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INSPECTION, SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

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CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

. The defining characteristic of this study's contribution to educational research is the dual perspective - both technical/rational and cultural/political – that it brings to bear on Ofsted's school inspection process. This longitudinal investigation has two aims: test the claim that Ofsted inspection leads to "school improvement" and to illuminate the process of inspection-induced change. The fieldwork took place in six large secondary schools inspected during the year 1996-1997 and drew on the reactions of teachers at all levels within the schools. The thesis begins by examining Ofsted's technical/rational perspective of "school improvement", using the implementation of schools' "key issues for action" as an indicator of change and "school improvement". Three questions are put about the implementation of inspection recommendations:

"Which factors in the inspection process, school and immediate environment influence a school's response to the "key issues for action"?

Do "key issues for action" become the school's agenda for change and improvement?

Does implementation lead to change and improvement in all areas of the school's activity?

The study identifies how factors in the inspection process, the school and the immediate environment interact to influence the implementation of key isssues. The six case studies of implementation of inspection recommendations, concerned both with teaching and learning, provide rich descriptions of the schools' response to Ofsted's agenda for teaching and learning. As the investigation progressed teachers' meanings towards Ofsted inspection and "school improvement" were brought within its scope. The research identifies political issues raised by the participants and charts the emergence of political themes relating to the implementation of "key issues for action". The discussion places the two different perspectives within a framework of social theory and develops the dual research method as well as the requisite processes and procedures. The investigation offers tentative conclusions about Ofsted inspection and concludes by considering the implications for Ofsted's current inspection practice.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The chapter describes the recent history of school inspection, the public policy context in which school inspection operated, the main features of Ofsted inspection and Ofsted's claim that inspection leads to "school improvement". It identifies the main focus for the research. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the researcher's initial stance in this investigation.

1.1 Inspection prior to the Education (Schools) Act, 1992. Although the Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted, is now virtually synonymous with inspection prior to the 1992 Education (Schools) Act, school inspection had been the exclusive domain of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, known as HMI, and the inspectorates of local education authorities. The two systems were essentially independent of each other and the latter embodied considerable variations since each inspectorate and the local authority decided on its own approach to local inspection. The main role of HMI was to provide central government with a description of the "health" of the system. HMI did not have a brief to create policy although it was expected to comment on both policy proposals and the implications of policy change. Fitz and Lee (1996) claim that

"[HMI] *neither saw itself, nor was it seen as a powerful actor in the policy making fora"* (Fitz and Lee, 1996:11)

Members of HMI were attached to specific geographical areas in which it was their responsibility to familiarise themselves with local schools and prepare reports. These reports were not available to the general public but provided evidence about the state of education in a particular school for the

headteacher, the local education authority and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, HMCI. The number of full school inspections decreased in the immediate post war period and by the late 1950s they had virtually ceased (Department for Education and Science/Welsh Office, 1982). There was a broad educational consensus so that HMI became increasingly involved in advisory work and in 1968 a parliamentary select committee (Department for Education and Science, DES, 1968) recommended that full-time inspections should be discontinued, except in exceptional circumstances, with monitoring being left to local education authorities' inspectorates. Fitz and Lee (1996:11) claim that the 50s and 60s witnessed the rise of individual charismatic HMIs who sought to establish a mode of good practice in primary schools, which was recommended to selected teachers. Essentially these inspectors sought to improve the work of individual teachers and schools and were not seeking to "create national policy". However, the establishment of the Schools' Council in 1962 allowed HMI to influence curriculum reform and to promulgate visions for teaching in primary and secondary schools. Individual HMIs, many of whom were influential in their own right, led the curriculum groups, which were established. For example Edith Briggs was responsible for formulating the course content for primary mathematics.

By the late 1960s the post war consensus began to break down and the series of pamphlets known as the "Black Papers" (Cox and Dyson, 1969a; 1969b; 1970) ushered in an era of increasing public disquiet about the state of public education, especially the rapidly growing education budget and the education system's lack of public accountability. Almost a decade later Prime Minister James Callaghan echoed public misgivings about the education

system in his widely reported speech at Ruskin College in 1976. Education accountability became a key issue in debates about the state of the education system. In this new climate HMI established the role of evaluators of the "health" of the school system. A programme of informal visits, short- and full school inspections was established. Data from school visits were utilised to inform national surveys of schooling. Reports of these surveys were widely disseminated and shaped the direction of policy concerned with school and local education authority practice. The importance of HMI inspection activities was endorsed in the Rayner Report (Department for Education and Science, DES, 1982). This report confirmed HMI and local inspectorates' role in assessing "standards", making informal judgements about policy formulation, reforming the curriculum and advising individual schools.

The Conservative Government re-emphasised the role of local inspection in the elimination of "poor standards" and the "improvement of schools" in the White Paper *"Better Schools"* (DES, 1985). However, in 1989 the Audit Commission, reporting on local school inspection services, found an imbalance between the inspection and advisory roles with a disproportionate amount of time being spent on the latter at the expense of inspection. This cast doubt on whether local and national inspection services operated to raise standards and improve school performance. The Parents' Charter (DES, 1992), which called for regular inspections of schools based on objective inspection and analysis of performance measures, heralded the Government's commitment to improve the accountability of education system and provided the context for reform of the system of school inspection

embodied in the Education (Schools) Act, 1992, which set up the Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted.

1.2 Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted. The Education (Schools) Act, 1992, set up the Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted, to oversee a programme of mass inspection of schools. It brought in a four-year cycle of inspection, broadened the recruitment base to include lay inspectors and awarded the right to manage inspection to independent registered inspectors or RGIs. Their independence was underlined in a new requirement that no members of the team should have "*an association with the school which prejudices inspection judgements.*" Education (Schools) Act, 1992. The notion of independence was crucial to Ofsted's approach to inspection. Contracts for inspection were open to "contractors" who appointed RGIs to lead inspections and who brought together teams of inspectors under the terms of competitive tendering. There was also a much speedier process of reporting back – a report to the school governors together with a summary for parents was to be ready within 25 working days following inspection. Governing bodies were to prepare a reply within 40 working days from inspection setting out the school's plans for implementing the "key issues for action". Copies of the school's plan were to be sent to the parents within a further five days (Department for Education, DFE, 1993). The school was required to publish a summary of the inspection findings, which would be made available to stakeholders. The transparency of the process was underlined by the publication of guidance for carrying out inspection in the *Framework for the Inspection of Schools, which* was in turn, a key section of the more detailed *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools*, first published in 1992 and updated annually. The publication of the

Handbook was also an important step in dispersing knowledge of Ofsted's own special view of schooling – this is considered in more detail in Chapter 2.

Special attention was given to the issue of "failing schools" which could be taken over by an "education association" if the Secretary of State deemed either the school's action plan or the local education authority's proposals inadequate, or if was impracticable to implement the plan effectively or if monitoring revealed the plan to be inadequate (DFE, 1993: Appendix A). Ofsted's inspection methodology and the issues raised by Ofsted's approach to inspection are considered in more detail in Chapter 2 "Inspection Method and Methodology".

1.3 Change of inspection regime. The previous section indicates that the Education (Schools) Act, 1992, significantly transformed the mode of school inspection. It replaced Her Majesty's Inspectorate, a small body of professional inspectors, with Ofsted. The responsibility for school inspections was assumed by independent inspection teams contracted from the centre, guided by a framework document containing explicit inspection criteria and overseen by a small number of HMIs. Thus the 1992 Act led to changes in inspection procedures and personnel. Ofsted's programme of mass inspection increased the number of lesson observations, which stimulated the agency's interest in questions of pedagogy. Jim Rose, Director of Inspection at Ofsted, addressed the issue of "unsatisfactory" teaching – first reported by HMI (DES, 1990) – in calling for a national policy directing pedagogy. What stood in the way of pupils making better progress and teaching higher standards became the main focus in school inspection.

1.4 Main purpose of inspection The main purpose of Ofsted inspection was to measure, against set criteria, exact levels of performance and the more simple the inspection framework, and the more quantifiable, the better since this facilitated the assessment. At the heart of the process – its methodological core – was the view that judgements were made on the basis of a systematic review of the evidence compared with specific criteria. In the case of Ofsted this methodology was incorporated in the *Handbook* (1992a-2002a) in the most explicit and developed form to date. The *Handbook* was both comprehensive about how inspection was to be carried out and what was to be inspected. However, all forms of inspection including Ofsted were vulnerable to doubts about the reliability, validity, consistency and objectivity of the inspection method and procedures, collection of evidence of competence of inspectors and the delivery of individual inspections. As a consequence the credibility of inspection findings rested on the efficacy of inspection procedures such as sampling, the application of inspection criteria and the corroboration of judgements. The discussion in Chapter 2 describes how Ofsted's inspection procedures have been designed to ensure reliability, consistency and validity.

1.5 Ofsted's claims for inspection. What were Ofsted's particular claims for inspection? The first set of claims related to accountability and provided a picture of what was occurring in the school system for decision-makers. This applied in the case of individual schools and to the system as a whole (Frost, 1995:2). Anthea Millett, Ofsted's first Director of Inspections, took a similar view before the commencement of the first series of inspections:

"Inspection can help...by creating the best-ever knowledge base about the education service which will offer society a full account of how schools and

pupils are doing throughout the country; and by providing assurance to stakeholders and politicians that public money is being spent and managed efficiently by schools. My hope is that inspection will become to be seen as a periodic staging-post in a school's development and than it can be seen as a genuine partnership in which the inspector's visit is linked to the school's and community's own concerns and aspirations." (Millett, 1993:12)

The second set of claims concerned the effect of inspection on "school improvement". The Education (Schools) Act, 1992, embodied the assumption that inspection leads to "school improvement" and this is underlined in Ofsted's first "Corporate Plan", which is subtitled *"Improvement through Inspection"* (Ofsted, 1993d). Ofsted's claim that inspection leads to "school improvement" provides the focus for this investigation.

Such a claim raised three questions. Who sets the agenda for "school improvement"? How does the Ofsted inspection process promote "school improvement"? What happens to Ofsted's inspection recommendations?

1.6 Researcher's stance. The initial decision to undertake a single perspective enquiry based on Ofsted's view of inspection owed much to this researcher's professional and academic training. His background in the physical sciences, professional experience and experience of Ofsted inspection (see below) led him to adopt a positivist stance in the initial stages of the investigation. He took the view that Ofsted's claim for inspection could be tested by examining the relationship between inspection and "school improvement" and reaching a conclusion by analysing data relating to change and "improvement". The research method drew on teachers' daily experiences of schools' responses to Ofsted's framework for "school improvement" and this allowed the enquiry to reach tentative conclusions about Ofsted inspection and "school improvement". However, as the

investigation progressed it became clear that participants perceived and construed Ofsted inspection in ways that were dissimilar to Ofsted's understandings. This led this researcher to adopt an interpretive paradigm where the research sees language as a symbolic system, in which individuals may have some differences in their meanings. Thus the enquiry adopted an ethnographic approach where relationships between the researcher and participants were more collaborative, issues were jointly analysed and thereby cultural/political themes relating to Ofsted inspection emerged. This had implications for research procedures and processes (see Chapter 5). For example the researcher recognised that by using an interpretative paradigm meant that he himself constituted a potential variable within the enquiry and thus his own ideology would be a factor. In this way the investigation developed into a dual perspective enquiry drawing on different – positivist and interpretative - research paradigms.

The researcher has reflected on the issue of taking a dual perspective. He is not claiming that such a perspective reflects the reality of of Ofsted inspection but represents the complexity of teachers' understandings. Clearly it widens the number of concepts relating to inspection, change and "school improvement". The changing perspective reflected the development of the researcher's comprehension of the potential of education research. This writer returns to the issue of a dual - technical/rational and cultural/political – method in the subsequent sections.

1.7 Longitudinal investigation. This was a longitudinal investigation – the fieldwork took place in the years 1996-1998. Furthermore, the large volume of data generated by the six case studies (see Chapter 5) meant that this part-

time researcher spent two years transcribing, analysing and presenting data and findings before preparing the report. Ofsted made changes in inspection procedures (see *Update* 1996-2002). However, the main characteristics of Ofsted's inspection method remained unchanged (Ofsted, 1993a; 1993b-2002a; 2002b) and thus research findings are relevant and can be applied to current inspection practice (Ofsted, 200lc; 2002a; 2002b) – see Chapter 9.

1.8 Researcher's involvement in inspection. During eighteen years as a headteacher of a large comprehensive school for 11-18 year olds this researcher was involved in a series of central government reforms, such as local management of schools, pupil number driven school budgets, implementation of the National Curriculum, publication of school examination league tables and various kinds of HMI inspection and Ofsted's first series of full secondary school inspections. He led the school's preparations for Ofsted inspection; managed the inspection itself and publication of the school's inspection report, prepared and implemented the school's post-inspection plan. He saw Ofsted inspection from a different perspective when as chair of the governors of a specialist primary school that had received an "unsatisfactory" Ofsted inspection report he had oversight of implementation of the school's plan for "school improvement". This involvement in Ofsted inspection naturally aroused his curiosity about the inspection process. How did inspection work?

1.9 Conclusion and overview of chapters 2, 3 & 4. This chapter highlights the role of the Office for Standards in Education, Ofsted, and the programme of mass inspection of schools in the central government's plan for school reform.

The discussion in Chapter 2 describes Ofsted's approach to inspection: the inspection method, the notion "procedural objectivity" and the implication for Ofsted's view of "validity" and the management systems model of the school. Chapter 3 "Perspectives on Ofsted inspection, change and school improvement" indicates that this investigation takes a dual' technical/rational and cultural/political – perspective on Ofsted inspection. It places Ofsted's view of "school improvement" within the framework of social theory. The discussion is in three parts: the first part views Ofsted inspection as social action, as a disciplinary power and as audit; the second part addresses the cultural/political discourse and the micro-political perspective on the school. It considers the cultural/political perspectives on "school improvement" and considers the implications for this investigation. The third part describes Fullan's (2001a) model of educational change. The discussion in Chapter 4 reviews the previous research into Ofsted inspection, highlights issues and considers the implications for this dual perspective longitudinal investigation.

Chapter 2

OFSTED'S INSPECTION METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction. This chapter highlights classroom observation as the dominant characteristic of inspection methodology and compares HMI and Ofsted's approach to the interpretation of inspection evidence. It highlights "procedural objectivity" as the key element in Ofsted's approach and describes inspection procedures that ensure the consistency, reliability and validity of inspection judgements. It considers the implications for this research. The discussion addresses key elements in Ofsted's model of school and emphasises the implications for the investigation.

