriptions of the headteacher's leadership by himself and others demonstrate values-led leadership and distributive leadership. I heard about the balance of autonomy and accountability, how approachable the headteacher was, his clear commitment to the school and how well he listened to colleagues.

There were also key aspects of the 'architect' (Hill et al., 2016) – a leader who re-shapes and modernises the school and meets the needs of the community. There was no doubt that colleagues also saw him as both insightful and visionary.

However, there were aspects of the leadership described that did not altogether fit the 'architect' (Hill et al.,2016). For example, comments about the slight unpredictability when dealing with the headteacher and the notion of this headteacher as the 'figurehead' of the school. These behaviours are more akin to 'soldier' leaders (Hill et al., 2016). But there were also comments about behaviours softening and changing over time. One could possibly dismiss as character differences these contrasts in leadership between the headteachers of Schools 8 and 18 but I think it is not that simple. The stark difference in Ofsted judgements in their formative years and the greater sense of pre-occupation with the 'looming' inspection that came through in School 18 (e.g., in interviews with the headteacher and Senior leader and when considering the design of the School

Development Plan) surely has played a part in shaping the headteacher's approach to leadership. The headteacher of School 18 is a values-led leader; but context has meant he had less space to be the leader that he self-reports to be in his earlier years as headteacher. Possibly as a consequence he does not score his confidence and happiness with his decisions as highly as the headteacher of school 8. This case study is less an architect in action but leader who has grown into an architect or values-led leader over time.

4.9 Chapter summary

In the next chapter, I consider my findings further and discuss how far they answer the two research questions,

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**
- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?**

It seems there is evidence to support the link between Ofsted rating and the space for values-led leadership but that there is also some nuance to this linked to the formative years of headship. Moreover, values-led leadership can be seen to be enacted through behaviours that Hill et al. (2016) would recognise as their 'architect' with aspects of distributive leadership or connective leadership in evidence too. The case studies do indeed show some key characteristics of the 'architect' and some differences/developments that I explore in the next chapter. Drawing connections between the first and second research questions there are also some emerging themes from both the quantitative and qualitative data around how far an Ofsted judgement in the formative years of Headship allows you to enact values-led leadership. We see an 'architect in action' in a school judged outstanding (and therefore exempt from inspections for some time) in the case study for school 8 but the headteacher of school 18 quickly finds himself in a school with a lower Ofsted judgement and cannot fully enact values-led leadership for some time. Again, I explore both this and the impact of values-led leadership further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Overview of the shape of the chapter
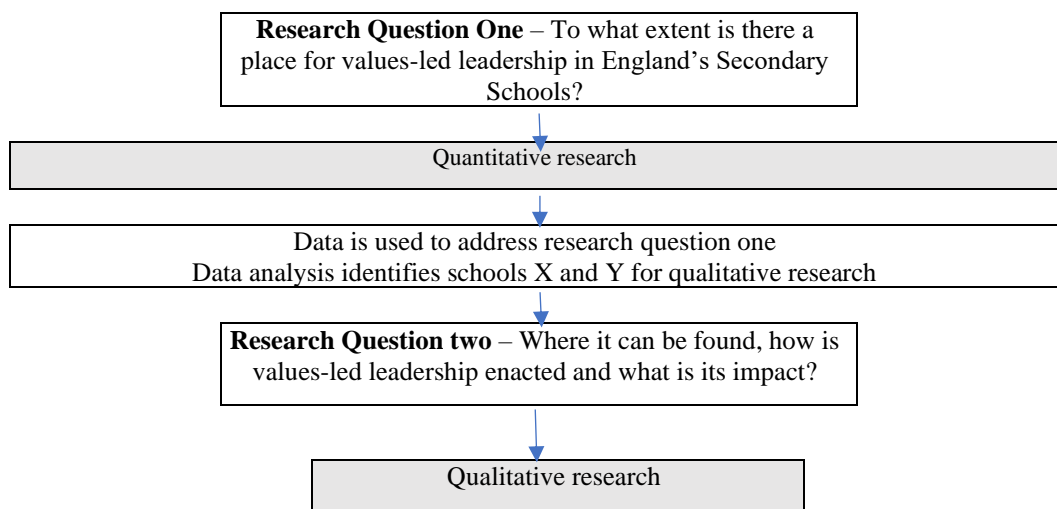
Figure 1 – Final mixed method research design (reproduced from page 43)

In this chapter I discuss the research questions in reverse order. This is because the increasing complexity of the first research question became apparent as I analysed my data and continued to read. Layder, (1998), might note that this was '*the continuous nature of adaptive theorizing' (p. 174)*. Mindful of that complexity, I begin my discussion with the more straightforward aspects; descriptions of values-led leadership in two Secondary schools; its positive facets and impact in the context of 2021 and 2022. In the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) I add some data and depth to the extant descriptions of a values-led leader and the impact they have on their school. Notably I build on the 'the architect (Hill et al., 2016) – as I explain in earlier chapters, this version of values-led leader has been central to my research helping me to shape both my research tools and my data analysis. In section 2.1, I aim to add further weight to the work of Hill et al. (2016) and possibly also update their ideas for today's context. Hill et al. (2016) do not call their 'architect' a values-led leader but, as I note below, their leadership is very much values-led leadership in action. They are driven to have an impact on society and work quietly and tirelessly to redesign the school so it best serves its community. They do all this with insight, humility and vision. Reflecting on the definition of values-led leadership stated in my introduction (section 1.3) this is absolutely a values-led leader. My descriptions of values-led leadership provide some

further details in the spirit of the 'how to' guides to values-led leadership that are currently popular (e.g., Tomsett, 2015). Moreover, my findings add to the weight of research emphasising the very positive role that values-led leadership can play in England's Secondary Schools. I am also able to suggest some links between values-led leadership and addressing the headteacher recruitment crisis

However, the question of a place for values-led leadership has proved to be more complex than simply confirming the notion in the extant literature that values-led leadership is found in 'stronger' schools (e.g., Campbell et al., 2003 and Gold et al., 2003). The part placed by Ofsted in determining the 'place' for values-led leadership is a growing theme but not in the straightforward way one might assume (i.e., it is not simply that stronger schools carry a higher Ofsted judgement and there we will find a higher incidence of values-led leadership). Greany and Higham (2018) explored the development of so-called the 'self-improving school-led system' and noted that Ofsted, a centralised inspectorate, still played a very important (and sometimes negative) part in the behaviour of schools. They also noted the importance of Ofsted in determining the 'fate' of schools and the part played by Ofsted in creating a local school system of 'winners and losers'. More recent research by Cousin and Greany (2022), carried out to inform and underpin explorations of more fruitful accountability systems than Ofsted, built on this further. They noted that

'The English education system is falling behind the high performing education systems in terms of philosophy, design and outcomes' (p. 37)

This study also acknowledged the part that current approaches to accountability (Ofsted) have played in this decline. Building in part on this research, I explore the links between Ofsted and approaches to leadership that I start to unpick in the final section of this chapter. And there is still much work to be done on this important theme (number 3 below) for the good of the English education system.

To sum up, this discussion chapter takes the reader on the following journey,

1. We can understand and describe how values-led leadership is enacted (my study builds on other descriptions)
2. Values-led leadership has a positive impact on a school (my study builds on other studies)

3. There is clearly a connection between the 'place' for values-led leadership and the current accountability measures (Ofsted). Whilst others are questioning the negative impacts of the Ofsted-led accountability regime on schools, leaders and outcomes, there is more to be explored on the impact of the current accountability under Ofsted on effective leadership approaches. I start to explore this in the final part of this chapter and my conclusion.

Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is its impact?

5.2 Architect 2.0

Hill et al. (2016) do not call their architects 'values-led leaders' but I would argue that they are. As noted above, when I read their 2016 work again it is clear that the 'architect headteachers' they describe are driven by a desire to serve. The behaviour of 'architect' leaders (unlike, for example 'surgeons') are not driven by a need for 'headline grabbing' success. They commit to a school and serve it in the longer term. I would also argue that the leadership behaviours of the 'architect' are aligned with Nolan Principles. For example, the fifth Nolan Principle is openness. A key aspect of the 'architect's' approach is engaging all, articulating their vision and taking members of the community on the journey towards it. The behaviours I explore below also link to the Nolan Principles of integrity, selflessness and, of course, leadership. In contrast, a number of 'the surgeon's' identified behaviours would not align with the Nolan Principles. For example, the removal of 'poor performers' (students and staff) to quickly boost the school's headlines would hardly be an act of integrity.

Analysis of the data certainly support the links between Hill et al.'s (2016) 'architect leader' and the two Headteachers in my case study schools. If we take key attributes of the architect as outlined in the original research, we see much of this in the descriptions of their leadership. 'Architects' (as their name suggests) re-design the school as they link failure of schools to poor design. The redesign is often done quite quietly but with the engagement of the community they are changing. Often the re-design is a longer-term project and will take several years. There is a financial element but also a focus on the best systems and structures to let teachers teach and students thrive. Table 12 below shows evidence of the redesign in both case study schools.

Hill et al. (2016) also identify some architect attributes including being 'insightful, humble and visionary'. When I reflected on this list of attributes I wondered if they were not contradictory. So, I looked at the data from the two case studies I had attributed to these codes (see section 3.18). Firstly, there was a deal of data confirming that these two leaders were indeed insightful. Secondly, there was lots of evidence that showed they had an accurate and deep understanding. And that this accurate and deep understanding of all things school-related was because of their strong knowledge base. There was also evidence of these two headteachers as 'visionary' leaders; planning for the future with wisdom and clarity. Finally, there was also evidence of their being 'humble' or possibly showing humility and humanity. I worried at first that this contradicted some of the other data about the role of headteacher 'as a figurehead' found in both case studies. Moreover, one of the two headteachers was certainly described as more 'ordinary' is his manner than the other who was clearly more flamboyant, but, overall, the clear message was of two leaders who were approachable, who listened, who respected their colleagues and invited their opinions. Again, table 12 shows the collated evidence of this for both case study schools.