2.2 Classroom observation. Inspection methodology is characterised by the dominance of classroom observation over other types of evidence such as descriptive information, statistical data and samples of pupils' work. A preference for classroom observation is highlighted in Ofsted's recommendation that a minimum of 60 per cent of the inspection team's available time should be spent on the direct observation of teaching and learning (Ofsted, 1994e) – a recommendation that applied at the time of this investigation.

What assumptions are made about classroom observation? The theory is that scrutinising classroom practice can determine the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Wilson (1995), an American enthusiast for inspection, sets out the case for inspection in this statement:

"Inspection has evolved a methodology that portrays and judges what actually happens in schools. Inspectors, who have been experienced teachers, actually visit schools, directly observe classes and make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning based on the evidence they collect at the schools. Through a team moderation process the judgements of individual inspectors are discussed and the inspection team agrees a corporate

judgement. The results are reported back both to the school people and policy makers" (Wilson, 1995:95)

Since the bulk of inspection evidence is drawn from observing lessons a high premium is placed on the exercise of professional judgement. Classrooms are complex places, with many different interactions operating simultaneously, and although inspectors are trained and prepared for the task, the reliability of the inspection process depends heavily on the individual skills of inspectors in observing and interpreting what is going on. This has implications for the research since perceptions of the reliability of the inspection process depend on inspectors' interpretation of classroom activities. The discussion now turns to the issue of the different approaches to interpretation.

2.3 Her Majesty's Inspectorate approach to inspection. HMI's attitude to inspection judgement carried with it the notion of "connoisseurship" – a stress on the subjective experience of the individual in the mode of operation.

According to Kogan and Maden (1999) the HMI operated

"largely on intuitive and connoisseurial criteria [they] *regarded themselves mostly as professional colleagues whose role was to advise local authorities, teachers and schools, rather than to enforce standards"* (Kogan and Maden, 1999:15)

Since the professional experience and wisdom of HMI underpinned the previous approach to inspection, the cataloguing and publication of criteria was thought to be unnecessary and inappropriate. Fitz and Lee (1996) interviewed members and former members of the Inspectorate about their work and the interviewees emphasised their colleagues' individuality and the importance of their induction into *"a small, cohesive body able through training and procedure to accept each others' judgements"* (Fitz and Lee, 1996:15). The interviewees highlighted *"the pressures of experience"* and *"collective*

judgement" as significant factors in their mode of operation. The same authors likened HMI's mode of operation to the notion of an "interpretative community" (Giddens, 1990; 1991) whose authority was derived from its institutional position, close-knit structure and its role as a reproducer of knowledge. In this way the Inspectorate's capacity to comprehend quickly what was happening in the classroom together with its unrivalled experience and knowledge of the school system allowed Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, HMCI, to offer both a critique of government policy as well as providing direction in a series of annual reports (DES, 1986; 1990; 1991). The involvement of HMI in such curriculum projects as the Schools' Council could have implied a pedagogical stance but the official position was to be neutral on questions of pedagogy. It seemed that HMI was content with judging what they saw in its own terms, to say in effect that "it was good of its kind", whilst supporting the idea of an explicit curriculum matched to age, aptitude and phase.

It was clear from the evidence gathered by the Rayner Report (DES/WO, 1982) that HMI's judgements were highly regarded by the teaching profession and by policy makers alike. However, when schools' inspection reports were first published there were complaints about inconsistencies (Gray and Hannon, 1996). The consistency and reliability of HMI's inspection judgements could not be tested by independent research since the inspection criteria were not in the public domain. However, the creation of Ofsted, for reasons given in the previous chapter, finally brought inspection procedures into the public domain leading to a more transparent system. Furthermore, Ofsted's use of tightly drawn inspection criteria led to a reformulation of the

exercise of professional judgement and a focus on measures to ensure the reliability and consistency of inspection judgements and findings.

2.4 Ofsted's methods. The previous discussion indicates that the aim of Ofsted is to be transparent, objective and independent and in these circumstances the HMI "connoisseurship" model is deemed inappropriate. Ofsted makes explicit in unprecedented detail the criteria to be used for evaluating schools and for quantifying the resulting judgements, and publishes them in successive versions of the *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools* (Ofsted 1993a-2002a). The *Framework* (Ofsted, 1995b), defining both what was to be inspected and how, in schools participating in this study was set out in Part 2 of the *Handbook*. Inspection organisation was further detailed in Part 3, whilst Part 4 elaborated the details of what was to be inspected, and this was further expanded in a subsequent section entitled *Technical Papers*. Each sub-section of Part 4 included an amplification of inspection criteria. For example the criteria for "the quality of teaching" were specified in great detail:

"Teaching quality" was to be judged to the extent that to which:

- teachers have clear objectives for their lessons;

- pupils are aware of these objectives;

- teachers have a secure command of the subject;

- lessons have a suitable content and activities are well chosen to promote learning of that content;

- teaching methods engage, motivate and challenge all pupils, enabling them to develop at an acceptable pace, and be aware of their achievements and progress. (Ofsted, 1994a, (2) 26)

Criteria were further amplified by the provision of contrasting paragraphs one

describing a "good" example, and another an "unsatisfactory" one. Guidance

was provided on the issues to be considered when reviewing the evidence

and the factors to be taken into account when formulating a judgement. As a

consequence the number of criteria proliferated in the *Framework* and Maw

(1996) estimated that there were:

*"89 explicit criteria for evaluation, some of them multiples; 84 statements of
'additional evidence to include', some multiples; and 74 statements of what
'the report should include'"* (Maw, 1996:24)

The consequence was a large number of statements recording judgements;

typically almost 1,000 statements agreed by the inspection team in the case

of the 11-18 age secondary schools. Taken overall these indicated the range,

diversity and interactive nature of factors pertinent to judgements about the

quality of schooling education and it was apparent that this posed questions

concerning procedures employed to reach inspection judgements and

findings.

In formulating such explicit criteria and evaluative systems Ofsted

intended to convey the impression that inspection had a wholly objective

basis. However, the criteria were mainly qualitative in nature and Ofsted

intended to bring a more objective perspective. It did this by employing

procedures such as the "aggregation" of data, to constitute a process known

as "procedural objectivity", which is defined as

*"the development of and use of a method that eliminates, or aspires to
eliminate, the scope for personal judgement in the description and appraisal
of a state of affairs"* (Eisner, 1991:44)

This can be demonstrated by the procedure for grading "teaching quality".

Lesson observation began with an individual lesson observation form, LOF

(Ofsted, 1994a: (3) 61), which yielded short evaluative statements on certain key features, together with a rating scale of one to five. Individual lessons were graded from the most to least satisfactory as follows:

1. Many good features, some of them outstanding.

2. Good features, and no major shortcomings.

3. Sound.

4. Some shortcomings in important areas.

5. Many shortcomings.   (Ofsted, 1994a: 93:16)

In turn lesson observations were aggregated for the subject, curriculum area and school on the basis of the recorded inspection evidence and were used to complete the judgement recording statements, JRS, on a seven-point scale. These JRS's were then forwarded to Ofsted to be included in the national database, on the assumption that the procedure yielded an objective perspective on what were essentially subjective judgements. Essentially this process converted opinion into numerical grades that could be used for comparisons.

How were the individual assessments reached on the basis of each criterion represented as a single grade? Consistency was achieved over many observations by employing successive levels of "aggregation". This assumed that the criteria had the same meanings for all inspectors, that is inspectors did not coin their own interpretations when reading the text. Since the record of observations, LOF was constrained by Ofsted's inspection criteria this had the effect of limiting the range of observations that could be made and thus a truth that was observed might not necessarily be recorded. This raised the question whether this process was analogous with Foucault's

(1980) notion of the exercise of "the technology of power", since these procedures produced "truth" through the interaction of "knowledge, power and normalisation". In other words the inspection process pre-determined the "facts" of schooling.

The procedure for the "aggregation" of data posed the question whether the various criteria for judging "teaching quality" were of equal importance and if not, how were the criteria of different importance combined into an overall judgement? The 1994 version of the Handbook failed to provide guidance on these matters and it had to be assumed that they were the subject of *ad hoc* decisions by Ofsted inspectors. This researcher took the view that the aggregation of data alone did not eliminate the need for judgements and therefore did not guarantee the consistency and "validity" of inspection judgements. However this remained a key principle in Ofsted's inspection procedures.

Inspection procedures such as sampling and corroboration also served to create the perception of "validity". The *Handbook* (Ofsted, 1994a) states:

"The sample of lessons and classes inspected must constitute an adequate cross-section of the work of the school...be representative of all age and ability groups...Lessons should be seen in all [National Curriculum] subjects and in other subjects or aspects specified in the inspection contract" (Ofsted, 1994a, (2): 11)

The question was whether this could ensure a sufficiently large sample on which to base important judgements. Lessons and activities could only be sampled and the proportion covered in the schools participating in this research might be as low as 7 per cent of all lessons (Ofsted, 1993c: (3) 11). The rationale for this practice was not made explicit and it seemed to be

based on the received wisdom of the previous HMI inspection regime. This also raised a question about the "reliability" of inspection judgements – "reliability" being defined in terms of the extent of agreement that exists between two trained inspectors on the grades awarded. The number of observations required to produce consistently high levels of agreement in the case of different subjects and individuals was ruled out by this specification suggesting that inspectors needed to exercise caution about a particular feature before concluding that it was not present. Ideally, judgements emerge from the corroboration and mutual support of several sources of evidence. A subject inspector is expected to visit the classroom of all relevant teachers covering the full age and ability range of the pupils. In reaching a judgement about the overall quality of teaching in a given curriculum area the inspector is required to consider all descriptions of the lessons covered. The aggregation of grades across lessons assists this process. For example a statement could be made that "in 80 per cent of lessons observed the teaching was judged sound or better".

Evaluations of decisions about factors affecting the whole school such as management are not the exclusive domain of a single inspector and were subject to collective or consensus judgements. The *Handbook* states (Ofsted, 1994a)

"Reaching consensus about the quality of judgements is most easily accomplished through discussion involving teams members towards the end of the inspection (Ofsted, 1994 (3) 20)

At first sight this seemed self-evident. However, the process of reducing large amounts of qualitative data, by a process that includes "collation, synthesis and evaluation" is not as simple as this implies. Some writers, for example

Nixon and Ruddock (1993), argue that these procedures are *"deceptively straightforward"*. Disagreements have to be resolved, with different levels of experience being taken into account, before an overall judgement can be reached, yet the *Handbook* (Ofsted, 1994a) offered no guidance on this matter. This also poses a question about the role of those inspectors who are contracted to attend for only part of the inspection. Even though they may be alternative ways of obtaining their views this could call into question the validity of the resulting corporate judgements.

Ofsted's arrangements to test the "reliability" of corporate inspection judgements included a second team which, provided with knowledge of the report of the first team, inspected a sample of the schools. The original assessments were confirmed for 98 per cent of the 250 schools judged to be "failing" or "failing to provide a satisfactory education" during 1996 (Ofsted, 1997c). Whether this was a "fair test" of the "reliability" of corporate judgements is open to question - the main weakness being that the second team had prior knowledge of the first team's findings. It also leaves unquestioned a question about the "reliability" of inspection judgements in schools receiving "satisfactory" reports – the majority of schools inspected.

Ofsted's notion of "validity" was based on the principle that the application of relevant criteria gave rise to "valid" inspection judgements. This view assumed judgements meet the test of "reliability" – two experienced inspectors observing the same lesson agree on an inspection judgement – being based on an adequate sample and acceptable levels of consistency in measurement. If these conditions were met and the judgements matched the inspection evidence they were deemed to be" valid" judgements.

Nevertheless, making the criteria explicit could not guarantee that inspectors internalised and converted them into "valid" judgements and as a consequence Ofsted employed a system of "audit trails" to relate judgements to specific evidence at different stages in the "aggregation" of evidence. However, a question remained about the numerous sets of criteria drawn upon to formulate complex judgements. This involved the consolidation of numerous inspection judgements into a limited number of "main findings" and "key issues for action", the assumption being that individual faulty judgements would at least be averaged out so that the main findings will not be invalidated. Thus the validation of the main findings required the full agreement of the inspection team (Ofsted, 1995b: 21).

Some writers challenge Ofsted's notion of "validity". For example Fitz-Gibbon and Stephenson-Foster (1999) argue that that Ofsted' claims for the validity of its inspection judgements should be underpinned by an "accumulation of evidence". This is based on the idea of a "nomological set" (Cronbach and Meehl, 1995), that is a variety of tests of validity which can be applied to assessment, among which are tests of "face validity", "construct validity" and "predictive validity". "Face validity" is defined as "an agreement that the procedure seems reasonable" which when applied to inspection invites interested parties jointly to resolve questions of "validity". This raised the question of whether Ofsted's policy was to work with schools to resolve doubts about the "validity" of inspection procedures. Certainly Ofsted surveyed headteachers and inspectors about their experiences and attitudes towards the inspection process. However, Ofsted's position (Ofsted, 1997c) was that its procedures were secure and reliable and, therefore, the idea of

seeking an agreement with interested parties on the credibility of its systems did not arise. "Construct validity" is specified to be "an agreement that the construct is rational". However, such a test could lead to the questioning of the Ofsted's descriptors of "bad", "good" and "failing schools" which were in effect summary judgements on the health of the school system. "Predictive validity" is interpreted in terms of the correlation between concurrent and future performance. However, a formula that accommodated the complexity of the relationship between process and outcome and which received the full support of stakeholders was a distant prospect. Nevertheless, Ofsted (Ofsted, 1997c) took the view that the inspection process could assess a school's "capacity to improve" and this became a feature of schools' inspection reports. This involved inspectors making predictions about the effect of the headteacher's leadership and management on school development. It represented a significant departure from a strict interpretation of "procedural objectivity". Arguably Ofsted's inspection procedures did not meet the test of "validity" arising from the notion of an "accumulation of evidence". In this researcher's view Ofsted preferred a specification that was expeditious, avoided a lengthy, contentious debate about "validity" and served Ofsted's interests as a major instrument of school reform by providing reports on individual schools, identifying schools that were "failing" and supplying information to central government about the quality of teaching within the nation's schools.

The monitoring of inspections was undertaken within the framework of Ofsted's own procedures, a sample of inspected schools being visited by HMI. At the end of every inspection the Record of Inspection Evidence, RoIE, a

detailed collection of inspection findings summarised in terms of five- and seven-point scales, was forwarded to Ofsted. In monitoring inspections Ofsted assessed whether inspection judgements were consistent with this evidence. Starting with the school report, the Ofsted monitors determine if the main findings were consistent with detailed findings in the text. These findings were compared with the "second stage summaries" and, in turn, the "first stage summaries". However, this approach had a weakness:

"There is no quantitative record of classroom events, there is no descriptive record either, nothing comparable with an ethnographer's notebook, and for instance the only recorded outcome is, itself, evaluative" Maw (1995:79)

Thus there was no guarantee that inspectors fully experienced and recorded all the events that took place in the first place. The assumption was that the framework of criteria guided the process and, therefore, consistency would be ensured on this basis. However, the validity of such judgements might be uncertain. This point has been subsequently been recognised and current inspections (year 2003) record findings in an "Inspection Record", which is monitored by the Registered General Inspector, RGI, and can be subsequently used for audit trails. Also all observational evidence, discussion records and analysis of data that is made by individual inspectors are recorded on Evidence Forms, EF's. These are submitted to the RGI for comment as soon as they are completed.

In the pre-inspection phase the RGI visits the school to inform the headteacher of the forthcoming inspection and to make arrangements to collect documentation for the inspection team. During the inspection itself, which typically lasts a week, inspectors spend as much time as possible observing the work of pupils in classrooms and elsewhere. In addition

inspectors talk to pupils and staff, look at samples of work and attend activities such as assemblies, registration and tutorial sessions, as well as extra-curricular activities. The RGI or lead inspector and headteacher meet regularly to discuss the management of the inspection and any issues that emerge; subject inspectors give oral feedback to classroom teachers and heads of subject; and towards the end of the week the findings are presented orally to the headteacher and other senior staff. At that stage the school can identify factual inaccuracies or challenge ill-founded interpretations but cannot seek to alter the findings. The RGI then drafts an inspection report and meets with the governing body to hear its views on the main findings before the inspection report is published.

An inspection report typically formulates a set of recommendations indicating how a school might address the specific issues raised during the inspection. In Ofsted inspections these recommendations are termed "key issues for action" and are intended to be "practicable, explicit and as few as are consistent with the inspection findings" (Ofsted, 1995b: (2) 17). There is a requirement that such key issues be incorporated by the school within an "action plan" that includes a detailed strategy for future development.

This investigation is interested in how schools responded to their inspection recommendations and how and to what extent schools implemented the recommendations and whether this ultimately resulted in real change. The headteacher was expected to play a pivotal role in the inspection process: assisting in formulating the terms of the inspection contract, supplying the necessary documentation, informing teachers of the requisite arrangements and collaborating with the lead inspector and helping to

manage the inspection itself. The headteacher was also required to distribute the school's inspection report as well as preparing and implementing the school's action plan.

2.5 Implications for this research. The previous discussion poses questions about Ofsted's inspection methodology. The central tenet is that a team of inspectors can assess the condition of a school by scrutinising what happens in classrooms. The question was whether teachers accept that such a process can depict the "normal" situation within school. If teachers take the view that inspection provides an unrepresentative picture of the usual state of affairs this leads to a rejection of inspection findings and recommendations.

At the heart of the Ofsted process is the belief that judgements are made on the basis of a systematic review of evidence set against specific criteria. This methodology is incorporated in the Ofsted *Handbook* (Ofsted, 1992a-2002a) in explicit form, which poses the question whether Ofsted's inspection procedures guarantee the "validity" of inspection judgements. This brings teachers' perceptions of Ofsted's inspection procedures within the ambit of this enquiry.

It was clear that the implication of Ofsted's claim for "procedural objectivity" is that inspectors are free from bias because they have no self-interest in the schools they inspect and can therefore examine them impartially. However, this poses a question about the lack of prior knowledge of inspectors of schools and of each other. The notion of "procedural objectivity" (Eisner, 1991) appears to eliminate the scope for personal judgement and this implies that Ofsted's inspection criteria can yield the reality of school in terms of unambiguous "facts" without resorting to the

exercise of professional judgement. Furthermore, Ofsted's *Framework* embodied a model of school which determines the "facts" of school. The question was whether teachers accept the Ofsted's model of school and thus have confidence in an inspection process that underpins this view of schooling.

Ofsted's inspection method is based on the belief that "key issues for action", or inspection recommendations, represent a valid agenda for "school improvement". The assumption is teachers accept the validity of key issues that are linked to the main inspection findings, which in turn, are a valid summary of the myriad of judgements formed during an inspection. Thus teachers accept "key issues" as an appropriate agenda for "school improvement" so that implementation of key issues is an indicator of "school improvement". However, this view raises several questions. For example do all schools accept Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement"? Do teachers at all levels share Ofsted's view of key issues as an appropriate agenda for "school improvement"? Is it safe to assume that implementation of key issues leads to change and "improvement" in all areas of activity?

2.6. Ofsted's model of school. The previous discussion (see 2.4) indicates that Ofsted's approach to Inspection conceived the essential features of schools "as they really are". These features are assumed to be relatively stable over time, otherwise descriptions would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Furthermore, this notion of stability is assumed to carry over into the future, at least for the period between the end of the inspection and the appearance of the inspection report. It also implies that any recommendations

for "school improvement" which are based on such descriptions provide a plan for the development of the school's immediate future.

The Ofsted *Handbook* (Ofsted, 1992a -2002a) describes what are considered to be the *"discrete, invariant and defining characteristics of schools"* and thus a universal set of features which constitute a specific model of school are effectively imposed through the inspection process. Wilcox and Gray (1996) views the Ofsted model in terms of the inspection process when he describes it as a "multi level, performance, process, and context model". He argues that it is "multi- level" because of the three different levels of descriptions contained in inspection reports. The first consists of the separate accounts of each subject and cross curriculum area - the detail of the first level is effectively summarised in general accounts of the second level: "standards", "quality", "efficiency", "pupils' development and behaviour". The third is the highest level of generality and is represented by the main findings and "key issues for action". However, this researcher takes the view that the Ofsted model of school is recognisably set within a "technical-rational" perspective (Mintzberg, 1989). This requires clear aims and objectives, which should include the pursuit of high standards of attainment and the promotion of the moral, social and personal development of pupils as reflected in the ethos of the school. As previously noted, the 1992 Education (Schools) Act introduced the requirement that schools should be evaluated, not only in terms of the quality of educational provision, but also for the efficiency of their resource management. In this case learning outcomes were related to the quality and mix of the resources deployed and thus there should be tight coupling between resource and financial management in the operational core

of teaching and learning. Thus the Ofsted *Handbook* (1992a-2002a) includes key processes relating to resource management: the allocation of resources, planning and budget-setting, using resources and evaluating past use of resources and a feedback of this information for future decision-making. Resource allocation is concerned with how both financial and physical educational resources – staff, services and materials – are deployed to achieve specific learning outcomes. Ofsted amplified its stance on school planning in a document entitled *Planning for Improvement* (Ofsted, 1995c). This included the expectation that a school's plans would be backed by information about a school's performance as judged by a series of key school indicators together with league tables of school examination results. By relating such school outcomes, particularly those applying to higher levels of pupil attainment, with the allocation of financial resources an individual school can be judged on the basis of "value for money". Planning is based on "valid" and "appropriate" data, which allow any strengths and weaknesses to be identified, so that the school can respond accordingly. Thus the Ofsted *Handbook* include criteria that are concerned with the use of resources to produce learning outcomes: "effectiveness" – the extent to which intended outcome are achieved; "efficiency" – the relationship between the combination of inputs and learning outcomes; and "value for money" – where a school gives value for money when it is both "efficient" and "effective".

Levacic and Glover's (1998) analysis of 117 inspection reports produced during 1994 finds that the inspection framework requires evidence that schools are following rational decision-making processes which are consistent with *"the search for the most effective and efficient deployment of*

resources". These processes include the creation and implementation of development plans, a systematic evaluation of resource management and the operation of sound financial systems. The input variables include the pupil-teacher ratio, teachers' class contact ratio, teaching time, unit costs, educational resource costs, the percentage of pupils entitled to free meals and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The variables concerned with the processes for rational decision-making with respect to resource allocation relate to: a rational planning at school level; departmental planning; staff deployment; resource deployment; and financial management. These variables are rated on a scale of 1 to 3 according to the inspectors' comments, where category 3 indicated "good practice", category 2 denoted "satisfactory" practices with some room for improvement, and category 1 indicates the presence of critical comments. Educational "effectiveness" is measured in terms of: the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or better; the percentage of lessons in which learning is rated as "good"; and the percentage of lessons in which teaching is rated as "good".

Another feature of the Ofsted model is the use of comparative or benchmarking data for learning outcomes. This involves an assessment of the learning progress of individual pupils in relation to their prior attainment benchmarked against large national samples. Such "value-added analysis" of pupil performance data provides schools with information about relative strengths and weaknesses, and identifies "good" internal practice that can be disseminated, and weaknesses that can be addressed. At the time of the research, 1996/1998, use of this technique was still at an early stage but by the year 2000 Ofsted had developed "value-added analysis" and this became

a key feature in the inspection process (Ofsted, 2001c). This matter is addressed in Chapter 9.

Schools can also compare patterns of expenditure with other schools using the Performance and Assessment Report or PANDA data provided by Ofsted. This provides guidance about whether expenditure patterns are near the median or within the "interquartile ranges", or whether they are unusually high or low, which facilitates a scrutiny of particular items of expenditure. It is clear that Ofsted assumes that its "technical rationalist" perspective of school is used as the "lexicon of school" (Ball, 1994) – the basis for decisions about teaching and learning. If this were the case it would be safe to assume that teachers' accept Ofsted's depiction of school and thus the agenda for "school improvement". The question arises whether Ofsted's school model is in fact accepted as the basis for decisions about teaching and learning. Does the Ofsted model represent schools' responses to key issues?

2.7 Implications for leadership and management. The previous discussion indicates that Ofsted assumes schools to be managed rationally, as effective and efficient organisations, achieving tight coupling between inputs, processes and outputs. Furthermore, Ofsted expects school leaders to have a clear vision, to promote a common sense of purpose and to focus attention on student achievement:

"strong leadership provides clear educational direction…the school has aims, values and policies which are reflected through all its work…the school through development planning, identifies relevant priorities and targets, takes the necessary action, and monitors and evaluates its progress towards them…there is a positive ethos, which reflects the school's commitment to high achievement, an effective learning environment, good relationships, and equality of opportunity for all pupils." (Ofsted, 1995c:100)

There was evidence that a technical/rational view of management underpinned Ofsted's inspection reports. For example analysis of Ofsted inspectors' comments relating to management in a sample of 183 secondary school inspections during 1993 and 1994 (Levacic and Glover, 1997; 1998), revealed a concern for development planning; use of development plan objectives as a planning framework; use of staff costing; use of resource costing; and the use of accommodation costing. Ofsted inspectors also expressed concern for the school's use of educational outcomes, consistency across departments and the involvement of senior and middle management and governors. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools annual reports for 1993 and 1998 (Ofsted, 1993d; Ofsted 1998c) also highlighted a concern that headteachers should use development planning as the basis for financial planning. Ofsted's (1995c) planning discourse gave a more comprehensive insight into Ofsted's views on management. It recommended a school-wide structure of staff responsibilities aimed at delivering a consistent and cohesive curriculum and providing a framework for evaluation, review and planning. The assessment of pupils' progress would be subject to agreed policies and guidelines for the "effective" management of pupils' behaviour and "effective" teaching. The discourse highlighted the importance of a systematic approach to the monitoring of teachers' work in the classroom. It also proposed new responsibilities. For example the head of subject or "middle manager" was charged with: the delivery of the National Curriculum; ensuring satisfactory levels of pupil attainment, relative "performance" and standards of pupil behaviour; promoting "teaching quality"; and the department's "efficiency" and "effectiveness".

The notion of maintaining tight managerial control challenged traditional thinking. For example Bennett's (1995) investigation of heads of subjects' attitudes towards their role revealed a general reluctance to intervene directly in the teaching process but rather a preference for monitoring exercise books and lesson plans. Nevertheless, control was kept over the syllabus, the content, depth and time allocation for subject topics and resource allocation in addition to the guidance given on the sequence of topics to be taught. More recently a survey of middle managers in seventy-one secondary schools (Busher et al. 2000) indicates that the monitoring of teachers in classrooms is viewed as unacceptable in a professionally regulated world. These authors claim that this view reflects contemporary thinking about the role of the head of subject, namely that colleagues can be trusted to get on with the job in their own way. This implies a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of inspection practice. For example Levacic's (1997; 1998) case studies of four secondary schools and nine primary schools judged by Ofsted to be offering good value for money, found that the adoption of technism was tempered by context, culture and style. However, the capacity to do this was restricted by the demands of the socio-economic context and also the culture of the school. This raised a question about the effects of context and culture on schools' response to Ofsted inspection recommendations concerned with management and leadership. It also posed the question whether inspectors temper comments relating to these matters according to the context in which a school operates.

2.8 Teachers' reactions to the Ofsted model. It useful to place thinking about school management within the wider context of public service reform.

The reforms to school inspection in England and Wales, heralded by the Education (Schools) Act, 1992, can also be viewed in terms of central government's attitudes towards inspection and the public services. Reforms of the police, social services and school inspectorates were justified in terms of a new discourse of "public service management" or "new managerialism" Pollitt (1993). This had several stands: a focus on cost-cutting together with separating the purchaser and provider functions; introduction of market and quasi-market mechanisms; stipulation of indicators of performance; emphasis on service quality; standards of customer responsiveness; and the dismantling of bureaucracies. According to Henkel (1991) there was an increasingly dominant trend:

"...to view the manager as superseding the professional as the force to continue the rationalisation of the 20th century technology and management skills." (Henkel, 1991:179-180).

Furthermore, central government was giving a higher profile to a positivist epistemology that assumed that:

"complexities of provision can be broken down into definitely assessed indicators of performance." (Henkel, 1991: 179-180)

Thus Ofsted's model of school did not stand alone. It represented a culmination of a growing trend to view schools as management systems concerned with the delivery of specific standards of performance and quality. However, there has been much speculation about the extent of the acceptance of this view within schools. For example Ball (1994) claimed that discourses of management, such as the Ofsted model, *"have progressively displaced other lexicons for describing and understanding schools"*. However, this raised a question about the extent to which such discourse had deposed other discourses such as the professional teacher responding to the needs of

individual pupils. Simkins (2000) contends that imposition of such managerial discourse has led to a "cultural distancing" of management and teaching. The implication being that teachers operating mainly in the "management domain", for example headteachers and senior managers, do not necessarily share the same priorities as other staff, such as classroom teachers operating mainly in the "professional domain". This implies that teachers functioning in both "domains" may need to accommodate different sets of priorities, purposes and values when relating to their colleagues.