School 8 – Architect in action Headteacher A	School 18 – Growing into an architect Headteacher B
*Restructured staffing, balanced the budget *Improved IT infrastructure *Expanded the school (increased pupil numbers) *Expert knowledge of technology in schools (wrote a book) *Staff acknowledge he has a thorough overview of all aspects of the school *Shared understanding of his vision/plan *Approachable *Often 'in the background'	* Restructured staffing, balanced the budget *Modernised systems and tightened policy and procedure *Sharpened focus on teaching and learning *Staff acknowledge he has a thorough overview of all aspects of the school *Forward thinking – keeps up to date with wider developments (has roles beyond own school that enables that) *Shared understanding of his vision/plan *Staff feels he listens

Table 12 – summary of evidence of 'architect traits' in both headteachers

So why is architect 2.0 my subheading? There are clearly some slight departures from the descriptions in Hill et al.'s (2016) research. Their 'architects' were informed or inspired by great leaders of the past. Not so these two headteachers. When asked about their own inspirations (or indeed when others were asked) there was either uncertainty or comments that their leadership inspiration came from more contemporary or down-to-earth examples. They both named the leader of a headteacher's union and other sources of inspiration were also mentioned, for example,

'I think I think he admires that kind of I suppose those qualities you see in cyclists and people who do long distance events.' (Head, school 8)

'I would say that every headteacher that I have worked with I have learned and taken a little bit of each of them.' (Head, school 18).

Is it the changes to the education system that explain this? If we contextualize Hill et al.'s work it was published 2016 (updated in 2017). The interviews were conducted from 2007 and whilst they focus on academy leaders it was decidedly before many schools were in Multi-Academy Trusts on the scale, we see in 2022, before the pandemic and before very wide use of social media in education. Perhaps the latter explains the differences for my two 'architect' headteachers in their choice of inspiration. Colleagues commented that they are both active on social media (notably 'Twitter') and their inspiration does seem to come from other educationalists who are vocal on Twitter. Their academic background and personal interests may also play a part here – in the original research the 'architect' headteacher is more likely a historian or economist, the headteacher of School 8 is a geologist/scientist (and self-proclaimed avid cyclist) and the headteacher of School 18 is from a PE background. Could this be a simpler explanation for the sources of their inspiration? There were certainly references to sporting leaders when the headteacher and others were asked about leadership inspiration.

The Hill et al. 2016 research points to aspects of the redesign being the 'acquisition' of a Primary School or the addition of a Sixth Form. Again, the educational landscape has changed. The freedom for a headteacher in a single school to do something like that now is very much constrained by the growth of Multi-Academy Trusts. Possibly if Hill et al. (2016) conducted their research again now they would find that the redesign of schools by the current 'architect leaders' did not include such bold moves. The educational context simply does not allow for a headteacher of a single school to do those things. Does this mean 'architect 2.0' makes smaller moves, less ambitious redesigns? Certainly, they are more constrained by the context of 2021 and this again brings to mind the warnings within the article,

'Perversely, although the Architects are the only leaders who improve long-term examination results, they are the ones we least reward, least recognize and rarely appoint.' (Hill et al., 2016, p. 6).

The original 'architects' also had often come to teaching from another career often working in industry before becoming teachers possibly partially explaining their notion that their schools needed to be re-designed and their interest in the school serving its community (potentially inspired by the importance of the consumer in industry). That

was not the case for my two headteachers (i.e., they were not career changers). It must also be noted that further research (Allen, 2017) has challenged the link between subject background and strong school leaders and the notion that the best school leaders entered the profession later. However, serving the community *was* a theme in both case studies. For the headteacher of school 8 there was a real focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable students that were often overlooked in a seemingly more affluent community. Equally, the major piece of work to expand the school was to meet the needs of a growing local population. For the headteacher of school 18, there was a sense of a need to continue to serve the community through events, interactions and maintaining what they had long held dear about the school, alongside a need to ensure the education in school also served to educate the community. For the latter this was developing education around diversity and equality for children from a predominately white local area. Partnerships with agencies and groups beyond the school that could help expand the thinking of the children within the school was clearly a feature of the work of the 'architect headteacher' in the original research.

Hill et al. (2016) make the point that the current education system does not recognise and reward the 'architect' leader however, and I suggest this also comes back to the 'place and space' for values-led leadership I explored with the survey. The data tentatively showed a greater link between values-led leadership and schools with higher Ofsted ratings. Other literature about values-led leadership (e.g., Campbell et al., 2003 and Gold et al., 2003) notes they are in 'good' or 'strong' schools. In a school under pressure an 'architect' would be unlikely to get the time and space they required for their careful redesign. Indeed, it is likely that the headteacher of school 18 was fortunate; the relatively quick re-inspection gave his school a rating that then allowed him the space to properly re-design and lead in a more 'values-led' way. There are also comments about his leadership changing over time from him and others that might link to this too. Indeed, I noted in the previous chapter that school 18 was a case study of 'growing into an architect'. He did not have the space to be a values-led leader at first and there were comments in the interviews about aspects of his leadership that were more akin to the surgeon (Hill et al.,2016), for example his unpredictability and the importance of him as the 'figurehead' of the school. This could also be an example of what Day (2009) calls 'layered leadership'. In one study he explores the leadership of a Primary headteacher taking a school from a position of failure to success over time. He categorises the different phases of her work to improve the school over a period of

seven years noting that, for others who wish to lead a similar school improvement journey, *'a layered approach with more emphasis being placed on certain strategies during particular phases whilst others are "seeded" will be more effective.' (P. 12)*

In this study the interplay between the need to satisfy external accountability measures (and get the school out of a failing Ofsted category) impacts the leadership approaches the headteacher can and does take. This first phase describes some clashes with staff and 'bumpy' times whereas, in final phase and once a higher Ofsted grade has been secured, Day describes the culture as 'everyone a leader'. Day's work is a much more positive interpretation suggesting that the initial leadership behaviours are palatable as they help to secure the external validation that will allow the freedoms to lead in a values-driven way. The notion of 'seeding' future strategies and approaches is interesting too; possibly we are back to the notions of pragmatism certainly in these early, heavily scrutinised years of the improvement journey.

Thus 'architect 2.0' is the architect' of the context in which I write. They might have the opportunity to lead as an architect from the outset or once the external pressure allows. This notion of the 'opportunity' to be an architect is of real interest to me and I explore it again in section 5.5 below. Interestingly, Hill et al's (2016) original architects were in schools in special measures in 2007. As I note in chapter 4, the Ofsted regime has changed and I would suggest that these leaders would not have the time and space to lead as described in the research; Hill et al's (2016) claims and finding do not fit the current context of schools. So, architect 2.0 will have similar instincts to the original architect – to re-design and rebuild to meet the growing or changing needs of the school and community – and they will do it by engaging all and with clarity and insight. They are more likely to be inspired by peers and fellow leaders (and indeed get strength and support through these connections) but they may also be constrained in their redesign by growth of the Multi-Academy Trust movement.

However, there is more to a values-led leader than being an 'architect'. Armstrong et al. (2018) note that connective or distributed leadership is key to building systems and structures that ensure leader's values drive the institution even in the current context,

'Such values-driven structures provide a platform by which principals create the conditions in which policy and reform can be managed and absorbed without compromising the core purpose and contextual priorities of these schools.'. (Armstrong et al., 2018 p. 2)

And it is to that aspect of values-led leadership we next turn.

5.3 Distributed leadership enables values-led leadership

Distributed leadership was in evidence in both schools and was experienced as empowering the staff. In the Literature review chapter, I explore aspects of distributive and connective leadership linked to values-led leadership. A key quotation kept returning to my mind as I analyzed the case study data,

Distributed leadership means brokering, facilitating and supporting the leadership of others (Harris, 2013).

Moreover Harris (and others such as Day et al., 2001) also notes the importance of mutual trust as the 'glue' for successful distribution of leadership. The following quotations from the case study illustrate that distributed leadership was a feature of both the case study schools,

'My overall philosophy of leadership is employing experts, trust them and listen to the advice they give you.' (Head, school 8)

'He knows that the structures are in place and everybody knows what they need to do and he trusts that they will do it.' (Support staff, school 8)

'And I think the big thing that we introduced was high levels of autonomy alongside high levels of accountability.' (Head, school 18)

'B delegates in a different way to the way D (previous headteacher of a different school) would have done … B will leave a lot of the 'History' to me whereas D would not have done that.' (Middle Leader, school 18).

There was also a sense, particularly in school 8, that these strong connections served the staff well in times of trouble including the Covid 19 pandemic. This data also included good examples of the 'webs of connection' forged by connective or distributed leadership enabling headteachers to manage the challenges of government-led directives and preventing them from derailing values-led leadership. In the school 8 case study it was clear that Department of Education directives during the height of the Covid 19 pandemic could have caused upset (in one example not being able to use science laboratories for science lessons because of the need to segregate different year groups in different parts of the school to help prevent the spread of Covid 19) but strong connections support by strong communications prevented this.

Armstrong et al. (2018) suggest that leaders build systems and structures that can actually ensure their values drive the institution even in the current educational context.

And there was good evidence in the case studies suggesting that developing distributed leadership enabled the headteachers to be values-led leaders. It was certainly clear that the headteachers' values permeated these two schools and colleagues were clear about the values that drove their headteachers. Let me illustrate that further; each headteacher's response to section 3 of the survey (NB this led to the TotalSelf score) was backed up by the case studies. For example, the headteacher of School 18's survey response indicated that optimism and personal accountability were regular drivers behind leadership decisions and this was supported by comments from others:

'B's more open approach and more positive to be honest, like I say you will never see him walking around with a face like thunder.' (Teacher, school 18)

'But he is very good at saying why things are ... why decisions are made in a certain way.' (Senior Leader, school 18).

This was also absolutely the case with the headteacher of school 8. In both case studies no participants had trouble articulating what they thought had driven the headteacher's decisions. And there was often an overlap between the words used by the headteacher to explain their values (and drivers behind decisions) and the words used by members of staff. One clear example from school 8 was about the headteacher's commitment to the success of more vulnerable, less advantaged children which was also shared by a middle leader,

'I think he is very passionate about social mobility. That comes across when I am speaking to him about students.' (Middle Leader, school 8).

That connective and distributed leadership opened up deeper channels of communication was also crystal clear. But the communication did not need to be loud or 'from the front'; the headteacher of school 8 communicated what he stood for, where he was taking the school and why he was doing so in a much lower key but just as effective way as the headteacher of school 18. What mattered more was ensuring connections and trust. Truly distributed leadership both served to communicate this trust and to communicate the headteacher's values.