What are the implications for Ofsted inspection of this trend towards new managerialism? Writers such as Wilcox and Gray (1996), Ouston et al. (1996) and Earley (1998) contend that headteachers and some senior managers were receptive to Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection". However, these authors found that classroom teachers were less committed to the discourse and it was difficult to discern the effects on teaching practice. Clearly it may be unsafe to assume that teachers operating in the management domain, for example headteachers and senior managers, represent the views of all of the staff and, therefore, speak for the whole school. According to Ball (1998:317-336) schools are "*complex, contradictory and somewhat incoherent organisations*" and like other "values organisations" have inherent tensions in work practices, beliefs and attitudes of teachers. This view accords with this researchers' own experience of school. Ball (1998:262) also contends that there are varying degrees of "bite" and "creative interpretation of the disciplines of reform" within schools and this implies that individual teachers creatively interpret policy texts, such as the Ofsted model, and make it their own by operating and modifying it through

their personal values and practices. Thus beliefs about "professional autonomy" and "new managerialism" (Pollitt, 1993) might co-exist and simultaneously influence schools' responses to Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection". This resonates with this researcher's own experience where response to the disciplines of reform varied between individuals, departments and at different levels as well as over time and in response to various internal and external pressures.

2.9 Summary. The discussion indicates that inspection methodology is characterised by a dominance of lesson observation over other types of evidence. The belief is that the quality of schooling can be determined by scrutinising classroom practice and thus there is an Ofsted requirement that a minimum of 60 per cent of the inspection team's time is spent on direct lesson observation. At the heart of Ofsted's inspection methodology is the view that inspection judgements are made on the basis of a systematic review of evidence compared with specific criteria. Ofsted makes explicit the inspection criteria for evaluating schools and for quantifying the resultant judgements in the Ofsted *Handbook* (1992a-2002a). The *Framework* (1992b-2002b) defines what is to be inspected. Ofsted's approach is characterised by "procedural objectivity" – the use of inspection procedures that convert inspection judgements into quantifiable and measurable assessments relating to individual classrooms, curriculum areas and the whole school. These procedures, such as sampling, aggregation and corroboration serve to create the perception of "validity". As a consequence Ofsted can claim that inspection depicts the school. The assumption is that identifying a school's

strengths and weaknesses motivates schools to implement "key issues for action" and thus schools change and improve.

The Ofsted *Handbook* embodies not only a technical/rational model of inspection but also an implicit model of school. The Ofsted model represents the culmination of a trend in recent years to regard schools as management systems concerned with the delivery of specific standards of performance and quality. Terms such as "planning", "efficiency", "effectiveness", and "resource control" are deployed at the level of overall management, but also in relation to teaching and classroom practice. Arguably the picture of school that emerges is one of self-regulation in the interests of finance-led decision making and competition with other schools. Thus school leaders are expected to provide a vision that focuses attention within the school on issues such as "quality", "value for money", "standards" and "performance". Clearly Ofsted's models of school and inspection are all of a piece and this has implications for research into inspection.

2.10 Conclusion. This chapter describes the main features of Ofsted's inspection methodology and identifies a link between inspection and "school improvement". The next chapter considers the place of Ofsted within the framework of social theory and the issues raised by Ofsted's technical/rational perspective on "school improvement".

Chapter 3

PERSPECTIVES ON OFSTED INSPECTION, CHANGE AND

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

3.1 Overview. This chapter contains three parts. Part one reviews the

epistemological status of inspection from Ofsted's technical/rational

perspective. It draws key concepts from the writings of Habermas (1984;

1987), Foucault (1977) and Power (1994), and considers the implications for

Ofsted inspection. It concludes with a description of Ofsted's stance on

"school improvement". This investigation became a dual perspective enquiry

when the researcher introduced a cultural/political perspective. Therefore part

two places the cultural/political perspective within a framework of social theory

drawing on key concepts of writers who view organisations from cultural and

political perspectives. There is a review of micro-political perspectives on

change and school improvement and a discussion of the implications for the

research method. Part three describes a framework for assessing change.

PART ONE – THE TECHNICAL/RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

3.2 Introduction. The discussion in Chapter 1 indicated that the main aim of

this research was to examine Ofsted's claim that inspection led to "school

improvement". The relationship between inspection and "school

improvement" was highlighted in Ofsted's (1993d) first *Corporate Plan*, which

is subtitled "*Improvement through inspection*". This stance is sustained in

Ofsted's consultative paper on the future of the direction of school inspection,

"*Improving inspection, improving schools*" (Ofsted, 2001c) and the current

arrangements (Ofsted, 2002c). Ofsted's claim for inspection is underpinned by

three assumptions. First, by identifying schools' strengths and weaknesses the subsequent formulation and implementation of an action plan generates collective and individual change:

"Headteachers, teachers and governors have had an objective, external evaluation of their school's achievements and the reasons for its strengths and weaknesses, to help them set priorities and plan for improvement" (Ofsted, 2001c: 1)

Second, "improvement" is achieved by building up a picture of schools from inspections by aggregating information, providing advice to the Secretary of State and drawing attention to issues of educational concern. Thus exemplars of good practice can be formulated through comprehensive portrayals of English schools. Third, making reports to parents facilitates choice of schools, stimulating the education market and development of "better" schools.

This raised a question about the teacher's role in "school improvement". Arguably teachers were being expected to accept Ofsted's discourse embodied in the *Handbook for Inspection of Schools* (1995a) as an absolute statement of educational truth, intended to be "delivered" by agents of the state. The locus of control lay within the state and its agencies, such as Ofsted, and if schools fail to deliver, then Ofsted would intervene, and publicly declare that a school was "failing", and parents would withdraw their children bringing about the school's imminent demise. Ofsted would also identify "ineffective" schools and measures would be taken to ensure that such schools "improved" in a short time.

Ofsted's approach to "school improvement" raises several questions. For example what kind of "truth" claims can be made? Do teachers share inspectors' accounts of school performance? How far is inspection a subtle form of control over those responsible for schools? In what sense is

inspection a form of auditing? This researcher sought answers by first viewing Ofsted's technical/rational approach from three different theoretical perspectives: as a form of social action, as an auditing process and as a "disciplinary power". This allowed Ofsted inspection to be placed within the frameworks of the following social theorists: Habermas (1984; 1987), Foucault (1971; 1997) and Power (1994). Key concepts within these frameworks provide understandings of Ofsted's technical/ rational approach to inspection. Such a model determined the initial choice of research questions, method and procedures for this study (see Chapter 5).

3.3 Inspection as social action. The inspection of schools is clearly a complex social process consisting of innumerable interactions between inspectors, teachers and others. How might such a process be understood in terms of social action? Certain concepts from Habermas's (1984; 1987) *Theory of Communicative Action* illuminate issues raised by Ofsted's approach to inspection. Habermas sees social action – human interaction – as being coordinated through the medium of language. He draws a distinction between two types of social action. In *strategic action* an actor intervenes within a social context to achieve a goal, for example greater effectiveness or success:

" a strategic model [exists] *when there can enter into the agent's calculation of success the anticipation of decisions on the part of at least one goal-directed actor. This model is often interpreted in utilitarian terms; the actor is supposed to choose and calculate means and ends from the standpoint of maximising utility"* (Habermas, 1984:85)

By contrast, the concept of *communicative action* refers:

"to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations...The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of interpretation refers in

the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit consensus"
(Habermas, 1984: 86)

In order to understand the significance of "communicative action" it is necessary to know something of Habermas's view of language. Habermas holds that a speaker comes to an understanding with another speaker by raising three distinct "validity claims". In every utterance a speaker makes a "truth" claim relating to the "objective world", a "rightness claim" relating to the "social world" of normatively regulated interpersonal relations, and a "truthfulness" or "sincerity" claim relating to the speaker's "subjective world". These claims are universal features of linguistic communication and each lays claim to universal validity for everyone capable of speech and action. The extent to which an utterance is valid is determined by the reasons that a speaker can give in support of what is said and the extent of their acceptability to others in the process of "argumentation". Habermas holds that the strength of an argument is measured in a given context

"by the soundness of the reasons; that can be seen in, among other things, whether or not an argument is able to convince the participants in a discourse, that is, to motivate them to accept the validity claim in question" (Habermas, 1984:18)

When speakers take part in "argumentation" they must suppose that certain conditions hold to ensure that agreements are based on reason alone and not, for example, on power relations among speakers. These conditions define what Habermas calls the "ideal speech situation" and he suggests the following "rules" as constitutive of an "ideal speech situation": each subject is allowed to participate in discussion; each is allowed to call into question any proposal; each is allowed to introduce any proposal into the discussion; each

is allowed to express his attitudes, wishes and needs; and no speaker ought to be hindered by compulsion.

The question that arises is whether Ofsted inspection is characterised by "strategic" or "communicative action". The interactions between individual inspectors and individual teachers suggest that Ofsted inspection is an example of "strategic action". The previous discussion (see Chapter 2) indicates that Ofsted requires the inspector to adopt an objectivating attitude to the teacher. The expectation is that the inspector interprets the teacher's behaviour within the criteria and detailed prescriptions of the *Handbook*. These are non-negotiable as are the judgements made. Furthermore, although inspectors are encouraged to seek the perspective of teachers through the scrutiny of lesson plans and feedback, the pressures of the inspection timetable severely limit the possibilities for discussion. There is no obligation for the inspector to obtain a synthesis of views and it is the inspector's view that remains privileged.

Habermas (1984; 1987) is also concerned with social action at the level of society as a whole. Modern society is viewed in terms of the interaction between "the lifeworld", "systems" and "steering media". The "lifeworld" is the context within which communicative action occurs and the "horizon" within which people refer to aspects of the "objective", "social" and "subjective" worlds. "Systems" emerge from the "lifeworld" as functionally definable areas of action. The principal ones are the economic and administrative systems and these are guided by lifeworld concerns and held together by the "steering media" of money and power. "Colonisation of the lifeworld" takes place when the "steering media" begin to penetrate the

reproductive processes of the lifeworld. Thus the communicative infrastructure of the lifeworld is displaced by action coordinated by power and money requiring only an objectivating attitude and an orientation towards success – "strategic action". This results in enhanced material reproduction but beyond a certain point it can cause pathological side effects, such as loss of meaning, alienation, anomie and withdrawal of legitimacy.

Broadbent et al. (1991) have refined Habermas's (1984; 1987) model by recognizing that societal steering media and systems are themselves made up of a wide range of organisations with their own micro-lifeworlds, steering media and systems. Thus Ofsted might be considered as an example of a "steering medium", inspection as a "steering mechanism" and schools as "societal systems". Broadbent et al (1991) suggest that the colonizing potential of steering media may be assessed by applying two "rules of thumb" advanced by Habermas (1987: 363-373). The first was whether or not the steering media were "regulative", "freedom guaranteeing", "constitutive" or "freedom-reducing". Ofsted appeared to be constitutive and freedom-reducing when it replaced well-established programmes of local and HMI inspections with its own statutory basis and high political profile. The second "rule of thumb" was whether steering media were "amenable to substantive justification" or only "legitimised by procedure". Thus where the "steering media" was comprehensible to an "average individual" and reflected, "informed common sense" it would not need defending. The question was whether the approach to schooling and inspection embodied in the *Handbook* and *Framework* had "colonised the school lifeworld", affected teachers' views of "informed common-sense" and thus influenced views about teaching and

learning. However, if school systems were made up of a range of domains, activities, groups and sites, each having their own "micro lifeworlds" and "steering media", it was unsafe to assume that Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" had completely displaced other "steering media", which formed the basis for understanding orientated action in all areas of school activity. The implications are considered in section 3.6 below.

3.4 Inspection as a disciplinary power. Foucault's (1977) notions of "disciplinary power" and "examination" as the means of achieving organisational efficiency and control can be applied to inspection. Foucault (1977) argues that institutions such as factories, schools and barracks give rise to procedures having common characteristics constituting what he calls "disciplinary power":

"instead of bending all its subjects into a single uniform mass, it [disciplinary power] separates, analyses, differentiates [them and] carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units."
(Foucault, 1977: 170)

"Disciplinary power" consists of "humble modalities" and "minor procedures" and its success

"derives from the use of simple instruments: hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it – the examination. " (Foucault 1977: 170)

According to Foucault the inmates of disciplinary institutions, such as schools, prisons and barracks, are maintained under constant surveillance through "hierarchical observation", which ensures the permanent visibility of subjects. This is ensured through the architecture of the institutions and Foucault (1977) employs the metaphor of Bentham's "panoptican" for the visibility of subjects achieved through "disciplinary power". This is conceived as a circular architectural structure composed of cells containing an inmate, which ensures

that their inmates could be kept under constant surveillance. A "micro -penalty" was fashioned concerned with punishing non-observance or departure from norms associated with time and attendance, correct behaviour and attitudes and the accepted way of carrying out tasks. "Normalising judgements" refer to regular assessments made of individuals against sets of norms and standards. Thus a pervasive form of social control was maintained in institutions.

It is in the "examination" that hierarchical observation and normalizing judgements are uniquely combined. "Examination" is defined as a *"normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to classify and to punish"* (Foucault, 1977:191). The procedures for "examination" are situated in individuals in a network of documentation as part of a "meticulous archive" which captures and fixes them and thus "examination" and its documentary techniques makes each individual a "case". In this way an individual may be *"described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his individuality"* and then *"trained or corrected, classified, normalized and excluded"* (Foucault, 1977: 192).

How can Foucault's (1977) notions of disciplinary power and examination apply to the Ofsted process? Inspection is disciplinary in two senses. It requires a school to undergo an exacting discipline during the inspection process, which extended over a period of twelve months at the time of this investigation. Inspection may lead to a school being "disciplined". Thus those individuals who were associated with any weaknesses identified in an inspection risk censure not only from those within the school community but also by those outside the school, such as the parents. Shortcomings are

exposed and are expected to be remedied. In the extreme case of a "failing school" (see Chapter 2) there is the probability of public opprobrium, additional surveillance by HMI, the possibility of being taken over by an "educational association" and the ultimate penalty of closure.

The previous chapter indicates that inspection is the "examination" of a whole school resulting in a multiplicity of normalising judgements made by applying criteria, rating scales and "judgement recording statements". The outcome is an account cast in descriptions of the school's strengths and weaknesses; success and failure; effectiveness and ineffectiveness; efficiency and inefficiency. Inspection creates a "case", by locating a school on a continuum of cases from the "excellent" to the "failing".