5.4 What is the impact of values-led leadership?

The work of Hill et al. (2016) suggested that the architect leader would provide the best 'return' for the government's investment in leadership. As I wrote above, the analysis of the case study data found that these two values-driven headteachers were 'architects'

(or 'architect 2.0') as I have noted above. There was also evidence of distributed or connective leadership in their schools. And this approach to leadership ensured that their values permeated the schools and drove decisions. So, what could be said to be the impact of all this? There is almost a whole thesis in discussing how to judge or quantify the impact of leadership. In the case studies (see previous chapter, sections 4.5-4.8) I note that the schools are <u>over-subscribed and outcomes are strong</u>. In this section, my focus is on other the impacts observed and noted.

Firstly, there was a clear sense that the staff interviewed were <u>happy to work in those schools and with their headteacher.</u> There is respect for the Headteacher's expertise and colleagues feel trusted. Moreover, there is a focus on their well-being. This was particular marked in school 8 where number of points made were about the contrast in leadership approaches between the current headteacher and his predecessor. This was summed up by a comment made by Senior leader in school 8,

'Lots of staff will say they have been able to breathe with A around. They said the previous Head … would hold you to very high account and would be breathing down your neck and things were done in a very black and white way.'

The colleagues interviewed in both schools were also clear that the headteacher's leadership was <u>changing and developing their schools for the better</u>. The schools were clearly being modernised and developed but these developments are understood and supported. The staff interviewed expressed that these changes were for the better of the community and the children. Improving technology and use of technology was a theme in both schools as was restructuring staffing models but there were different changes to the structures and approaches. In school 8 there was also expansion of the school as a key development whereas in school 18 it was around improving education around diversity and inclusion. In all this we see a tangible impact of the values-led leadership; taking strong schools and making them even better. The leaders were redesigning, re-modeling and building (literally in one case) to meet the needs of the community.

There was a strong thread around <u>the impact these leaders were having on the students in the communities they served</u>. The focus of these headteachers focus was on ALL students**.** Their needs were centre-stage. In school 8 this was seen in the headteacher's strong interest in supporting the needs of more vulnerable or less privileged students. And colleagues' comments showed me that this drive was felt throughout the school (see above). In school 18, when reflecting on the biggest changes the headteacher had made, the member of support staff compared her children's experience of the school and

levels of success under a different headteacher to how they might have experienced it under this headteacher. She noted,

'Nobody can slip through the net; I think they clearly (were) doing previous to that. I have always said about my own children … where they got Bs at GCSE I think under B's regime they would have got 'A's. And I think where they got 'Cs' they would have got 'B's.' (School 18, Support staff).

These findings are also in keeping with the work of Hill et al. (2016) where it is noted that the 'architect' (unlike the 'surgeon' for example) is not just interested in rapidly improving headline figures to show success, he or she wants real transformation. Equally, the virtues or personal characteristics outlined in the 'Ethical Leadership' framework (2019) include justice. The report states,

'Leaders should work fairly, for the good of children from all backgrounds. They should seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives'

(Ethical Leadership Commission, 2019 p. 5.)

 This was in evidence in School 8 and 18 and their impact made their schools more places where the success of every child was important. But achieving this 'justice' is not a quick fix, it's not about ensuring next year's Y11 and Y13 get great headline results. It is about much deeper and long-term work. Higham and Greany (2018) write about how challenging it is for school leaders to do this; to keep a focus on children, particularly those with high needs who may impact negatively on the school's outcomes in our current self-improving school-led system with its crushing levels of accountability and high stakes culture for leaders. I explore this further below.

Finally, an interesting impact of values-led leadership was <u>that colleagues think the headteacher is important. They respect the role.</u> A colleague in school 18 (teacher) summed up the impact of the headteacher on the school,

> *'So, in terms' of B sort of having that importance to how the school runs, I think it's more of a knock-on effect? I don't think the students see it all necessarily … **but it's how the staff feel to work for B which then changes their mood and their approach to the students** and so on down the line.'.*

Is this a possible solution to the headteacher recruitment crisis? In my introduction I discuss how the job has been seen as increasingly soulless to potential applicants and how more space for values-lead leadership might be an antidote to this view and a solution to the recruitment crisis. The case studies of school 8 and 18 certainly support this. The headteachers are liked and admired. There were no disparaging comments

about the role (only about how some predecessors had carried it out) and one colleague even noted,

'I want his job one day!' (Senior leader, school 18)

There was admiration for the headteachers, particularly their knowledge base, but also when describing how they both trusted and empowered others and how they listened to, and took wisdom from, others in the school, I wondered if the colleagues interviewed were describing an approach to being headteacher that was 'do-able'. In school 8 in particular the headteacher was described as 'one of us' and even 'ordinary'. But colleagues liked and admired him and, just like those who worked with the headteacher of school 18, their experience of him increased their respect for the role of headteacher. And made it seem more accessible, possible even. In my discussions about 'architect 2.0' I note that both the headteachers were not inspired by heroes from history. Instead, they talked about headteachers they had worked for or knew, for example when talking about this inspiration the headteacher of school 18 answered,

'I would say that every headteacher that I have worked with I have learned (from) and taken a little bit of each of them.'

I would argue this is actually a helpful aspect of their values-led leadership. It is somewhat of a challenge to emulate Franklin D Roosevelt when leading a comprehensive in Doncaster, but to have been inspired by Mrs. Jones, your first headteacher, and, in turn, to provide a values-led role model for the young teachers in your school is far less of a challenge and actually more for useful for the future of secondary school leadership in England. This respect for the headteacher and their role, coupled with their own confidence and happiness with their decisions and their impact will also undoubtably aid headteacher retention. These Headteachers and the fact that they and their work is admired possibly serves to reduce a need for Hoyle and Wallace's (2005) 'ironic orientation' in these schools. They demonstrate that something genuine, values-led and child-focused is possible in the current context of high stakes accountability and policy overload.

However, young entrants to the profession will not experience values-led headteachers if there is no space or place for this approach to leadership. All the worthy works and 'Ethical Leadership frameworks' (2019) mean little if a leader is unable to enact values-led leadership. In my final section I return to this tension in our schools in England. Inevitably, I also return to the role played by Ofsted in placing constraints on the

approach that can be taken to leadership in schools. Having the time and space to get the right staffing structures in place, to share a vision for the future and build systems and structures to fulfil that vision is simply not compatible with the demands made by Ofsted on leaders to quickly turn schools in 'lower' Ofsted categories around. Possibly the case study of school 18 gives us hope – when a school has met the Ofsted demands for quick improvements and is then judged 'good' or better, then the headteacher can grow into an 'architect' (Hill et al., 2016).   Or is more than hope needed; do we actually need a review of the whole approach to judging to enable approaches to leadership described through-out these chapters in all our schools? I the next section I share evidence that would suggest that.

To what extent it there a place for values-led leadership?

<u>5.5 Further thoughts on a place for values-led leadership in our Secondary school today</u>

As noted in my Findings and Analysis chapter, the survey data provides some support for the hypothesis in the literature that we are more likely to find evidence of values-led leadership in schools enjoying a higher Ofsted rating. There is further support from the findings from the case studies; there is a sense that the early poor Ofsted judgement of the current headteacher of school 18 had an impact on his leadership. Or at least an impact on his early leadership – he and others acknowledge that his approach has evolved (see sections 4.7-4.8). There are some elements of the 'surgeon leader' who is described as a 'tough, disciplined leader who believes that their job is 'to get the school back in shape fast' (Hill et al., 2016) in descriptions of School 18 headteacher's early approaches. But his leadership did develop and change. Possibly his role models and his own instincts for leadership brought him back to the leader he wanted to be and the improved Ofsted judgement have him the space to be a values-led leader. I also note in the Findings and Analysis chapter, that there is a theme around the formative years of Headship and how that shapes the headteacher's approach. It is clearly not as simple as a direct link between the current Ofsted judgement and the space for values-led leadership. It is a more complicated picture where Ofsted judgments play a part in shaping the leadership approaches taken by headteacher. Day and Gu (2018) explored the importance of biography in shaping successful school leaders who achieved great things (and successfully enacted government policy) through the unwavering application of their own values to every action they took. Their study focused on

biography in the sense of the experiences of education of their two protagonists but there is seemingly a link between early experiences of headship and the head's capacity or ability to apply their values to every action they take.

I struggled to find research with a direct focus on Ofsted's impact on leadership behaviour and approaches taken by headteachers following a poor Ofsted judgement but there is some other research of interest. Lowe (2003) investigated the impact of Ofsted inspections on schools' improvement agenda. His findings were based on much earlier inspection framework and thus a very different approach to Ofsted inspections in terms of notice period before an inspection and the length and focus of the inspections themselves. In his study of the 6 Secondary schools, he noted that some of the headteachers were able to utilise the Ofsted findings and action points to further their own agendas. And that where there was an alignment between the Ofsted agenda for schools and the agendas of some of the case study headteachers, it served them well. But he also noted where there was misalignment in both agendas it necessitated a change in leadership approach to implement the Ofsted recommendations which was not well received by school staff,

'By contrast where the headteacher responded to Ofsted's critical comments on the school by altering his preferred style to a coercive approach - controlling the debate about Ofsted's agenda, taking decisions without consultation and demanding compliance with the school's official line - there was an adverse reaction.' (Lowe, 2003, p. 216).

The report does not give us further detail about the 'preferred style' but we can confidently conclude that a 'more coercive style' is not values-led leadership (see section 1.3). Other research (e.g., Colman, 2022) supports that view that the speed with which improvement is expected by Ofsted is unrealistically fast and that this can be destabilising, emotionally fraught and affect the headteacher's leadership. The latter is noted in this concluding comment

'Tensions emerge between what leaders are required to do for Ofsted, and what they believe is right for the pupils in their schools and the wider community, impacting leadership strategies and decision-making' (Colman, 2022, p.18).

Most of the article focuses on the destabilising effect of the poor inspection judgement on the schools (largely linked to the visibility of the scrutiny the school faced) and how challenging that was for two schools in particular as they served deprived communities. But there was certainly a sense through-out that the negative Ofsted judgement (and all

that came with it) somewhat prevented the school leaders serving their schools as they would have liked.

Moreover, is the space and place for values-led leadership being further 'squeezed' by the development of the academy movement and Multi Academy Trusts in England's schools? As I discuss above, Hill et al.'s (2016) architect had greater freedom to redesign the school that 'architect 2.0'. But, as I also note in the 'Findings and Analysis' chapter, when discussing school 7, joining an academy Trust after a lower Ofsted judgement can give the headteacher time to make changes without such intense scrutiny. So, to really answer this question, I would need to look at values-led leadership and CEOs and to investigate whether their role and relationship with the Regional Schools Commissioner (a local agent of the Department of Education) and the funding agencies allowed for distributed or connective leadership. There is not scope for that in this thesis.

Certainly, time is everything if you want an 'architect' not a 'surgeon' (Hill et al., 2016) and if you want distributed leadership in your school. School leaders must, of course, be accountable and schools do need an external eye to check that they are best serving the children in the school. Yet the current accountability system, Ofsted, seems to be a barrier to values-led leadership. Hill et al. (2016) pondered why the DfE were not seeing a return on their investment in English schools. They provided an answer that has seemingly not been heard.

Bottery (2019) takes the discussion wider than the problem of inspectorate; indeed, wider than England. In his chapter entitled 'An Ethics of Educational Leadership for Turbulent and Complex Times', he firstly acknowledges that governments have forced such a crowded agenda and an array of demands on school leaders that they have been forced to simply focus on the 'how' rather than the 'why' or the 'what'. This is supported by an analysis of the various incarnations Headteacher Standards I analyse in the Literature and Policy Review chapter – the many new initiatives from white papers and other documents find their way into this endless list of demands on headteachers. Bottery (2019) goes on to argue that a focus on the ethics of educational leadership (the 'why' and the 'what') is more important than ever but that educational leaders cannot do this alone. He notes that 'governments, policies, inspectoral regimes and institutional thinking' would all have to change.

In my next chapter, the conclusion, I further explore this idea that the place for values-led leadership is small and diminishing. We can find values-led leadership, we can describe it and we can acknowledge its positive impact. But it is less clear how we enable and support this approach to leadership in our schools. In the next chapter, I draw all these findings together and note some thoughts for the future.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Overview of the chapter

The chapter begins with a summary of the salient points from my Discussion chapter. I note that the first part of my research question proved much trickier to answer and warrants further research and discussion. I go on to acknowledge the limitations to my research notably that there were other avenues to explore and that more case studies would have yielded an even greater data set. Here I also note the context of my work; the Covid 19 pandemic and make some brief points about the impact of the pandemic on school leaders.

The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the contribution of my work and, linked to that, where this work could go next. I believe I have just started to uncover ideas that warrant further research and that this further research could help to improve England's Secondary schools and recruit (and retain) more headteachers. There is an opportunity afoot for this in the context of discussions around the future of accountability systems (notably Ofsted). Moreover, there is something missing from these current discussions; how to make a greater place for values-led leadership (with its capacity for a tangible positive impact) in England's Secondary schools.

6.2 A summary of my findings

- **To what extent is there a place for values-led leadership in England's Secondary Schools?**

This proved the harder of the two questions to answer. My findings did provide some support for the hypothesis that stronger schools (i.e., using Ofsted gradings as a proxy measure) tend to have a greater incidence of values-led leadership. As I note through-

out, my quantitative research was carried out in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) thus I was gathering data to build upon existing research and theories. By using Ofsted gradings as my measure I was also able to develop some further theories around why this relationship between stronger Ofsted gradings and a greater incidence of values-led leadership might exist. A key factor was time. In particular, my theorisation drew on the architect leader (Hill et al., 2016). This led me to focus on exploring time as a factor in creating a place for values-led leadership (NB whilst Hill et al. do not label 'the architect' as a values-led leader I was confident that this was values-led leadership with a different name - see Literature and Policy Review chapter). The architect leader needs an extended period to re-design aspects of the school; she needs time to communicate her plans and vision and she needs time to see it come to fruition for the good of the students and community. The findings presented above provide strong evidence that a positive Ofsted grade (*1/outstanding or 2/good*) gives the headteacher this time. Moreover, the headteacher also has the freedom from monitoring visits and Ofsted-defined goals for improvement that schools with lower gradings must endure. They have the space to lead in a different way and identify their own goals and vision for the school. Thus, we find **the place** to be a values-led leader.

There is possibly an alternative hypothesis that being a values-led leader gets you the strong Ofsted judgement in the first place, but I do not have the evidence to support it. There is a clear interplay between the judgements made by the Ofsted regime and **the place** for values-led leadership. If a new headteacher joins a school with a poor Ofsted grade their initial focus will inevitably be to prepare for an imminent inspection or monitoring visit. There will be an externally imposed timeline and externally imposed improvement goals. This was seen in case study of the headteacher of school 18 whose leadership was not as strongly values-led as the headteacher of school 8. The headteacher of school 8 had joined an 'outstanding' school as headteacher. In the Findings and Analysis chapter, I also delve a little beneath some of the seeming outliers in the data and find the beginnings of a correlation between values-led leadership and the Ofsted grading of the school the headteacher leads in their formative years.

The role of Ofsted in creating (or negating) a place for values-led leadership is certainly an area that warrants further research and I explore this a little further in sections 3 and 4 below.

- **Where it can be found, how is values-led leadership enacted and what is the impact?**

Where I found values-led leadership it looked somewhat like the 'architect' (Hill et al., 2016). But it has changed somewhat because the context of English Secondary Schools has changed. Values-led leadership in my study looks like 'architect 2.0'; a humble and knowledgeable visionary who carefully, and with the support of those in the community, redesigns the school to better meet the needs of the students. Pace of change is steady and the changes are deep rather than superficial. They do this within the constraints of their power to make changes as the educational landscape of 2022, and particularly the further development of the academy movement, is a different context to lead and redesign a school than 2007 (when Hill et al. began their research).

Values-led leadership also looks like distributed or connective leadership. In the case study schools, the trust leaders had in their teams and colleagues was palpable. Unlike Ofsted regimes, the accountability approaches in these schools are positive. The headteacher's communication, openness and care for the well-being of all earns them the trust of their staff. They talk about what is important to them and their values are evident in much of what they say and do. Moreover, this distributed or connective leadership navigates the tension with externally imposed Department of Education policy. Despite the challenges that might be posed by external influence and direction, values-led leaders do still look outward for advice and inspiration. But they welcome advice from peers doing the same or similar roles. They learn from leaders with whom they have worked and they learn from leaders around them.

The impact of values-led leadership is evident not just in student outcomes but also on the well-being of staff. There is a respect for expertise and colleagues feel trusted. The school is modernised and developed but these developments are understood and supported; the success is shared. There is a moral dimension to the impact of their leadership too – the focus is on **all** students; not just those who fly or are less challenging. Maybe, most importantly, for the future of Secondary school leadership, colleagues think the headteacher is very important. There is respect for the role and some evidence of aspiration to the role. This could be useful to help resolve the headteacher recruitment and retention crisis.

6.3 Limitations in the scope and approach of my research

Inevitably, the more I read and researched, the more areas for investigation presented themselves. For example, I do discuss Multi Academy Trust (MATs) but there is clearly much more scope for exploring the impact being part of a MAT has on the 'place' for a headteacher to be a values-led leader. This is linked to questions around the roles of others in a MAT; for example, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Trust Board. A Trust Board has, in many ways, greater power and responsibility than a Local Governing Body. Together with the CEO they do set the mission, vision and values for their Trust and it would be interesting to know how that impacts on the headteachers in the Trust and the place for values-led leadership at school level. I also make a note in the Discussion chapter about the 'space' a Trust can sometimes give a leader to be a values-led leader (for example school 17) and allow respite from the pressured timeline of Ofsted improvement agendas.

It would also have been fruitful to have carried out a case study of a school where the questionnaire indicated the headteacher's leadership approach was less values-led. Possibly also a school with a lower Ofsted rating. This would have provided an excellent contrast to test and further develop some of my theories. A larger sample of headteachers could have also tested, refined and developed my theorisation of 'architect 2.0'. Alas, time constraints and opportunity did not allow for this.

It could be argued that my choice of Hill et al's (2016) research also constitutes a limitation as the research has courted some controversy. Interestingly, it was a piece of research that received more main stream media attention than most and other academic researchers were keen to question and point out limitations. Much of this was valid, the omission in the initial article of methodology was unhelpful for example. And the claims made were headline grabbing (e.g., the potential links between subject background and stronger leadership behaviours). However, my work, for the most part used the descriptions of leadership behaviours in the research. I used descriptions from Armstrong (2018) and others in this way too. Both were in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) which, as I note through-out potentially makes the use of this research less problematic. But I do appreciate that the strong reactions from some quarters of the academic community will see the use of this article as a limitation.

Another limitation in the scope of my research is consideration of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. I gathered my data (interviews and questionnaires) between

summer 21 and January 22. When I finalised section 1 of the questionnaire, I added '*how to implement an aspect of the Dfe instructions to schools linked to Covid 19'* to the list of important decisions made in the past 12 months (section 2). This was simply because since spring 2020 many of the decisions taken by headteachers were linked to Covid 19. Equally, in the interviews, the headteachers and their colleagues did make reference to the pandemic when discussing the headteacher's leadership decisions. For example, keeping year groups in self-contained 'bubbles' to minimise interaction between different age groups or measures taken to ensure the school play could still be performed when Covid 19 cases rose in December 2021. The pandemic was certainly there 'in the background' in some of the examples given and anecdotes shared. There have been articles written on the pandemic and its impact on students (e.g., Frank, 2022), on teachers (Marsh-Davies & Burnett, 2021) and on school leaders (Harris, 2020,). There is inevitably a focus on the impact on learning or the attrition on wellbeing but there are also comments on the impact on leadership approaches, for example the importance of distributed leadership when schools were in lockdown (Harris, 2020). However, I have not gone any further in my exploration of the impact of the pandemic on values-led leadership. I suspect that the impact of Covid 19 on school leadership is something that will be studied further in years to come; certainly, we know from the news at the time (and my own experiences in my school) there was the familiar interplay between government directives and school leaders' own beliefs and ideas about how to best serve their community. The suspension of certain accountability measures (in terms of student outcomes) in part changed the parameters of leadership (Netolicky, 2020) in many countries including England but Ofsted continued their work (in a slightly altered guise – Ofsted, September 2020; Ofsted, January 2021) and government diktats and the threat of enhanced Health and Safety inspections (Department for Education, 2020) ensured the performative environment full of demands on school leaders remained in place. Some research suggested (Harris and Jones, 2020) that there was a shift in leadership approaches during the pandemic ('in disruptive times') that could have implications for the future. Equally other articles (e.g., Zhao, 2020) discussed the opportunity provided by the 'pause in schooling' to rethink much about education including the approach to accountability. But these changes and opportunities do not seem to have been sustained or taken in the rush to return to normal times and re-establish 'normal' including a return to pre-Covid inspection routines (Ofsted, December 2020).