Hierarchical observation is also built into the Ofsted process. Registered Inspectors are expected to monitor the performance of members of their inspection teams and HMI, in turn, monitor the judgements and findings made by inspection teams (see Chapter 2). Ofsted's use of systems based on the principle of "procedural objectivity" which connects inspection evidence, judgements and findings, serves the monitoring of inspection findings at different stages in the inspection process. The Ofsted process can be viewed as a "panoptican" which keeps school "cells" and their teacher "inmates" under surveillance. Ofsted's "gaze" is focussed on schools through the instrument of the *Handbook,* which includes Ofsted's preferred model of the school. Matthews and Smith (1995) reported that the *Handbook* and *Framework* were employed by secondary headteachers as a "management tool" to review their schools' performance and procedures and management development and thereby Ofsted's "gaze" was maintained between

inspections. This had implications for the research because it posed a question about the degree to which schools complied with the disciplines of the *Handbook* in the school's implementation of inspection recommendations.

3.5 Inspection as audit. Power's (1994) analysis of "audit" – the official examination or inspection of business accounts – identified the issue of control within systems of financial control. First was the notion of "control of control" (ibid. page 19), which was based on the assumption that audits generally influence systems of control indirectly rather than directly, shaping first-order activities. This suggested that inspection could operate through systems of management control rather than directly shaping such first order activities as teaching. However, Ofsted Inspection seemed to be an exception to this rule because, by focusing on first order activities, it sought to influence how teachers performed in the classroom.

A second view was that audits exposed the internal workings of organisations to the various interested groups and thereby wrested power from the professionals and placed it in the hands of "real" participants such as parents. Ofsted achieves this through the depiction of schooling in the *Handbook* and schools' inspection reports. The third point followed from the second and was that auditing was regarded as a neutral technique for yielding certain financial "facts". According to Power (1994:8) there was a tendency for any system of auditing to become self-referential, that is the process created the very "facts" that it purported to represent. Also it modelled organisations for its own purposes and thus influenced significantly first order operations and denied any notion of critical reflexivity about their own processes. This raised the question whether Ofsted inspection operating in

audit mode could generate an inclusive or interdependent relationship leading to a broader view of schooling. This would require an "ideal speech situation" where exchanges were not based entirely on power relations (see 3.4). However, in this researcher's experience Ofsted inspectors adopted an objectivating attitude to teachers. The expectation was that the inspector interpreted the teacher's behaviour within the criteria and detailed prescriptions of the *Handbook.* These were non-negotiable, as were the judgements that are made. Although inspectors were encouraged to seek the perspective of teachers through scrutiny of lesson plans and discussion, time constraints severely limited the possibilities. Indeed there was no obligation to obtain a synthesis of views. Inspection appeared to be essentially an example of strategic action involving teachers and inspectors.

3.6 Implications for this research. The earlier discussion about Ofsted's inspection method (see Chapter 2) indicates that there was a close affinity between the Ofsted model of the school, "school improvement" and mode of inspection. The review raised the question whether Ofsted's model of the school reflected teachers' views of informed "common sense" – the basis for decisions about teaching and learning. If this were the case teachers would respond positively to Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement" by implementing "key issues for action". However it was unclear whether Ofsted's management systems model of school had "colonised" schools' "micro-lifeworlds" and thus was displacing other "steering media" that formed the basis for action. In this researcher's view it was unsafe to assume that the Ofsted model was the basis for decisions about teaching and learning in all school "domains". Writers such as Simkins (2000) claim that teachers

operating within "management" and "teaching" domains may not share the same purposes and values. As a consequence individuals may respond differently to recommendations embodied in "key issues". Thus schools' implementation may not be the neat and ordered process envisaged by Ofsted's (Ofsted, 1995c) planning discourse.

The review also raised issues about Ofsted's technical/rational mode of inspection. Ofsted emphasised the notion of "procedural objectivity" in its approach to inspection (see Chapter 2). The complex process of schooling was broken down in the *Framework* into numerous inspection criteria drawn from the Ofsted model of school embodied in the *Handbook* (see Chapter 2). During their observations inspectors collected evidence relating to these criteria and formed inspection judgements by making comparisons with Ofsted's benchmarks and exemplars. Individual inspection judgements were aggregated to form overall judgements about a curriculum area and the school, the aim was to "objectivise" inspection data, limit the scope for judgement and ensure the "validity" of inspection findings. As a consequence Ofsted could claim that inspection produced accurate descriptions of schooling and identified schools' strengths and weaknesses. Thus key issues acted as an agenda for "school improvement". However, this raised the question whether it was safe to assume that teachers accept Ofsted's model of inspection. For example Habermas (1984; 1987) argues that for knowledge to have a wide public value it must have gone through an "ideal speech" state of discussion and interaction by all stakeholders. The Ofsted process appeared to have some limitations in this respect. Although inspectors were willing to correct "errors of factual accuracy" no modification of the judgements

was usually entertained. Any attempt at reaching joint understanding and agreement during inspection feedback was therefore minimal, the situation being overwhelmingly one of strategic rather than communicative action. The agency's belief in the value of "procedural objectivity – the complete separation of facts and values – meant that inspection was essentially a neutral technique, a mirror held up to the "reality" of school. Furthermore, comparisons could be drawn between Ofsted inspection and the auditing process. Power (1994) argued that auditing created the very "facts" that it purports to represent and thus denied critical reflexivity. Arguably Ofsted inspection created the facts of schooling.

The discussion pinpointed several issues for research into Ofsted inspection. Clearly Ofsted's stance raised the issue of teachers' perceptions of the "validity" of inspection findings and Ofsted's model of the school. This was linked to whether teachers operating in different domains, such as management and teaching, had the same view of Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" (see below).

3.7 Ofsted's stance on school improvement. There was a need to clarify what Ofsted meant by the term "school improvement" since this was central to this investigation. Ofsted adopted a performance related definition of "improvement". The agency promoted notions of "quality" and "standards" in a cause-effect analysis of the process of schooling indicating that it viewed "school improvement" in terms of the management processes and systems embodied in successive versions of the Ofsted *Framework* and an outcome of successful pupils in cohorts of similar pupils. Thus a school's "performance" set against local and national benchmarks was a key component in

considerations of "school improvement". The *Framework* also included a comprehensive set of descriptors of "effective" teaching suggesting that the way a school promoted learning was bound up with the process of "improving" and was linked to teachers' expectations, methods of teaching and pupils' ways of learning. Thus Ofsted's view of the conditions for "improvement" was steeped in a performance-related view of "school improvement" and was based on the systematic evaluation of teaching in terms of the *Framework*, school priorities and central government policies. This involved comparisons using data about pupils' progress, known as "value-added measures", and schools' performance compared with Ofsted's local and national benchmarks. Such emphasis on assuring consistency, "quality" and "performance" within clearly defined parameters implied strong central control over school structures, systems and relationships. As a consequence the headteacher's role in promoting "improvement", managing systems, monitoring progress, knowing what was happening in classrooms and ensuring that everyone focused on raising standards of attainment, was stressed. Although authors such as Stoll and Fink (2001) also take a rationalist view of "school improvement", Ofsted highlighted issue of "performance". While Ofsted (Ofsted, 1998a) acknowledge the importance of a school's "capacity to improve" it emphasised the idea that the *Framework* was developmental and empowering and thus crucial in promoting "continuous improvement".

It was clear that an investigation into the effects of the inspection process using Ofsted's perspective on inspection needed to assess "school improvement". Thus the study employed the implementation of inspection recommendations as the indicator of "school improvement". It also needed to

monitor the implementation of inspection recommendations over time and this

implied a longitudinal investigation. Accordingly the research took place over

two school years – see Chapter 5 ""Research Methodology, Processes and

Procedures".

PART TWO – CULTURAL/ POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.8 The Cultural/Political Perspective. The previous discussion describes

how the research began by taking a technical/rational perspective. However

as the fieldwork progressed it became clear that participants placed their own

meanings on the Ofsted process. As a consequence this investigation also

embraced a cultural/political perspective to catch these meanings. This

section identifies key concepts postulated from authors propounding a cultural

and political perspective about organisations such as the school.

Organisational theorists, such as Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984),

Deal (1985) and Nias, Southworth and Campbell (1992) adopt an essentially

a cultural perspective. Others, such as Ball (1987), Radnor (1990) and Blase

(1991) take a political stance. However, other writers, such as Wallace and

Hall (1997), draw key concepts from both perspectives in a dual

cultural/political perspective about the school and this research followed this

approach. This view is based on an assumption that:

*"Individuals make different use of resources to achieve desired goals through
interaction according to their beliefs and values, which they share to a greater
or lesser extent with others, and of which have only partial awareness. Values
may be sustained or changed through interaction."* (Wallace and Hall,
1997:88)

This assumption is based on Gidden's (1976) notion that individuals

communicate meanings within the context of normative sanctions and

relationships of power. Clearly there was a need to identify those concepts that give purchase to social life within school and apply them to particular events, such as Ofsted inspection. Certain concepts were drawn from Wallace and Hall's (1997) description of concepts within a cultural perspective. Meanings and norms may be subsumed within the notion of *culture* – a set of shared complementary symbols, beliefs and values expressed in interaction. Beliefs and values include those relating to *norms* – rules of behaviour. Thus when individuals hold the same meanings and norms, they belong to a common culture. However, some shared meanings take the form of *myths*: stories and rumours related to the organisation which are passed on between individuals and whose authenticity may be based upon impressions or hard evidence. *Meanings*, which may be shared by all parties in the interaction, include those relating to the role of the individual or group. When individuals occupy a social position their actions are determined in part by what others expect from anyone in that position in terms of their responsibilities. Another significant concept is *status* – the relative position of a person on a socially defined scale or hierarchy of social worth.

The research draws key concepts from a political perspective. Hales (1998) points out that there is debate about the concept of power and thus it is necessary to define key concepts such as *power, authority* and *influence*. Here the term *power* refers to the capability of individuals to intervene in events so as to alter their course. Giddens (1984) defines *power* as a "transformative capacity" – the capacity to secure desired outcomes. *Resources* may include: sanctions and rewards; references to norms of behaviour and attitudes and skills linked to individual personalities; and

knowledge. Individual personalities are expressed in interaction through preferences in the use of power according to beliefs, values and patterns of behaviour that represent the individual's personal style. Power can imply conflict:

"power allows for each protagonist within a conflict to use his or her transformative capacity in attempting to achieve interests that contradict those of others." Giddens (1984)

This implies that where there is consensus *"individuals may have great capacity for working together to bring change or maintain the status quo"* (Wallace and Hall; 1997).

Two types of power may be distinguished. Bacharach and Lawler (1980) and Handy (1981) distinguish power as a resource, and influence as the process of attempting to modify others' behaviour. Thus *authority* implies the use of resources to achieve desired ends in a way that is perceived as legitimate by beliefs and values associated with formal status. *Influence* is defined as the informal use of resources to achieve ends where individuals perceive there is no recourse to sanctions linked to the delegated authority accompanying status within the school's management hierarchy. Hales (1998) argues that this allows an important distinction to be made in the context of management between the ways people are managed – how behaviour is influenced - and what makes management possible.

There are various definitions of *micro-politics*. For example Hoyle (1986) restricts the term to a covert use of influence. However this research draws a distinction between an action that is manipulative – *"a conscious attempt, covertly, to influence events through means which are not made explicit"* (Wallace and Hall, 1997) and an action where power is illegitimate,

overt or not. The difficulty is that implicit or explicit means and ends may be regarded by either party to the interaction as legitimate or illegitimate. Thus Individuals seek to realise their *interests,* seen as outcomes that serve as fulfilment of their wants. This implies that use of resources to realise *interests* reflects individuals' efforts to give expression to their values, which in turn are framed by their beliefs. Giddens (1984) claims that individuals are implicated in a multi-directional "dialectic of control". Thus interaction within schools can be viewed as a complex network of interdependencies, depending upon the individuals involved since everyone has access to some resources. Conversely no individual has a monopoly on power; it is distributed throughout the organisation, albeit unequally. Thus individuals may be able to *delimit* the actions of others. The relationship between power and conflict depends upon individuals attempting to realise different and even irreconcilable interests. Thus *conflict* refers to struggle between people expressed through their interaction. Conflict does not necessarily arise where actions are taken to realise *contradictory interests* as long as action according to one interest is separated from action according to the contradictory interest (Wallace, 1991). Writers, such as Wallace and Hall (1997), argue that mutual incompatibility between interests may be an enduring feature of social life where people are unaware of their interests or are unwilling to act on them. However there can be conflict where some members act according to formal status while others act as equal contributors within the same interaction.

This view raises questions about response to influence. The key issue is whether power and influence are recognised by those subject to it and this in turn reflects the visibility of imbalances of power resources and how

explicitly influence is exercised. This stance is important because recognition of an unequal power relationship is a prerequisite for power and influence. Thus when subjects recognise that power and influence are present they evaluate or form judgements about them.

What are the implications for this research? Ofsted inspection involves teachers making judgements about the legitimacy of Ofsted's power and influence operating through the inspection process. Thus teachers may question whether Ofsted should seek to influence their actions; whether they should accept what they are being required to do; and whether it is appropriate that Ofsted should possess such power. Ofsted's resources include a capacity to describe schools "as they are" and sanctions, such as holding schools to account and references to Ofsted's norms (see section 2.4). This implies that teachers may question whether headteachers should make use of Ofsted's resources to exert influence within school. The more these questions can be answered in the affirmative the more Ofsted's power and influence are deemed legitimate. Hence Ofsted's *authority* is expressed in terms of possession of power resources and attempts at influence which are deemed legitimate and, hence, acceptable to teachers. However teachers judge whether such economic and knowledge power is legitimate or not through attitudes, values and beliefs that are shaped by social forces. Thus what may be decisive within the Ofsted process is the effect of competing ideologies of power – the extent to which Ofsted's power is seen as legitimate, therefore, reflects the balance of competing ideas. This balance in turn reflects the distribution of normative power resources and this implies that perceptions of Ofsted's legitimacy may vary. Thus schools may not

respond to Ofsted's in unison and this suggests that this investigation needs to explore the individual responses of each school participating in this investigation.

There is much debate about the issue of the impact of legitimate power and influence on behavioural responses. However the intention is not to enter this debate but to highlight the issue of compliance. This research takes Etzioni's (1961) view that responses to power and influence lie along a continuum from positive to negative. Positive responses are consistent with the intentions of those exercising influence and may be regarded as degrees of compliance. However Etzioni (1961) claims that compliance is qualified by different degrees of cognitive involvement – the extent to which an individual feels positive about behaving compliantly. At one end of the continuum is "commitment" – behaviour associated with feelings of acceptance and self-identification. At the other end is "alienative compliance" – behaviour that is consistent with the intention of those exercising influence but where the individual neither believes in nor feels positively about their behaviour and thus makes no investment in self. In between is "calculation" – where those subject to influence weight up the costs and benefits of compliance.