6.4 My contribution to knowledge and practice

Further descriptions of values-led leadership are useful for a range of educational professionals from aspirant leaders to governors or trustees seeking to recruit a new headteacher. I personally found the case studies inspirational and informative; they supported my work as a Secondary Headteacher. I have also used aspects of the research and reading when leading CPD to develop leaders in my school and across the Trust.

There is, as I note in chapter 2, some research already describing values-led leadership. There are also other popular books on the subject that are often more autobiographical in nature (e.g., Tomsett, 2015). Some of the academic research notes the impact of values-led leadership (for example, Armstrong et al. 2018) write about how webs of connection allow school leaders to maintain strong values that are not then negated by external input or directives) but I believe I have identified even more tangible impacts of this approach to leadership. I have built on this body of literature to further add to the notion that values-led leadership is good for all young people, staff wellbeing and headteacher recruitment and retention. However, I have also added more to the debate. Most significantly I have grappled with this question that has not been hitherto addressed – if values-led leadership is a positive and impactful way to lead as a Secondary headteacher why are we not seeing this approach in every school? By building on the work of Hill et al. (2016) and examining the impact of Ofsted on opportunities specifically for values-led leadership I have opened up a key area that warrants further exploration.

Let me explain further. From the outset, I found much merit in the work of Hill et al. (2016). They set out to explore why England was not getting a better outcome for its investment in English schools (i.e., why were students not achieving as well as peers in other countries). Their answer (and warnings) has seemingly not been heeded (possibly because of the critiques leveled at the omission of detail on their methodology and other concerns I explain in chapter 2). They explicitly stated,

'Our findings suggest that it's because we're appointing, rewarding, and recognizing the wrong leaders.' (p. 1).

In my research I have not only sought to build on the 'architect' theory but I have also connected the concerns Hill et al. (2016) raise about ineffective leaders with the

prevailing accountability system for English schools; Ofsted. Following an inadequate Ofsted judgment, a school leader will have around 30 months to turn their school around sufficiently to be graded higher at the next inspection. They will likely receive their first monitoring visit between 3-9 months of the inspection and may have up to 5 monitoring visits in the 30 months between the inspection that led to the grade and the inspection that hopes to find improvements. One could argue this context necessitates and endorses 'surgeon' leaders and their quick fixes,

'Unsurprisingly, examination results improve dramatically in the one or two years they're at the school (although revenue falls as they remove poor performing students). However, these examination results don't last. After the Surgeon leaves, exam scores fall back to where they started, mainly because younger students have been ignored and under resourced for the previous two years.'

(Hill et al., 2016 p.2)

'Architects' are a clear example of value-led leaders but they need time to turn a school around. In our education system we are not giving leaders time. And often one headteacher disappears after a failed inspection and a new one is duly appointed with even less time to do more than hack and cut and make the next year or two of student outcomes seem palatable. There are examples like School 18 and in research (Day, 2009) where early leadership approaches bear fruit, secure better Ofsted rating and the headteacher stays for many years more carefully re-building all aspects of the school as a values-led leader unhindered by frantic expectations of 'turnaround'. But are these stories an exception? Is this 'layered leadership' (Day, 2009) unusual or too hard? Little wonder that Hill et al. (2016) comment that the UK government are not getting a return on their investment in education. And this also cannot be helping the recruitment and retention crisis. My research, however, show that values-led leadership restores faith and interest in the role of headteacher. More values-led leaders in more schools could help to address the headteacher recruitment and retention crisis.

There is research underway (e.g., LocalEd25) linked to projects that are exploring new approaches to accountability. A literature review (Cousin and Greany, 2022) carried out to inform the work on accountability by LocalEd 25 notes that the 'self-improving' school-led system was supposed to lead to better schools. And it has not in many cases. Moreover, it references research of the negative impact that current accountability

regimes (namely Ofsted) have on headteacher well-being and recruitment. However, there is a need for more on approaches to leadership that are made possible or not possible because of the current context and systems. Put simply, research on the impact of current accountability regimes (Ofsted) on leadership approaches has not yet been fully explored. It is a compelling angle that adds weight to the case for change. I believe my research is a contribution to this key debate and, as I discuss below, there is a need for even more research.

6.5 What might be next?

Hill et al. warned in 2016 that the UK government were not getting a 'return' on their investment in leadership simply because the system did not acknowledge and reward the types of leaders who actually 'turn round' schools. My research, in the spirit of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) used the notion of 'the architect' as one lens through which to identify values-led leaders. I found that these architects still exist. They are values-led leaders. They are architects 2.0. Other literature on values-led leadership (Harris, 2013; Armstrong et al.,2018), alongside the case studies, helped me to expand the descriptions of values-led leadership. I also considered the impact of values-led leadership. The impact on schools, just as was seen in the research of others (Hill et al., 2016; Armstrong et al. 2018), is tangible; outcomes are good, staff are thriving and they make Headship appear attractive to the next generation. Put simply, values-led leaders are good for their schools and for the education system. But the room to be an 'architect 2.0' or similar is narrow; it exists in a place where there is time and permission to be a values-led leader. And this permission or time is only afforded by the absence of Ofsted visits and interference.

As mentioned earlier, there are projects afoot exploring the damage done by current accountability approaches. They identify the damage done to the school reputation, to outcomes, to the leaders themselves and to future recruitment. They do not, however, explicitly identify the limitations the current accountability approaches place *on the ways* in which headteachers can lead. I am determined to share my research and findings with colleagues working on these projects (for example, LocalEd25) to add another dimension to these all-important conversations about the future of Secondary schools in England.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Participant information form (survey/questionnaire)

C Tasker

Sheffield Hallam University

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Title of Project**
   This survey information is for my doctoral research into leadership in Secondary schools. It focuses on leadership decisions and the drivers for those decisions.

2. **Legal basis for research for studies.**
   The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest.** A full statement of your rights can be found at https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research. However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number ER24667024. Further information at https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

3. **Introduction**
   I am hoping that you will help me to research approaches to leadership in Secondary schools. My research is in two parts – the questionnaires and then two case studies. There is a recruitment crisis facing our schools and fewer and fewer teachers want to be Headteachers. I want to find out if there is space for different approaches to leadership in our Secondary schools and what impact they can have on both the school and the appeal of the role.

4. **Why have you asked me to take part?**
   You have been chosen as a participant because you are a Secondary Headteacher

5. **What will I be required to do?**
   Complete a short questionnaire.

6. **Where will this take place?**
   Wherever you like! I will send you the copy of the questionnaire for you to complete.

7. **How often will I have to take part, and for how long?**
   No more than half an hour in one sitting.

8. **Are there any possible risks or disadvantage in taking part?**
   Not to my knowledge

9. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**
   The opportunity to reflect upon school leadership and discuss it further (if you wish) with someone outside your organisation.

10. **When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?**
    You have the opportunity to ask any questions prior to completing the questionnaire (i.e. you can contact me, and I am more than happy to answer any questions over email or on the phone). I will share a 'debrief summary' with all participants and any participants who want an opportunity for an individual debrief will be offered one. My contact details are at the end of the sheet.

11. Who will be responsible for all the information when this study is over?
The research data will be owned by the University.

12. Who will have access to it?
Only the researcher will have access to the questionnaire responses which will be stored on an encrypted memory stick and a password protected laptop and on the secure university Q drive. Comments and quotations from the questionnaires may appear in my thesis (and possibly future work) and so will be read by my doctoral supervisors (and other people involved in the marking process) and those who access my work.

13. What will happen to the information when this study is over?
The questionnaire responses will be stored securely (and subsequently destroyed) for the duration of the study and beyond as required by university regulations on the University server.

14. How will you use what you find out?
The data will be used in my doctoral thesis. The anonymised data may additionally be presented in future educational conferences and/or publications.

15. Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?
Pseudonyms will be allocated to the study's participants and schools during data analysis to ensure confidentiality.

16. How long is the whole study likely to last?
The plan is for the study to run from March 21 until October 21 (but the current challenges presented by Covid 19 might necessitate a longer period).

17. How can I find out about the results of the study?
This research will form part of a doctoral thesis that will be available to anyone who wishes to read it. The anonymised data may additionally be presented in future educational conferences and/or publications.

18. What if I do not wish to take part?
Participation is voluntary and there is absolutely no obligation to take part. You do not have to provide any reason for not wanting to be involved! At the start of the questionnaire there is a reminder that by completing and returning the questionnaire you are consenting to take part and noting that information about how I will use the data gathered is shared in this information sheet.

19. What if I change my mind during the study?
If you change your mind about your involvement following completion of the questionnaire, please let me know within a week. My contact details are to be found below.

20. Do you have any questions?
If so, please ask them now or do feel free to contact me and ask.

21. Details of who to contact with any concerns or if adverse effects occur after the study.
Please find the researcher and doctoral supervisor's details below and feel free to contact them with any questions or to discuss any concerns.

Researcher:
Claire Tasker █████████████████████████

Supervisors:
Michael Coldwell █████████████████████
Emma Rempe-Gill █████████████████████████

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:
- you have a query about how your data is used by the University - you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) - you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated ██████████
Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, █████████████████████████████████ 5555	

Appendix 2 – Survey/questionnaire

Leadership Survey – leadership decisions and drivers

Please answer all the questions as fully as possible. Please also note that your completion of this questionnaire also serves as your consent to take part in this research. The participant information sheet details how I will use this data and the efforts I will take to anonymise my findings and store your data security. The sheet also tells you how to withdraw your consent and the timeline for doing so. Thank you!

Section one – about you, your current role and your experience to date

Q1 What is your school's name?

Q2 What is your Job title?

Q3 How many years have you been in your current post?

Q4 How many years have you held a senior school leadership role (i.e. *Assistant Head, Deputy Head, Acting Head or Headteacher*)?

Q5 For how many years have you been a teacher?

Q6 What is your curriculum background (i.e. English, ICT, Geography - the main subject that you taught or teach)?

Q7 Do you have the NPQH? (Yes or No)

Q8 How old are you?

Q9 What is your gender?

The next section of questions will ask you to identify the 3 biggest decisions you took in the year. Each time you identify a decision you will be asked two supplementary questions. The first is about what underpinned that decision and the second is about how happy you now are with that decision.

Q10. Identify one of the most important **decisions** you have undertaken in the last 12 months as a school leader? **Please hi-light or clearly tick one.**

Ways to improve examination results	What to include in the curriculum (*can include changes and tweaks*)
Strategies to balance the school budget	Pastoral matters/ a single pastoral matter or incident (*e.g., deciding sanctions, exclusions*)
Appointments (e.g. of key staff)	Staff capability or attendance and consequences
Ensuring quality CPD *e.g. How to best use INSET and meetings time*	What to include in the School Improvement or Action Plan
Setting agendas (*e.g. for SLT, middle leaders to best focus strategic discussion*)	How to respond to complaints/a significant or specific complaint
How to quality assure all or some aspects of school life	What to include in governor /Trust reports and meetings
Ways to improving/develop aspects of teaching (*including developing remote learning*)	Redesign of pastoral systems (e.*g. improving the behaviour management system or strategies for tackling poor punctuality*)
Matters relating to communication (e.*g. how to communicate with/respond to parents/carers*)	Redesign of other school systems (*e.g. Performance Management*)
Which Trust to join	Redesign of the staffing structure or part of the structure such as the leadership team
Specific referrals to Safeguarding or Social Care	How to implement an aspect of the DfE instructions to schools linked to COVID-19 (e.*g., CAGs or TAGs, wider opening in June 20, fully opening in September 20 or March 21, getting food or equipment to FSM students setting up the LFD testing centre etc*)
Other (*please specify opposite*)	

Q11 What drove that decision (i.e. why did you do what you did)? **Identify the top 4 factors by ticking 4 of the boxes** (*NB goes onto next page*).

Ensuring value for money	
Your knowledge of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally (*ie you were inspired by something you had read or by something you had seen in another school*)	
What you think is right	
Changes to exam specifications or accountability measures (e.g. new GCSEs/A Levels or P8)	
Optimism/positivity	
Improving student outcomes	
Accountability (your duty)	
Closing the gap/overcoming disadvantage	
Safeguarding students	
Fairness/equity	
To ensure professional development (of all or some staff)	
Your own experience	
Improving staff performance	
Kindness	
Advice or directive from the MAT or other school improvement partner (e.g. SIP, MLE or Teaching School)	
To hold others to high account	
Providing a world class education	
Parent/carer voice	
Impact on workload	

Q12 How confident and happy are you with that decision?

Please tick/hi-light a number 1 to 5 where 5 is '*very confident and happy with the decision. It was absolutely the right decision*' and 1 is '*not confident or happy. You doubt the decision taken*'.

1	2	3	4	5

Q13. Identify another of the most important **decisions** you have undertaken in the last 12 months as a school leader? **Please hi-light or clearly tick one.**

Ways to improve examination results	What to include in the curriculum (*can include changes and tweaks*)
Strategies to balance the school budget	Pastoral matters/ a single pastoral matter or incident (*e.g., deciding sanctions, exclusions*)
Appointments (e.g., of key staff)	Staff capability or attendance and consequences
Ensuring quality CPD *e.g. How to best use INSET and meetings time*	What to include in the School Improvement or Action Plan
Setting agendas (*e.g., for SLT, middle leaders to best focus strategic discussion*)	How to respond to complaints/a significant or specific complaint
How to quality assure all or some aspects of school life	What to include in governor /Trust reports and meetings
Ways to improving/develop aspects of teaching (*including developing remote learning*)	Redesign of pastoral systems (*e.g. improving the behaviour management system or strategies for tackling poor punctuality*)
Matters relating to communication (e.*g., how to communicate with/respond to parents/carers*)	Redesign of other school systems (*e.g. Performance Management*)
Which Trust to join	Redesign of the staffing structure or part of the structure such as the leadership team
Specific referrals to Safeguarding or Social Care	How to implement an aspect of the DfE instructions to schools linked to COVID-19

	(e.*g., CAGs or TAGs, wider opening in June 20, fully opening in September 20 or March 21, getting food or equipment to FSM students setting up the LFD testing centre etc)*
Other (please specify opposite)	

Q14 What drove that decision (i.e. why did you do what you did)? **Identify the top 4 factors by ticking 4 of the boxes.**

Ensuring value for money	
Your knowledge of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally (*ie you were inspired by something you had read or by something you had seen in another school*)	
What you think is right	
Changes to exam specifications or accountability measures (e.g. new GCSEs/A Levels or P8)	
Optimism/positivity	
Improving student outcomes	
Accountability (your duty)	
Closing the gap/overcoming disadvantage	
Safeguarding students	
Fairness/equity	
To ensure professional development (of all or some staff)	
Your own experience	
Improving staff performance	
Kindness	
Advice or directive from the MAT or other school improvement partner (e.g. SIP, MLE or Teaching School)	
To hold others to high account	
Providing a world class education	
Parent/carer voice	
Impact on workload	

Q15 How confident and happy are you with that decision?

Please tick/hi-light a number 1 to 5 where 5 is '*very confident and happy with the decision. It was absolutely the right decision*' and 1 is '*not confident or happy. You doubt the decision taken*'.

1	2	3	4	5

Q16. Identify another of the most important **decisions** you have undertaken in the last 12 months as a school leader? **Please hi-light or clearly tick one.**

Ways to improve examination results	What to include in the curriculum (*can include changes and tweaks*)
Strategies to balance the school budget	Pastoral matters/ a single pastoral matter or incident (*e.g., deciding sanctions, exclusions*)
Appointments (e.g., of key staff)	Staff capability or attendance and consequences
Ensuring quality CPD *e.g. How to best use INSET and meetings time*	What to include in the School Improvement or Action Plan
Setting agendas (*e.g., for SLT, middle leaders to best focus strategic discussion*)	How to respond to complaints/a significant or specific complaint

How to quality assure all or some aspects of school life	What to include in governor /Trust reports and meetings
Ways to improving/develop aspects of teaching *(including developing remote learning)*	Redesign of pastoral systems (e.*g.*, *improving the behaviour management system or strategies for tackling poor punctuality)*
Matters relating to communication (e.*g. how to communicate with/respond to parents/carers)*	Redesign of other school systems (*e.g., Performance Management)*
Which Trust to join	Redesign of the staffing structure or part of the structure such as the leadership team
Specific referrals to Safeguarding or Social Care	How to implement an aspect of the DfE instructions to schools linked to COVID-19 (e.*g., CAGs or TAGs, wider opening in June 20, fully opening in September 20 or March 21, getting food or equipment to FSM students setting up the LFD testing centre etc)*
Other (please specify opposite)	

Q17 What drove that decision (ie why did you do what you did)? **Identify the top 4 factors by ticking 4 of the boxes.**

Ensuring value for money	
Your knowledge of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally (*ie you were inspired by something you had read or by something you had seen in another school*)	
What you think is right	
Changes to exam specifications or accountability measures (e.g. new GCSEs/A Levels or P8)	
Optimism/positivity	
Improving student outcomes	
Accountability (your duty)	
Closing the gap/overcoming disadvantage	
Safeguarding students	
Fairness/equity	
To ensure professional development (of all or some staff)	
Your own experience	
Improving staff performance	
Kindness	
Advice or directive from the MAT or other school improvement partner (e.g. SIP, MLE or Teaching School)	
To hold others to high account	
Providing a world class education	
Parent/carer voice	
Impact on workload	

Q18 How confident and happy are you with that decision?

Please tick/hi-light a number 1 to 5 where 5 is '*very confident and happy with the decision. It was absolutely the right decision*' and 1 is '*not confident or happy. You doubt the decision taken'*.

1	2	3	4	5

Section 3 – You as a leader

Q19 The following section refers to your leadership style, as you perceive it. Please judge how frequently each statement fits your leadership style using the following scale:

As a leader I …	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Always
Take difficult or potentially controversial decisions if I believe they are the right thing to do					
Have a positive demeanour/look for the positives					
Remind staff who do not do as they should about our rules and standards					
Consider how the actions I take will improve student outcomes and exam results					
Would be happy for any member of the community (staff, students, parents) to know about decisions I have made and why I made them					
Consider how I can share my work and ideas with other schools					
Take time when I can to reflect on things I have said and done and consider if I could have done things better or differently					
Consider the financial implications of my decisions before finalising them					
Seek opportunities to praise colleagues and tell them when the work is good or good enough					

Consider how any changes in school will affect the poorest or most vulnerable students before making them					
Consider how parents/carers/governors & Trust members will react to decisions before finalising them					
Consider the implications of actions I take and potential risk of litigation					

Q20 List no more than 5 words that explain how you behave as a school leader

Section 4 – Your school's values and priorities

Q21 What are the core values of your school?

Q22 What are your key priorities as a school? **Please list the top 3.**

Please add **your email address** below if you are willing to consider being contacted for a case study

<div align="center">Thank you!</div>

Please return this survey to Claire Tasker (███████████████████████████)

or C Tasker, ████████████████████████████████

Appendix 3 - Participant Consent form and information sheet (interviews)

Sheffield Hallam University

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

FOCUS OF RESEARCH STUDY: Approaches to leadership in Secondary Schools

Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies

		YES	NO
1.	I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.	☐	☐
2.	My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.	☐	☐
3.	I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher.	☐	☐
4.	I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.	☐	☐
5.	I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.	☐	☐
6.	I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for the purpose of assessment and future educational conference presentations/publications.	☐	☐

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name (Printed): _____

Contact details: _____

Researcher's Name (Printed): Claire Tasker

Researcher's Signature: _____

Contact details
Researcher:
Claire Tasker c̲t̲
Supervisors:
Michael Coldwe
Emma Rempe-

Sheffield Hallam University, A
6158.
Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – INTERVIEWS

1. **Title of Project**
   This information is for my doctoral research into leadership in Secondary schools

2. **Legal basis for research for studies.**
   The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest.** A full statement of your rights can be found at https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research. However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number ER24667024. Further information at https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

3. **Introduction**
   I am hoping that you will help me to research approaches to leadership in Secondary schools. There is a recruitment crisis facing our schools and fewer and fewer teachers want to be Headteachers. I want to find out if there is space for different approaches to leadership in our Secondary schools and what impact they can have on both the school and the appeal of the role.

4. **Why have you asked me to take part?**
   You have been chosen as a participant because you are a Secondary Headteacher OR because you are a middle leader, teacher or member of support staff who has worked with your current Headteacher for a number of years (ideally 5 years or more).