3.9 Micro-political perspective on the school. Some researchers, such as Kemper (1978) and Fineman (1993; 2000), view schools as "self-organising emotional arenas". However, Keltchermans (1994; 1996) and Blase (1991) are of particular interest in taking a micro-political perspective on the school. The underlying assumption is that the actions of members of an organisation are determined to an important degree by their interests. The varying interests that are expressed as the objectives and motives of those involved from the

nucleus of these political actions. Van den Berg (2002) argues that

exploration of the micro-political perspective provides

"insights into the manner in which some teachers can quickly stagnate in their development...teachers strive towards the acquisition and maintenance of a stable work situation...such an orientation can also give rise to problems with changes in the work situation, particularly when these are imposed by external authorities...the micro-political perspective thus emphasises the use of informal power by individuals and groups to attain their goals within organisations." (Van den Berg, 2002: 583)

Thus the value of a micro-political perspective is the clear recognition of the

importance of the existential meanings of teachers. Arguably the recognition

of personal, emotional variables makes the internal dynamics of school

organisations more visible. Kechermans (1994; 1996) and Blase (1986) argue

that the existing patterns of culture, power and control within a school

influences the functioning of teachers. Busher et al's (2001b) case study of

how two headteachers and teachers in two urban areas coped with pressures

in their schools' external socio-political environment shows how actions

modified cultures and organisational structures as well as teaching and

learning and relationships between teachers. It provides political themes

relating to promoting school improvement. These include the impact of the

macro-environment on the internal processes of schools' change and school

improvement; the impact of local community on schools; headteachers' styles

and personalities – mediating the impact of the external environment of

schools and moderating the internal processes and cultures of schools; the

micro-politics of development - change, resistance and success; and change

processes with staff – culture, change and values. While this study was

concerned with the impact of the wider macro- and mezzo-environments on

schools it was particularly interesting because it included a micro-political

analysis of the schools' responses to "unsatisfactory" Ofsted inspection reports.

3.10 Change and school improvement. The previous discussion raises the issue of the cultural/political perspective on change and school improvement. Louis et al (1994; 1999) reporting on various research studies on school improvement argue that much change is unpredictable, evolutionary and non-linear in character and thus a methodical approach might be less efficient. Geijsel's (2001) study claims that the dominance of the rational/linear perspective may be to blame for a failure to establish the conditions needed to establish educational changes. Writers, such as Evans (1996), Poole (1996), van den Berg et al (1996) and Geijsel (2001) highlight the importance of a *cultural-individual perspective* on school development. Thus perceptions of teachers confronting change are seen as an important "instrument" not an impediment to change. Coburn's (2001) investigation shows that individual teachers do not blindly apply policy but rather give shape to policy. That is teachers adapt and even transform reforms as they put them in place. Individual teachers make sense of external policies in the context of the school. Thus teachers interpret norms, opinions, proposals and suggestions in an active manner and this process can lead to changed classroom practice.

Writers, such as Busher et al (2001b) and Bennett (2001), use key notions from the cultural/political perspective to develop a conceptual framework for change. The framework is based on the notion that school systems are characterised by "asymmetrical power relationships" between leaders and their subordinates. These authors argue that teachers struggle to assert their interests through school agendas and the beliefs and values that

underpin them where external agencies press for change. Where teachers decide that their interests are not being met sufficiently by policies enacted by headteachers and other leaders, they resist. Other writers, such as Ganderton (1991) and van der Westhuizen (1996), argue that resistance is a normal part of the decision-making process. According to Ganderton (1991) organisations actually need people who resist change because they make innovators think carefully about the impact of changes they are putting in place. Busher et al (2001b) view teacher resistance as an attempt by individuals or groups to assert their views against the dominant power of leaders. Paechter and Head (1996) claim that organisations such as schools often exert coercive pressures on their members to perform in certain ways. Thus where participants take the view that enacted policies are in conflict with their own interests, values and beliefs, resistance is a probability. Busher et al (2001a; 2001b) argue that such resistance is carried out through a set of political strategies. Other authors, such as Hoyle (1980), Wolcott (1977), van den Weisthuizen (1996) and Plant (1987) highlight the issue of teachers using strategies of resistance to counter their leaders. In contrast Ball (1987) highlights the issue of school leaders countering strategies of resistance in ways that deprive resisters of access to both the power and resources needed to implement their views. According to Busher et al (2001b) success in countering such resistance depends the on "pro-active engagement of leaders with their colleagues and subordinates". Additionally leaders' need the skill of understanding the socio-political processes of a school and its external contexts. In Busher's view there is a need to use

"a mixture of personal approaches, bureaucratic levers and cultural precepts to create an environment and purposeful collaboration amongst staff students and governors." (Busher et al, 2001b).

There has been much interest as to how leaders develop particular styles to motivate their staff and avoid conflict. Litwin and Stringer (1966) focus on so-called democratic styles of leadership. Blase and Anderson (1995) highlight "transformational leadership". However Allix (2000) points out that transformational leadership can be coercive as well as empowering. McGregor (2000) argues that leadership is empowering where the school is run in a collaborative or collegial manner. Hay McBer (2001) claims that leaders who display high levels of successful performance tend to show characteristics associated with the notion of "transformational leadership", holding individuals to account and developing staff potential. Busher et al (2001b) identify particular styles and personalities with successful change and improvement. These authors describe how "more successful headteachers" approach the issue of mediating change and moderating internal processes. This is contrasted with the approach of "long-established headteachers". Busher et al (2001b) claim that successful headteachers are able to adapt to swiftly changing environments thus making them more successful managers. The assumption is that certain modes of approach are more likely to be successful than other modes.

3.11 Implications for this investigation. The decision to adopt a cultural/political perspective on Ofsted inspection raised questions for the research method. Clearly a positivist method was inappropriate when seeking teachers' meanings towards Ofsted inspection – there was no reality "out there" that must be observed. Thus the research drew on notions within the

interpretative research paradigm where there is an emphasis on the importance of symbolic interaction. Here research findings represent the researcher's interpretations of informants' interpretations of negotiations with their experiences through words, symbols and actions. The interpretative researcher emphasises human agency and localised experience suggested that this would enable the investigation to gain insight into the complex relationship between teachers' meanings and the Ofsted process. The research drew on ideas within ethnography - a branch of the interpretative paradigm - concerned with" participant observation" where the observer becomes a participant in the activity that she or he is studying. However, the research method also borrows ideas from across disciplines including educational case study and educational ethnography and thus utilises various frames of reference.

Adoption of an interpretative methodology implied the need to review and adapt research procedures and process. For example the interpretative researcher recognises that by asking questions or by simply observing they may change the situation they are studying. Thus he is a potential variable in the enquiry and thus his own ideology is an issue within an investigation. This contrasts with the positivist notion of the detached observer conducting value-free research. The researcher is also seeking to maximise participant involvement with the intention of participation becoming more reflexive. This involves monitoring relations with other participants and basing actions on what one is learning about oneself in relation to them. The researcher must act on the information and this requires building participation as a flexible and emerging process into the investigation. The reader is reminded that this was

a longitudinal investigation lasting two school years. Thus the length and depth of fieldwork allowed the researcher to facilitate participation as a flexible and emerging process. This also involved changing research relations during the fieldwork – see Chapter 5 "Research Methodolgy, Processes and Procedures".

Writers, such as Carspecken and McGillivray (1998), point out that an emphasis on meanings implies a range of validity claims, for example objective validity claims that are based on what teachers see and hear and non-objective validity claims including normative-evaluative claims, subjective claims and identity claims. Thus the analysis of research data involves attention to word usage, to role structures and to cultural thematics, and other such components of social action. Clearly this implied a theory emergent approach. Thus political issues and themes would emerge during the investigation. However, a dual method study using different and even conflicting methods also raises the issue of interpretation: whether the research undertakes conjoined or serial interpretation. The discussion in Chapter 5 provides a description of research method and addresses issues relating to research processes and procedures.

PART THREE – ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

3.12 Assessing educational change. This investigation needed to assess the extent of implementation and change and thus it made use of Fullan's (1991; 2001a) model. While every change is not necessarily "improvement", it is clear that "improvement" involves change and there are clear parallels between inspection and other change strategies. Fullan's (1991; 2001a)

description of educational change allowed this investigation to identify stages in the change process. Thus this research discriminates between "implementation" and "institutionalisation", "change" and "improvement". Additionally it was possible to distinguish different types of change.

This research envisages that the change process consists of three overlapping phases: "initiation", "implementation" and "institutionalisation". The "initiation" phase is about deciding to embark on innovation and developing a commitment towards the process. The key activity is the decision to start and produce a review of the school's current state as regards a particular change. The key activities in the "implementation" phase are the carrying out of action plans, the development of commitment, checking progress and overcoming problems. "Institutionalisation" is the phase when innovation and change become part of the school's usual way of doing things. According to Miles (1987) the key activities of this stage include embedding the change within the school's structures, elimination of competing and contradictory practices, strong and purposeful connections with the curriculum and classroom teaching and widespread use in the school. Fullan (2001a) maintains that successful implementation includes elements of both pressure and support:

"pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources." (Fullan 2001a: 92)

Thus implementation needs to integrate pressure and support. In pursuit of change Ofsted (1995c) acknowledges the need to link external pressure, external support and internal pressure: internal pressure emanates from a recognition by governors, headteachers and senior staff of the advantage to the school inspection recommendations; the inspection process itself applies

external pressure by holding schools to account; and the necessary external support is provided by documentation such as the *Handbook*.

Factors relating to the "characteristics of change", which influence implementation and continuation of change, include the perceived need for a change and perceptions of the "complexity", "clarity" and "practicality" of change. There is a second group – some "local factors" relating to the school and including planned and unplanned events and "external factors" relating to the environment in which the school operates.

Fullan (2001a) cautions that teachers may not see the need for such proposals and in this case may question the degree of "fit" with school and individuals' needs. This matter may be related to its relevance to existing priorities or whether there has been an assessment of need in the case of complex change or even whether it accords with existing pedagogical beliefs and practices. "Complexity" refers to the *"difficulty and extent of change required of individuals responsible for implementation"* (Fullan, 2001:78). Thus the "complexity" of a proposal can be viewed in terms of whether it represents a radical break from current norms and practices and thus requires complete re-working of beliefs and attitudes or whether it is aligned with current practices and assumptions. In the case of complex change the level of support for successful implementation is increased and there is a greater risk of failure. However, the issue of "complexity" must not be viewed simply in terms of the problems created for implementation since it may result in greater change because more is being attempted (Berman et al, 1980, Fullan, 2001a).

The issue of "clarity" relates to essential features of a change such as goals and means. The more complex a reform the greater the problems of clarity. Lack of clarity, diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation presents a major problem at the implementation stage, creating uncertainties as to what the change means in practice. Unclear and unspecified changes can cause anxiety and frustration to implementers.

The quality or "practicality" of a change is related to the issue of the availability of resources and the time required for development. Having reviewed what is required to bring about large-scale curriculum reform, Fullan (2001a: 23-24) contends that a staff's capacity to bring about substantial change is significant and, therefore, the production of high quality materials is a key element in implementation. The goal should be a deep understanding of the change through the review and evaluation of materials and at the same time consolidation of change across the system and close monitoring of progress.

The next group of characteristics are what Fullan (2001a) terms "local factors" or social conditions for change: the organisation or setting in which people work and also planned and unplanned events that influence whether or not attempts will be productive. At the level of the individual school this includes the headteacher, staff, governors and the support provided by the local education authority inspectors and advisers. The headteacher or principal is the main agent of change and the individual who is most likely to shape the organisational conditions necessary for successful change by setting priorities, goals and creating collaborative work structures and procedures for monitoring progress. The earlier discussion (see section 3.8)

addressed the issue of approach to leadership from a cultural/political

perspective. However there are a plethora of studies highlighting the role of

headteacher in creating a school's capacity for growth, such as Sammons

(1999), Day et al. (2000), Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) and

Newman, King and Youngs (2000). Clearly writers have different stances on

the question of leadership. For example Hopkins (2001) takes the view that

"transformational leadership" is necessary but insufficient for improvement.

He focuses on the question of enhanced learning, the factors required to raise

student learning and "school improvement. Southworth (2002) highlights

headteachers' awareness of factors such as the staff quality, schools' current

levels of performance, teacher culture, and work place learning and

knowledge networks as key elements yielding school improvement.

Newmann et al. (2000) identify four components of the notion of "capacity":

teachers' knowledge and skills; the existence of a professional learning

community in which staff set clear goals for student learning, assess how well

students are doing, develop action plans and engagement in enquiry and

problem-solving; "programme coherence", a focus on clear learning goals

sustained over a period of time; and high quality technical resources. Yet

Fullan (2001a; 2001b) argues that "human capital" alone cannot produce

adequate development. There must also be organisational development

because "social capital" is the key to school improvement. In other words, the

skills of an individual can only be realised if the relationships within the school

are continually developing. However the potential of human and social capital

can only be realised when they are channelled in a way that combats the

fragmentation of change initiatives by working on programme coherence. The

other component of organisation capacity is acquiring the technical resources that support individual, collective and programme coherence. The key role of headteachers is to foster school capacity building. Day et al's (2000) study of leadership in twelve English schools demonstrates that "effective" headteachers constantly work at helping individuals to develop, continually promote the enhancement of relationships both within in the school and between the school and the community as well as maintaining a focus on goal and programme coherence. Leithwood et al. (1999) found that "effective" Canadian school leaders spend time developing people, building commitment to change, creating conditions for growth in teachers and relating to outside forces, while continually acquiring and targeting resources. Sebring and Bryk's (1998) study of school reform in Chicago concludes that school leadership is a determining factor in school success. When principals focussed on instruction, school-wide mobilisation of resources and effort, gave long-term emphasis to instruction and attacked "incoherence" they created the conditions for success.

It is clear school leadership is a complex issue and that the measure of a strong leader is one who develops the school's capacity to engage in reform. Fullan (2000a) quotes from Sebring and Bryk's (1998) study which claims that schools can increase scores on standardised tests in the short run with tightly monitored changes but the effects may not persist over time "*without undertaking the fundamental changes necessary to achieve effects that are likely to persist over time*". One such change is the creation and fostering of "learning communities" where "social" and "human" capital is developed. Fullan (2001a) also draws on Boyle's (2000) study of "failing

school systems" to make the case that different leadership characteristics may be required at different phases of the change process or of circumstances over time. For example to turn round a "failing" school may require assertive leadership whereas schools on the move need facilitation, coaching and assistance.

Teachers are also seen as key elements in school change. Hay Mcber's (2001) study of the framework for "effective teaching" found that "effective teachers" displayed three types of characteristics relating to teaching skills, classroom climate and professional characteristics. Professional characteristics are illustrated by the following dimensions: professionalism – challenge and respect; thinking – analytical and conceptual; planning and setting expectations – drive for improvement and information seeking; leading – passion for learning, holding people to account; and relating to others – teamwork and empathy. Fullan (2001) argues that this view can be seen as serving his own call to "reculture" the teaching profession as part of creating and fostering "learning communities".