5. **What will I be required to do?**
   Following completion of the consent form, you will be asked to answer a series of questions. The questions will be about the leadership and leadership behaviours of you/the school's Headteacher. This will be a face-to-face unstructured interview with the researcher. This will last up to an hour. The audio dialogue will be recorded on a voice recorder up to your departure so that it can be transcribed for later (or, if we talk via zoom or similar, I will record our conversation).

6. **Where will this take place?**
   Either face to face (Covid-19 permitting) or via zoom (or similar).

7. **How often will I have to take part, and for how long?**
   Approximately an hour in one sitting.

8. **Are there any possible risks or disadvantage in taking part?**
   Not to my knowledge

9. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**
   The opportunity to discuss and reflect upon school leadership with someone outside your organisation.

10. **When will I have the opportunity to discuss my participation?**

You have the opportunity to ask any questions prior to the interviews commencing and we will discuss your participation again immediately after the interview, during the debrief. My contact details are at the end of the sheet and we can discuss this further when we make arrangements for the interview.

11. **Who will be responsible for all of the information when this study is over?**
The research data will be owned by the University.

12. **Who will have access to it?**
Only the researcher (me) will have access to the interview responses (transcript and recording) which will be stored on an encrypted memory stick and a password protected laptop and on the secure university Q drive. Comments and quotations from the interviews may appear in my thesis (and possibly future work) and so will be read by my doctoral supervisors (and other people involved in the marking process) and those who access my work.

13. **What will happen to the information when this study is over?**
The interview responses will be stored securely (and subsequently destroyed) for the duration of the study and beyond as required by university regulations on the University server.

14. **How will you use what you find out?**
The data will be used in my doctoral thesis. The anonymised data may additionally be presented in future educational conferences and/or publications.

15. **Will anyone be able to connect me with what is recorded and reported?**
Pseudonyms will be allocated to the study's participants and schools during data analysis to ensure confidentiality.

16. **How long is the whole study likely to last?**
The plan is for the study to run from autumn 21 until summer 22 (but the current challenges presented by Covid 19 might necessitate a longer period).

17. **How can I find out about the results of the study?**
This research will form part of a doctoral thesis that will be available to anyone who wishes to read it. The anonymised data may additionally be presented in future educational conferences and/or publications.

18. **What if I do not wish to take part?**
Participation is voluntary and there is absolutely no obligation to take part. You do not have to provide any reason for not wanting to be involved and I will not contact you again.

19. **What if I change my mind during the study?**
If you change your mind about your involvement following completion of the interview please let me know within a week. My contact details are to be found below.

20. **Do you have any questions?**
If so, please ask them now or do feel free to contact me and ask.

21. **Details of who to contact with any concerns or if adverse effects occur after the study.**
Please find the researcher and doctoral supervisor's details below and feel free to contact them with any questions or to discuss any concerns. There is also detail of other key contact at SHU.

Researcher:
Claire Tasker ████████████████████████████

Supervisors:
Michael Coldwell M.█████████████████
Emma Rempe-Gillen ████████████████

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:**
• you have a query about how your data is used by the University • you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) • you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	• you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated ████████████
Postal address: ██████████████████████████████████	

Appendix 4 - Case study interview questions (both sets)

Headteacher questions

One key aspect of the questionnaire was identifying some of the biggest decisions you have taken in the past 12 months and then the drivers behind that decision (i.e., why did you do what you did). Can you talk me through a decision and why you took those decisions in a some more detail? For example, you mention xxxx, can you tell me xxxx?

So how would you describe yourself as a leader? And how does that translate into leadership behaviours (i.e., the things your school community see you do?)?

Who or what inspires you as a leader? Which leadership approaches that you have read about or experienced has influenced the leader that you are?

When you arrived, what was your vision for this school?

What things have you developed and put in place to take you towards that vision?

Tell me about the pace of change and the priorities for change?

May I have a copy of the current school action plan? Anything you would want to tell me about the action plan?

Other participant questions

Can you identify a major decision that was taken by the HT over the past 12 months and share with me your understanding of why that decision was taken?

How would you describe the HT as a leader? What does that look like? Describe their leadership behaviours?

Does the HT talk (or write) about their leadership approach OR their leadership inspiration? If they do, what sorts of things do you remember them saying?

Since your HT came to the school, what have they changed and developed? How has that affected you in your role?

What came across as/were their priorities for change and what was the order and pace of change? Describe how the change happened?

To what extent has your HT's leadership changed and shaped the school?

From your own experience, how important is the HT in the success of a school?

Can I ask why you kindly volunteered your time to answer my questions?

Appendix 5 – Survey rationale document

(NB both the tense and some of the content reflect my thinking and work at the time of design)

> **Leadership Survey**
>
> **Rationale document**

Section one – about you, your current role and your experience to date

The aim of this section is to gather demographic information about the participants. A key hypothesis that I am testing with the questionnaire is the notion that there is more likely to be a place for values-led leadership in a good or outstanding school. By asking for the name of the school I will be able to use the Ofsted data base (and the school website) to confirm the current rating (and previous ratings.

The other questions gather data that may (or may not) be useful. For example, there may be interesting correlations between the length of service as a headteacher and values-led leadership.

Equally, I have not yet explored any gender perspectives on values-led leadership but it may well be a narrative that develops in the data and I would foolish not to even attempt to gather this information.

There may also be links between the age of the headteachers and their approach to leadership or the training that they undertook to prepare for the role.

Finally, whilst the questionnaire is not the primary tool to explore the impact of values-led leadership (that will be the case study of a school identified from the analysis of the questionnaires and websites), the research by Hill et al. (2016) on types of school leaders used data on subject backgrounds and length of time in school prior to Headship (i.e., career changers who quickly moved into leadership were associated with a certain approach). So, I have also included questions about subject background and length of time in teaching.

Section two – reflecting on your work as a leader this school year

This section starts to try to unpick what drives the behaviour of school leaders. The research indicates we understand what drives a school leader by observing their behaviour. This behaviour can be somewhat understood by asking the participants to identify some key decisions they have taken this year and what drove their decision making. I am unsure as to whether the kinds of decision they have taken will be very useful data but it might be worthy of examination to see what they prioritise and may triangulate answers from section four.

I think of greater interest is the four drivers/factors they identify each time. Will they be the same? Are their decisions driven each time by a core set of values? Or will different decisions be driven by different things/factors?

The second supplementary question asks for the leaders to identify their level of happiness and confidence with each decision. The literature identifies an aspect of values-led leadership where leaders try to be guided by their values but often have to abandon them under pressure. I am aiming to explore this a little with the questionnaire

– my hypothesis being that the leaders might identify one or more decision that they feel uncomfortable about and may have chosen a higher frequency of 'bastard leadership' (Wright,2001) words and phrases in explaining what drove this decision.

I have created the list of drivers/factors very carefully. I have analysed a number of DfE policy documents (see chapter 2) to identify high-frequency words and phrases. For example,

- Value for money and/or financial constraints
- Student outcomes
- Closing the gap/overcoming disadvantage
- Providing a world class education
- Your knowledge of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally (i.e., you were inspired by something you had read or by something you had seen in another school)
- Holding others to high account
- Professional development (of all or some staff)
- Safeguarding students
- Improving staff performance

This is to test the negative perspectives in the literature. For example, the view that Headteachers do not now actually have their own values driven vision; rather they have (unknowingly) absorbed and re-packaged government policy and now articulate it as their own (Ball, 2012). Possibly the most negative perspective is the claim the English school system has led to only 'bastard leadership' (Wright, 2001). Wright argues that new managerialism has led to the 'subtle capturing of the leadership discourse' by governments, civil servants, leadership developers etc, i.e., 'bastard leadership'.

If the participants repeatedly select the phrases drawn from policy documentation one could argue that we have some evidence of 'bastard leadership'.

But these are not the only words in the list. The others are based partly upon the Nolan Principles for Public Life (1995),

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The Ethical Leadership Commission has undertaken some work linked to these values and principles in schools and use some slightly different language in their 'Framework for Ethical Leadership' (2019). They add a list of characteristics or virtues,

Framework for ethical leadership in education

Summer 2019

The Ethical Leadership Commission was established because of concerns expressed by ASCL members and others about the lack of guiding principles for ethical leadership in education. The resulting *Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education* provides the profession with the following principles to support leaders in their decision-making and in calling out unethical behaviour:

1. Selflessness: School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.

2. Integrity: School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.

3. Objectivity: School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.

4. **Accountability:** School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. **Openness:** School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. **Honesty:** School and college leaders should be truthful.

7. **Leadership:** School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

A. **Trust:** *Leaders are trustworthy* and reliable We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

B. **Wisdom:** *Leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*. We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

C. **Kindness:** *Leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper.* We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.

D. **Justice:** *Leaders are fair and work for the good of all children* We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

E. **Service:** *Leaders are conscientious and dutiful We* demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.

F. **Courage:** *Leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people.* We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.

G. **Optimism:** *Leaders are positive and encouraging.* Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.

Using both of these documents as my source of values-led leadership drivers I decided upon the following words and phrases,

- What you think is right
- Optimism/positivity
- Accountability (yours)
- Fairness and equity
- Your own experience
- Kindness

I was conscious of not wanting the two different kinds of words and phrases -i.e., those linked to 'bastard leadership' (Wright,2001) and those linked to values-led leadership- to be too jarring or so dissimilar as to influence the participants.

In terms of the design of the first supplementary question I had read about the importance of 'forced choice'(Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2009) and contemplated the problems of choosing the 'top 4' (p. 29 Bryman) but was more concerned that a 'yes' or 'no' option would lead to useless data as the participants might indicate all or most of the factors drive their decision. Which leader would not want to indicate that fairness or kindness drove their work?! But when forced to identify the 4 most important factors we might get the heart of what does drive their decisions and leadership behaviours and therefore if they are (or are able to be) values-led leaders. By asking the participants to identify 3 decisions and what drive each I should also start to see if common themes emerge.

The second supplementary question uses a Likert scale.

Section 3 – you as a leader

This section of questions was inspired by the approach taken in the authentic leadership questionnaire (Avolio, Gardner, and Walumbwa, 2007). They use a series of statements starting 'as a leader I' and the respondent identifies the extent to which that is true.

Authors: Bruce J. Avolio, William L. Gardner, & Fred O. Walumbwa

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) is designed to measure the components that comprise Authentic Leadership.
The ALQ scales address the following questions:
- **Self-Awareness:** To what degree is the leader aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her and how the leader impacts others?

- **Transparency:** To what degree does the leader reinforce a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions?
- **Ethical/Moral:** To what degree does the leader set a high standard for moral and ethical conduct?
- **Balanced Processing:** To what degree does the leader solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions?

In creating the statements, I again used the Ethical Framework list of values and virtues and the words/phrases harvested from policy documentation. This time I changed the phrasing and they appear in a different order (see questionnaire and code book),

- What you think is right
- Optimism/positivity
- Accountability (yours)
- Your own experience
- Kindness
- Fairness and equity

I am hoping to gather some data about each of the participant's philosophy of leadership and how they see themselves as leaders. This will be interesting data to compare with section two. Will the words they chose to explain what drove their decisions be consistent with how they view themselves as a leader? This information may also be interesting to compare with question 7 in section one (and indeed answers in section two). The NPQH is driven by the DfE's notion of the leaders that schools currently need and one might assume this is more aligned with 'bastard leadership' (Wright, 2001).

Section 4 – Your school's values and priorities

The second part of the quantitative research was going to be an examination of the school's website and documentation linked to ethos and values. I planned to compare the information shared in this section with the documentation on the website. However, my pilot showed this was an unhelpful source of data. Instead, these words may help me to frame my questions for the case study. Are they key decisions the leader has identified linked to school priorities? Is there a consistent sense of the school's values? And they aligned with the leader's own values as articulated in section 3 and identified through behaviours in section 2? This very much links to the key line in the preamble to the revised 'National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers' (2015) p. 4 which was very much the starting point for my research. It states,

'The values and ambitions of headteachers determine the achievements of schools.'

Appendix 6 – Ethics approval

Dear Claire
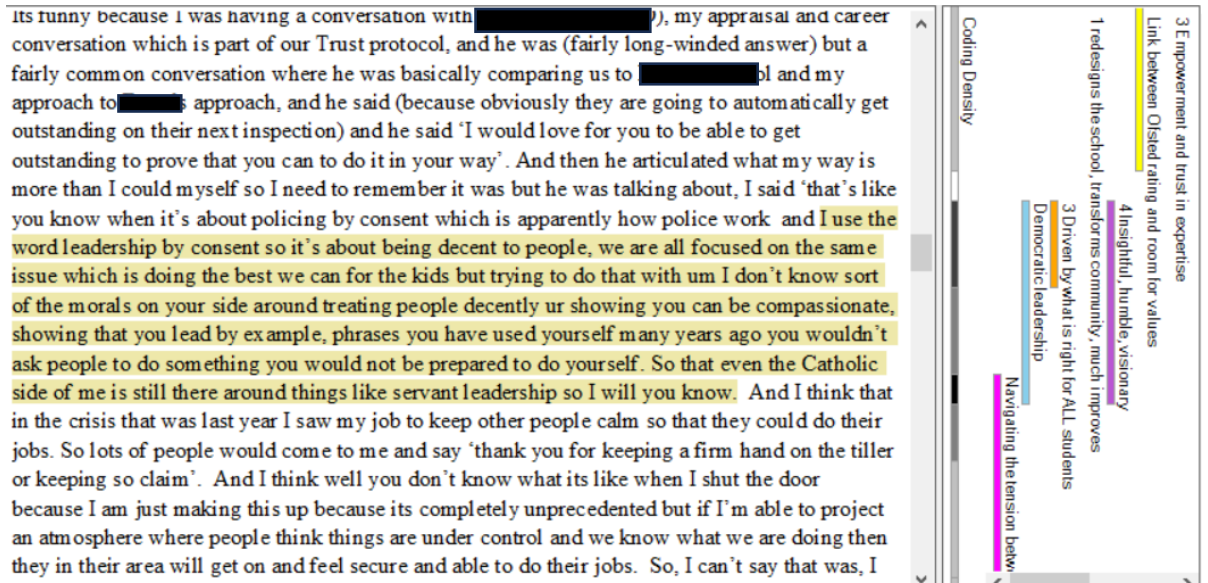
Title of Ethics Review: Do the values of Secondary headteachers determine the achievement of their schools?
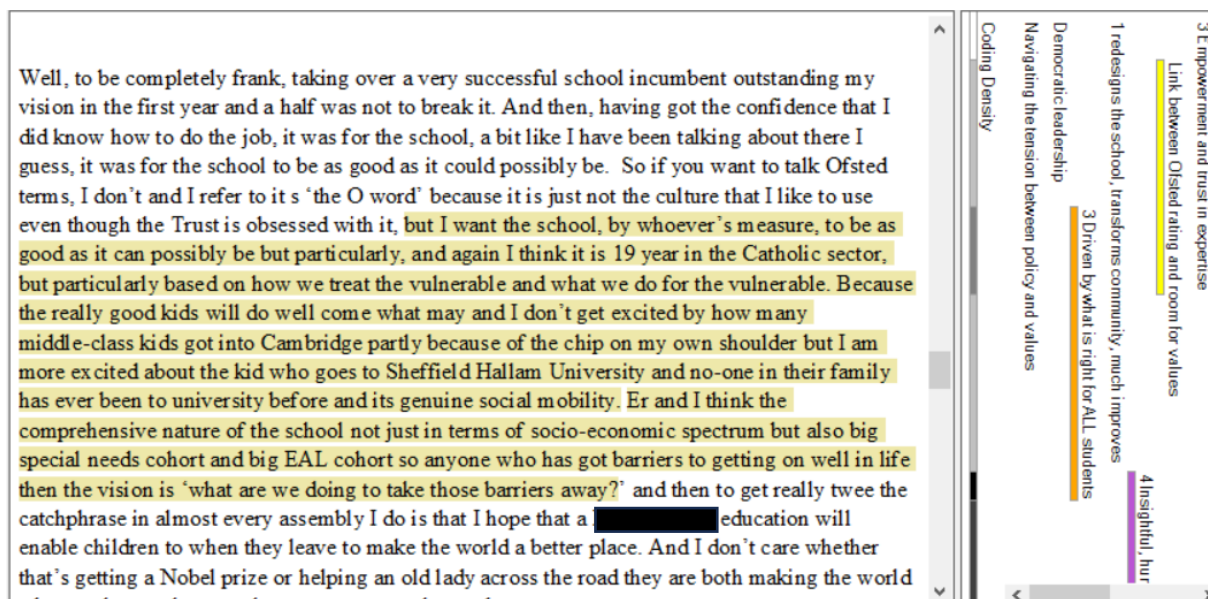Ethic Review ID: ER24667024

The University has reviewed your ethics application named above and can confirm that the project has been approved.

Appendix 7 - An example of interview data analysis (linked to detailed description of the interview analysis in chapter 3)

 The first screenshot of NVivo shows the text of the interview with the Headteacher of School 8 carefully analysed and coded. Down the side you can see the codes (or nodes). When one clicks on a code/node it then hi-lights that section of text. In this example I have clicked on the code/node' insightful, humble and visionary'.

Its funny because I was having a conversation with   ), my appraisal and career conversation which is part of our Trust protocol, and he was (fairly long-winded answer) but a fairly common conversation where he was basically comparing us to   ol and my approach to   s approach, and he said (because obviously they are going to automatically get outstanding on their next inspection) and he said 'I would love for you to be able to get outstanding to prove that you can to do it in your way'. And then he articulated what my way is more than I could myself so I need to remember it was but he was talking about, I said 'that's like you know when it's about policing by consent which is apparently how police work and I use the word leadership by consent so it's about being decent to people, we are all focused on the same issue which is doing the best we can for the kids but trying to do that with um I don't know sort of the morals on your side around treating people decently ur showing you can be compassionate, showing that you lead by example, phrases you have used yourself many years ago you wouldn't ask people to do something you would not be prepared to do yourself. So that even the Catholic side of me is still there around things like servant leadership so I will you know. And I think that in the crisis that was last year I saw my job to keep other people calm so that they could do their jobs. So lots of people would come to me and say 'thank you for keeping a firm hand on the tiller or keeping so claim'. And I think well you don't know what its like when I shut the door because I am just making this up because its completely unprecedented but if I'm able to project an atmosphere where people think things are under control and we know what we are doing then they in their area will get on and feel secure and able to do their jobs. So, I can't say that was, I

3 Empowerment and trust in expertise
Link between Olsted rating and room for values
1 redesigns the school, transforms community, much improves
4 Insightful, humble, visionary
3 Driven by what is right for ALL students
Democratic leadership
Navigating the tension betw
Coding Density

This next shot shows another section of the same interview text you can see the same coding process. In this example I have clicked on the code/node 'Driven by what is right for all students'.

Well, to be completely frank, taking over a very successful school incumbent outstanding my vision in the first year and a half was not to break it. And then, having got the confidence that I did know how to do the job, it was for the school, a bit like I have been talking about there I guess, it was for the school to be as good as it could possibly be. So if you want to talk Ofsted terms, I don't and I refer to it s 'the O word' because it is just not the culture that I like to use even though the Trust is obsessed with it, but I want the school, by whoever's measure, to be as good as it can possibly be but particularly, and again I think it is 19 year in the Catholic sector, but particularly based on how we treat the vulnerable and what we do for the vulnerable. Because the really good kids will do well come what may and I don't get excited by how many middle-class kids got into Cambridge partly because of the chip on my own shoulder but I am more excited about the kid who goes to Sheffield Hallam University and no-one in their family has ever been to university before and its genuine social mobility. Er and I think the comprehensive nature of the school not just in terms of socio-economic spectrum but also big special needs cohort and big EAL cohort so anyone who has got barriers to getting on well in life then the vision is 'what are we doing to take those barriers away?' and then to get really twee the catchphrase in almost every assembly I do is that I hope that a   education will enable children to when they leave to make the world a better place. And I don't care whether that's getting a Nobel prize or helping an old lady across the road they are both making the world

3 Empowerment and trust in expertise
Link between Olsted rating and room for values
1 redesigns the school, transforms community, much improves
3 Driven by what is right for ALL students
4 Insightful, hur
Democratic leadership
Navigating the tension between policy and values
Coding Density

What is not visible in either of these screen shots was the how many times I interacted with this text when new themes and therefore codes and nodes had emerged from reading and rereading the transcripts (and, at times, the literature).

This final screenshot shows a section of one theme (the example is 'Headteachers values permeate the school'). Within this data are chunks of texts from the interview with the Headteacher of school 8 and all other interviews.