This research takes the view that there are a group of influences under the heading of "external factors" operating beyond the school and local education authority. The previous discussion refers to the influence of reform policies such as Ofsted inspection and school examination league tables on school development. The question is whether these policies alone can successfully integrate accountability and school improvement. This issue is at the heart of the debate about Ofsted's claims for inspection (see 3.3).

3.13 Phases of change. This research takes the view that there are three overlapping phases of change (see 3.9) – "initiation", "implementation" and

"institutionalisation". This suggests that the examination of inspection-induced change should consider the "characteristics" of a proposed change: the perceived need for a change and perceptions of the "complexity", "clarity" and "practicality" of a change. It needs to identify any "local factors" within the school and the immediate environment, including planned and unplanned events, which influence change. It also needs to identify the behaviour and actions of key change agents, such as the headteacher and heads of subject, influencing change. There is also a need to distinguish between "implementation" and "real" change. Change is real where it becomes part of the school's usual way of doing things, embedded in school structures, competing and contradictory practices are eliminated and strong connections made between the curriculum and teaching.

SUMMARY

3.14 Summary. The discussion places Ofsted's technical/rational approach to inspection within a framework of social theory and identifies issues for this research. The review compares Ofsted with an auditing process that influences the very "facts" that it purports to assess – the implication being that inspection may create the "facts" of schooling and denies reflexivity. When Ofsted inspection is viewed as social action - Habermas's (1984; 1987) theory of communicative action – and in particular the notions of "communicative" and "strategic action", it appears that the Ofsted process does not create what Habermas calls an "ideal speech" state. This implies that teachers may not view Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" as common sense – the basis for decisions for teaching and

learning. In turn this raises the issue whether Ofsted's has "colonised" school "micro-lifeworlds", for example the management "lifeworld" and teaching "micro-lifeworlds". If this were the case schools' response to Ofsted inspection would be complex and inspection-led "school improvement" would not be a neat, logical and ordered process.

This was a longitudinal investigation and as it progressed it became clear that participants viewed inspection not simply as a rational/technical process but as a policy process. Participants highlighted micro-political interaction between senior teachers and their subordinates as a major factor in the inspection process (see Chapter 8). Thus this researcher took a decision to use ethnographic techniques within the investigation. This involved the employment of a different approach to validity claims, participation and analysis. This posed questions about the research relationship stance of "validity"; the need to promote reflexivity through "participation" or involvement and control over the research. It also raised the issue of this researcher's ideological stance. A theoretical framework was allowed to emerge during the analysis of cultural/political data. The discussion looks at key components of the political framework.

Chapter 4

REVIEW OF RESEARCH INTO THE EFFECTS OF OFSTED

INSPECTION ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

4.1 Introduction. This chapter considers the issues raised by previous

research into Ofsted's technical/rational discourse "improvement through

inspection". It identifies factors in the school, inspection process and

immediate environment that influence schools' response to Ofsted inspection.

The discussion indicates that Ofsted's view of the "validity" of inspection

findings and teachers' interpretations of "key issues for action" are significant

factors in schools' implementation of inspection recommendations. There is a

description of longitudinal investigation that view Ofsted inspection as a

staged process and this is followed by a review of the studies that examine

the link between Ofsted inspection and school development and performance.

The chapter concludes by highlighting issues for this research.

4.2 Factors influencing schools' response to inspection. The first

research studies on Ofsted inspection focused on how Ofsted inspection

works. These studies used a technical/rational perspective, usually Ofsted's

perspective, on inspection and highlight factors within school, the inspection

process and in the school's immediate that influenced schools' responses to

inspection. For example Wilcox and Gray's (1995) study of local education

authority inspections of five junior and middle schools in different local

education authorities, finds that a variety of factors influenced schools'

responses to inspection. In particular the "quality" of proposed changes;

factors in schools' immediate environments such as the headteacher's

attitudes towards inspection and the extent of LEA advice support for school

change; and such "external factors" as a need to implement the National Curriculum, influence schools' reactions to inspection recommendations. Wilcox and Gray (1995) draw a distinction between "implementation" and "institutionalisation" (Fullan, 1991; 2001a) highlighting that implementation does not always lead to institutionalisation and change. These authors pose the question whether schools' action plans generate a commitment to change.

A number of surveys of senior managers seek views about factors that influence a school's response to inspection. For example Ouston, Fidler and Earley (1996) surveyed 400 secondary headteachers about the effects of inspection on school development. Respondents gave their views on the issues raised by a need to achieve a "good" inspection report: preparation for inspection, inspection feedback and an accurate inspection report. This study claims that a school's planning is key element in the response to Ofsted's recommendations for school development.

4.3 Ofsted's view of validity. Ofsted's claim for the "validity" of inspection judgements came under close scrutiny when schools questioned the fairness and accuracy of inspection reports. Ofsted (1997d) published data which reveals that 95 per cent of schools inspected during 1995/6 "broadly agreed" that their inspection reports are "fair" and "accurate", and that inspectors are competent. Inspection judgements in the case of schools deemed to be "failing" or "likely to fail", to provide a "satisfactory" education had been confirmed by HMI in 98 per cent of schools judged in this category (Ofsted, 1997d). A study by Matthews et al. (1997), of the reliability and consistency of Ofsted's inspection judgements on the quality of teaching reveals the extent of agreement between pairs of inspectors on grades when viewing the same

lesson was "reassuringly high". According to this investigation inspectors' can judge "teaching quality" with considerable consistency and this points to a national system in which *"there is a high degree of reliability and validity in inspection judgements of teaching quality"*. However, Fidler et al (1998) claim that there were discrepancies between inspectors' grading and schools' judgements of "very poor" teaching that were likely to be divisive and damaging.

Some writers question Ofsted's claims for the reliability of the inspection method. For example Fitzgibbon and Stephenson-Foster (1999) surveyed a random sample of 159 secondary headteachers, 88 of who had been inspected by Ofsted about their attitudes towards the "reliability", "validity" and impact of the Ofsted process. Despite strong the support for the principle of inspection, particularly from inexperienced and newly appointed headteachers, respondents questioned the reliability of the Ofsted inspection method. Such doubts were linked to the question of sampling (see Chapter 2) and whether inspectors saw the "normal state of affairs". However, there were mixed views on the "usefulness" of inspection – 70 per cent agreed with the statement *" the Framework had an impact on school management and organisation"*. However, results from questions concerning the "usefulness" of the information in improving schooling were *"neither overwhelmingly positive nor overwhelmingly negative"*. This study concludes that among the evidence of a largely negative view about the reliability of Ofsted's inspection method there is strong support for the principle of inspection and Ofsted's management discourse embodied in the *Framework*.

4.4 Impact of inspection. Later investigations focused on the effects of Ofsted inspection on school development. For example writers claimed that Ofsted inspection reports might have negative effects on school development. For example Field et al. (1998) claimed that the language of Ofsted's inspection reports was generally positive but stylised and restrictive. When the action recommended by Ofsted was already in school development plans, then the reports did not offer anything new and the impact of inspection on development was consequently diminished. Ouston et al. (1998) and Maychell and Pathak (1997) reach similar conclusions. By contrast Ofsted took a positive view of the effect of school inspection reports. For example Matthews and Smith (1995) argued that documenting schools' achievements and strengths can have beneficial effects on staff morale since affirmation of a school's quality and sense of direction can boost confidence. However, Cuckle and Broadhead (1998) contend that "good" inspection reports confirm teachers' sense of professionalism and raise staff morale. Conversely, unexpectedly "bad" or highly critical reports damage staff morale and this had the perceived effect of limiting school development and improvement.

A minority of studies draw on the views of teachers at all levels. These link teachers' emotional responses towards Ofsted and subsequent behaviour. For example Brimblecome al. (1995) claim that Ofsted inspection creates "additional levels of stress", which have detrimental physiological and psychological effects" on teachers. Thomas's (1996) survey of 37 teachers from all levels in six Welsh secondary schools claims that that inspections *"can be more stressful than they need to be"*. This author recommends that schools adopt measures that reduce teachers' stress.

4.5 Intention to make a change. The previous section highlights research, such as Brimblecome et al. (1995), that links teachers' emotional reactions with their behavioural responses to Ofsted inspection. These authors claim that there is link between teachers' emotional responses to inspection and the intention to make a change. Information was collected through a questionnaire survey of a random sample of secondary schools inspected during 1994. A total of 821 questionnaires were returned from teachers at all levels and 30 in-depth interviews were carried out. The main findings were:

- Teachers' feelings about inspection affected their behavioural responses.

- A fifth of the respondents reacted differently towards their students whilst an inspector was in the room – the most common was to be more formal than usual.

- Half of the respondents were positive about the inspector's behaviour whilst in the classroom. The perceived behaviour was linked to an intention to change practice.

- Almost a third of the sample felt that the inspector had not seen a lesson representative of their usual standard of teaching; half felt that the inspection team had not seen a fair representation of their work.

- Responses varied with the gender and seniority of teachers and gender of inspectors.

This research points to differences in the responses to inspection within the same school and highlights that the intention to change does not necessarily result in actual change. Furthermore, it hints that schools' reactions to Ofsted inspection are influenced by teachers' emotions.

4.6 Longitudinal studies of inspection. A minority of investigations into the

effect of inspection on school development are longitudinal studies. For

example Wilcox's and Gray's study (1995) (see 4.2) of the nature and fate of

fate inspection recommendations took place over twelve months. This

investigation employed Fullan's (1991) model of educational change to make

judgements about the "quality" of change in response to inspection. It posed a

question about the time required by schools to implement and institutionalise

"complex" inspection recommendations, such as those concerned with

teaching and learning. The study found that schools required more time than

was available during the investigation to implement changes in the classroom.

This investigation also questioned a variation in the extent of implementation

of different types of inspection recommendation.

There has been one comprehensive, large-scale longitudinal

investigation into secondary schools' responses to inspection. Ouston et al

(1998) collected information over a three-year period by means of face-to-face

and telephone interviews with staff at 55 schools in 1993, 1994 and 1996.

Questionnaires were sent to all secondary schools inspected in the autumn

terms of 1993,1994 and 1996 and response rates of 60 and 80 per cent were

obtained. Some data were obtained from junior staff but most information was

obtained from headteachers. The investigation provides a "management

perspective", the assumption being that headteachers and senior managers

accurately reflect what is happening in the school as a whole, of the impact of

inspection on school development. The Ofsted inspection process was

considered to be in six stages, where schools' and inspectors' attitudes make

an impact on the subsequent changes: (1) before the inspection date is

announced; (2) after the date is known but before the inspection; (3) the inspection and preparing the action plan; (4) implementation of the action plan; (5) after the impact of the first inspection; and (6) re-inspection. Schools' responses in stage 1 were determined by their attitudes towards the Ofsted process; the extent of success in external examinations and pupil recruitment; the extent of current internal change and schools' own culture and values. Schools in the research programme received between two and four terms notice of the inspection date. Schools inspected during 1993/4 undertook extensive preparation – reviewing their own practice, bringing documentation up to date and working towards having "the perfect week". Nearly all of the schools inspected during 1996 described themselves as "fully prepared" with just over half presenting a "highly prepared performance". About one third saw this as making a major contribution to school development. However, the same proportion claimed it had slowed down developments not directly related to inspection. Many teachers found preparation a very stressful process.

Schools valued inspectors who behaved professionally, were in tune with schools' aims, purposes and values, and understood the context in which schools operate. They valued inspections that were seen as fair and accurate and inspectors who contributed to helpful and supportive dialogue. A "good" inspection increased confidence in the Ofsted process and enhanced the validity of the inspection report and recommendations. However, headteachers expressed concern about the quality of inspections conducted during 1996. A third of schools surveyed knew some of their inspectors before the inspection – some teachers saw this as an advantage as

inspectors knew about the context in the schools operated, whereas others saw this as a potential source of bias.

Implementation of "key issues" varied with the type of school. For example schools characterised by the researchers as "popular", "successful", well supported by parents and who expected inspectors to confirm their success, implemented key issues that were compatible with their own culture and values. Whereas staff in schools characterised by the researchers as serving disadvantaged communities who perceived that they could not match Ofsted's "ideal", depended on perceptions of the competence of the inspection team and the extent to which key issues were seen as valid and accurate. Staff in such schools took a positive view of inspection recommendations that took account of a school's context and culture. In evaluating their inspection reports, on average, schools considered 70 per cent of inspection recommendations to be "important for the school". However, some could not be implemented because they were beyond the school's control. Recommendations that were not congruent with the school's culture were considered less important and reports that were perceived as inaccurate received very little attention. "Poor" inspection practice led to schools dismissing inspection findings as invalid.

Implementation of "key issues" depended on the perceived importance of the recommendations for the school, and the ease which implementation could be achieved. Good progress was made in the case of key issues considered "important" and implementation was most successful where inspection recommendations and schools' intentions overlapped. Here the inspection findings acted as a confirmation of the school's direction and

lever for change. According to Ouston et al (1998) most of the "change" was made in the first year of the inspection – good progress was made with inspection recommendations that could be "easily fixed" such as changes to documentation and administrative procedures. "Struggling schools" frequently made little progress with "important issues" where the inspectors made a large number of recommendations that addressed school-wide issues such as improving attendance. Less progress was made with issues deemed "less important", improvements to accommodation and the corporate act of worship. Schools' approach to implementation varied with the school – the headteacher being the key element in a school's strategy for implementation. Headteachers met with considerable resistance from heads of subject to implementation of school-wide assessment policies and thus valued the support provided by the Ofsted process.

The longitudinal study by Ouston et al. (1998) concludes that the impact of inspection fades after about eighteen months. However the Ofsted process has a positive effect on many secondary schools but these authors question whether there is another, more effective and less costly, way of "school improvement". Ouston et al (1998) identify several issues for the research: teachers' attitudes towards the Ofsted inspection process; perceptions of the inspection itself, inspection findings and "key issues", for example whether inspection recommendations are in tune with an individual's values, culture and aspirations; relative importance of key issues; whether inspection recommendations are achievable and their interpretation by members of staff. The issue was taken up by Russell and Metcalfe's (1996) who undertook a study of middle managers' interpretations of inspection

recommendations concerning monitoring and evaluation. This found that interpretations varied within and between schools and such differences influenced the implementation of inspection recommendations. Ouston et al (1998) also highlight the significance of a school's current state of development, its readiness for change as key elements in implementation and the sheer complexity of inspection-induced change.

The longitudinal study by Ouston et al's (1998) is particularly useful because it highlights the issue of process. It views Ofsted inspection as a staged process where schools' and inspectors' attitudes make an impact on the subsequent changes. Although implementation is viewed as a mainly rational process, emphasis is given to planning change; these researchers acknowledge that teachers' beliefs about teaching influence perceptions of inspection recommendations and thus a school's response to Ofsted's agenda for change. For example teachers employed strategies of resistance in opposing the headteacher's plans for change.

4.7 Teachers' reactions to "improvement through inspection". In a study of schools' responses to the Ofsted inspection process Cromey-Hawke (1997) describes changes in teachers' attitudes towards Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection". A representative sample of 21 secondary school headteachers drawn from 17 local education authorities was surveyed about their schools' inspection findings during 1993/1994. Headteachers were initially optimistic about the improvement potential of inspection and some level of action was taken on 80 per cent of inspection recommendations one year after inspection. In spite of this respondents had not observed significant levels of school-wide change. However, they took the view that the Ofsted

process had significantly affected their own practice and they attributed this to higher levels of awareness of Ofsted. The study found that inspection recommendations concerning administrative processes and procedure were implemented, with individual teaching and learning activities remaining least affected. Two case studies of implementation of inspection recommendations in 11-18 comprehensive schools were undertaken. Information was collected annually through an interview with headteachers, middle managers and a sample of classroom teachers on how far inspection had affected their practice and the extent to which Ofsted was in their professional consciousness. Respondents claimed that Ofsted had a noticeable place in their professional consciousness but most respondents initially denied acting on "key issues for action" and this remained the case during the interviews that took place during 1996 and 1997. However headteachers took the view that they had acted on inspection recommendations because of their statutory nature. The research found that schools acted on a wide range of their original inspection findings two years after inspection but this activity tailed off after three years after inspection. Cromey-Hawke (1997) claimed that "force of circumstances" often meant that "key issues" were not being specifically implemented, although the principles underlying them were absorbed into the culture of teaching. Cromey-Hawke (1997) speculates that Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" is being increasingly recognised by many groups of teachers and poses the question whether this represented the "ethical retooling" of schools an insidious "colonisation" (Habermas, 1984; 1987) by Ofsted of the world of teaching. Cromey-Hawke (2000) clarified his stance in a final report where he claimed that significant "reculturing" in

response to Ofsted had taken place but schools had engaged in a "strategic counterplay", such as moderating the colonising potential of the cycle of inspection. Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" had been absorbed by schools' wider improvement efforts.

4.8 Key issues for action. Wilcox and Gray (1996:84) undertook an analysis of 181 key issues identified for a group of primary and secondary schools inspected during 1994/5. A wide spectrum of school-wide and specific activities was covered, for example "management and administration", "school development planning", "assessment", "curriculum delivery", "curriculum documentation" and "environment and accommodation". Other studies, for example Russell et al. (1996), also report that there was a wide range of activities covered in schools' "key issues for action". An analysis of inspection recommendations (Wilcox and Gray, 1996) suggested that half the inspection recommendations are concerned with curriculum and assessment seen as *"a nationally prescribed product though an agency of an explicit management system"*. These authors claim that the management system is one of meticulous documentation, planning, monitoring and evaluation. There were significant variations in the implementation of different types of key issues 9 and 21 months after inspection. For example recommendations concerning "teaching and learning" and "curriculum delivery" experience low levels of implementation, whereas those relating to management and administration and school documentation were either "fully" or "substantially" implemented. The study concluded that recommendations involving wholesale change in the behaviours of teachers are "difficult" to implement. It equated schools' implementation of inspection recommendations with "real" change and

"improvement" and suggests that it might be impossible to sustain teachers'
long-term commitment to change as new pressures emerge. The question
whether Ofsted inspection influences pedagogy was left unanswered.

4.9 Inspection and school performance. Several studies examine the link
between inspection and student achievement. For example Cullingford and
Daniels (1999) employed a statistical procedure to measure the success, or
otherwise, of Ofsted inspection of raising educational standards. This study
examined the link between inspection and school external examination
results. GCSE results were obtained from a representative sample of pupils in
terms of gender, social background and other "background features" in
schools inspected between 1993-1998. This investigation found that there
was a modest increase in the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more
GCSE grades A* to C. However when associated with Ofsted inspections a
slower rate was observed with schools falling behind other schools. All the
inspection periods appeared to have had a significant effect on grades
achieved. This observed negative effect was not constant. While
September/October inspections were having a less negative effect,
March/April inspections had a greater negative effect. This implied that the
timing of inspections was significant – the closer that inspection was to GCSE
examinations the worse the school's results.

Thomas (1999) surveyed all Welsh secondary schools that had been
inspected up to end of 1995/6 to determine whether inspection achieved
"school improvement". This was assessed in terms of the proportion of pupils
achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades. Information was sought on
areas of school life most altered by inspection. Eighty schools returned the

questionnaire representing a 64 per cent response rate. Eighty four per cent of the returns were filled in by headteachers and other senior staff filled in the remaining returns. Inspection was ranked sixth in factors that affected the schools' "performance" in external examinations: below increased monitoring by senior managers; in-service training with current staff; better use of current staff and appointment of new staff. Respondents speculated on factors that affect other schools' "performance" – the effect of a new headteacher, pupils' social background, class-size, new staff and schools' examination league tables were all ranked above inspection. However, the majority of respondents believed that inspection leads to improvements in teaching standards.

The most recent study by Shaw, Newton, Aitken and Darnell (2003) surveyed the examination results of 3000 Ofsted inspected secondary schools offering students for the GCSE examinations during 1992 to 1997 inspection cycles. For the kinds of schools where achievements were already much higher or lower than the average, for example selective schools inspection was associated with slight improvements in achievement. For county, local education authority maintained comprehensive schools inspection did not improve examination achievement.

4.10 Issues for research. This study employed Ofsted's technical/ rational perspective on inspection and thus the issues raised by those investigations that took the same perspective were of particular interest. Previous investigations highlighted factors in the school, inspection process and immediate environment that influenced schools' responses to Ofsted inspection and agenda for "school improvement". The longitudinal

investigation by Ouston et al. (1998) was particularly useful since it viewed these factors in terms of a staged inspection process - from before the date of the inspection is announced to re-inspection four years later (see Chapter 9 for the current arrangements for re-inspection). These authors describe schools' responses to the inspection process and indicate a number of technical/rational factors or themes. For example teachers' attitudes towards Ofsted – whether Ofsted is the most appropriate agency to evaluate the school's mission; the inspection method – whether Ofsted captures the "reality" of the school - is identified as an issue. Ouston et al, (1998) also highlight Ofsted's stance on "validity" as an issue – whether teachers accept Ofsted's view that "procedural objectivity" and the consistency and reliability of inspection judgements ensures the "validity" of inspection findings and the picture that emerges from inspection. These authors identified teachers' perceptions of the "quality" – the appropriateness, practicality and complexity of the "key issues for action" – as a significant influence on implementation. Ouston et al. (1998) raised the issue of teachers' interpretation of Ofsted's intentions towards the school – whether senior and middle managers share the same intentions as Ofsted and thus whether the implementation of inspection recommendations is concerned with Ofsted's view of the school's strengths and weaknesses Other writers, such as Wilcox and Gray (1996), also highlighted the issue of the school's implementation of different types of key issue. In a comprehensive analysis of schools' implementation of key issues Gray and Wilcox (1996) claimed that those key issues concerning teaching and learning and "curriculum delivery" experienced low levels of implementation. In contrast key issues concerning management and

administrative matters and school documentation had been "fully" or "substantially" implemented. Both Gray and Wilcox (1996) and Ouston et al. (1998) argued that change that involved the whole staff – teachers' beliefs and practice – was problematic. This implied that this investigation needed to achieve an understanding of how whole-school matters are influenced by Ofsted inspection.

It was clear that this investigation required an indicator of inspection-induced change and a result it used schools' implementation of "key issues for action" as an indicator. This investigation's particular contribution to research into Ofsted inspection is that it was a longitudinal study that collected information from teachers at all levels across the school. This researcher took the view that realities grounded in teachers' day-to-day experiences of a school were more reliable sources of information about the Ofsted inspection process than information drawn from "official" sources. However this stance posed the question whether Ofsted's technical/rational framework would accommodate all the issues relating to the implementation of inspection recommendations. This researcher had noted Ouston et al's (1998) study that highlighted the issue of the effect of teachers' interests and the school's culture on the school's implementation of inspection recommendations. Writers, such as Brimblecome et al. (1995), highlighted that the intention to make a change was not simply a rational process - teachers' emotional responses to Ofsted inspection were a significant factor in the response to Ofsted inspection. The discussion in Chapter 5 indicates how this researcher deals with this matter.

Chapter 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Introduction. The chapter describes how the researcher's ideology influenced the choice of research method - a dual technical/rational and cultural/political approach to implementation of inspection recommendations. The use of collective case studies is identified as the overarching research methodology and the discussion indicates how such methodology influenced the research method. The discussion indicates that the study was longitudinal and charts the emergence of a micro-political perspective and considers the issues of "participation", "interviewing" and "validity". The chapter concludes by considering the dual method and describes common research procedures and processes.

5.2 Research aim. The main aim was to examine Ofsted's claim that inspection leads to "school improvement" (see Chapter 3). Ofsted inspection provided schools with agendas for "school improvement" embodied in "key issues for action" and the assumption was that implementation led to change and "school improvement". Thus the objectives were to assess the changes and "school improvement" arising from inspection and to illuminate the process of inspection induced change.

5.3 Researcher's stance. The researcher's ideological stance was a key element in his approach to the investigation and thus he took the view that he should be transparent about his ideology. It was more accurate to refer to ideologies since he viewed life through a complex web of different and at times contradictory value and information systems – political, pedagogical, social and spiritual. His core values, such as a commitment to social justice,

compassion and democracy remained constant throughout. However, the details of these ideologies remained in a continual state of flux. During his adult and working life ideologies had been shaped by a wide diversity of traditions such as: socialist ideals about income-distribution; the ideals of comprehensive education; teacher professionalism; public service; feminism; post-modernism and humanistic and Jungian psychology. Latterly he supported the central government's drive for school reform and accepted the discourse of "new managerialism" as an ideology for leading and managing a large secondary school (see Chapter 2). However there were contradictions embedded in these ideological systems of thought, and at the time of this investigation he was unable to reconcile his own internal tensions concerning such government agencies as Ofsted setting the educational context for schools and a teacher's "right" to determine what was appropriate for the context in which she or he operated. His view was that such contradictions were embedded in the Ofsted inspection process and thus he intended that this study would identify whether Ofsted inspection controlled the direction of school change and thus the context for teaching and learning. Ofsted's (Matthews and Smith, 1995) claim that there was widespread acceptance by teachers of Ofsted's *Framework* (1995b) and the view that large sections of the teaching profession recognised that inspection findings were assumed to be essentially valid and provided a sound basis for discussions about working towards "school improvement", influenced his thinking about the research. This led him to adopt Ofsted's technical/rational perspective on inspection-induced change and, while no inherent supremacy for the Ofsted model was being claimed either in inspection or "school improvement", the manner in

which teachers, managers and schools responded to its application in their own unique contexts became the focus of the study.

However as this longitudinal study progressed interview data suggested that Ofsted inspection had a range of meanings, not simply Ofsted's meanings, for teachers participating in the inspection process. Furthermore it became clear that micro-political interactions within the school organisation influenced the outcome of Ofsted's pressure for change and these interactions had significant implications for teachers' understandings of the inspection process. Thus the study used ideas from the ethnographic research paradigm where human actions are based on social meanings, individuals interpret each other's understandings and meanings change through social intercourse. In this way the study took a dual perspective approach – technical/rational and cultural/political or micro-political – to the Ofsted inspection process. Bolman and Deal (1991) argue that a dual perspective approach can generate a range of descriptions that broadens understandings of a phenomenon and in this way discussion expands the number of concepts by sequential interpretation. The intention was not to capture the "reality" of the Ofsted inspection process but to represent the response to inspection by employing a dual perspective, the applicability of which may vary with the event and the participants.

5.4 Overarching strategy. A case study methodology was preferred for the overarching strategy. However any attempt to select a case study design inevitably involved this researcher entering a minefield of overlapping but distinctive styles, approaches and methods (Stake, 1995). This researcher first established a position on the issue of "generalisation" and linked this with

the principles of educational case study. Writers such as Stake (1995) highlight the importance of the issue of "generalisation" or "particularisation" in case study methodology: *"case study seems a poor basis for generalisation...the real business is about particularisation"* (pp.7,8). Although various propositions for "generalisation" have been put forward including Tripp's (1985) "qualitative generalisation", Yin's (1994) "analytical generalisation" and Stake's (1995) "prepositional generalisation", this research opted for an interpretation of "generalisation" located within the field of educational research. Educational case study research can be disseminated through "fuzzy generalisation" which is defined as

"A kind of prediction, arising from an empirical enquiry, that says something may happen, but without any measure of possibility, it is qualified generalisation, carrying the idea of possibility but no certainty."
(Bassey 1999: 46)

Such thinking originates in the academic literature of "fuzzy logic". In particular Fourali (1997) has brought the term into educational literature by arguing for "fuzzy assessment" and imprecision instead of phoney exactness. By employing the notion of "fuzzy generalisation" the researcher is concerned with the detail and circumstances that give meaning to educational research and to exceptions and uncertainties that surround an event, and thus the adjective "fuzzy" implies that there will be exceptions. This can be contrasted with scientific generalisations where there are no exceptions and where a statement is abandoned or revised to accommodate new evidence. According to Bassey (1999) a "fuzzy generalisation" read in conjunction with written reports indicates that something has happened in one place and that it may happen elsewhere, and also implies an invitation to assess whether it applies

in different circumstances. Thus "fuzzy generalisation" informs "professional

discourse":

"That part of their professional knowledge which teachers acquire through their practical experience in the classroom...which guides their day-to-day actions in classrooms, which is for the most part not articulated in words, and which is brought to bear spontaneously, routinely and sometimes unconsciously on their teaching." (Brown and McIntyre, 1993:17)

Such knowledge is influenced by "professional discourse" which is:

"[The] maelstrom of ideas, theories, facts and judgements, which the individual meets...broods on, contributes to and occasionally uses." (Bassey, 1999:51)

It is also underpinned by understandings of educational systems and political

knowledge and a range of ideological positions such as those concerned with

teaching also support it. Bassey (1999) claims that the role of educational

research is to inform professional discourse, to be informed by it by

contributing to ideas, facts and judgements about education. Thus

educational case study is an empirical enquiry, which is conducted within a

localised boundary of space and time into *"interesting "* (the author's italics)

aspects of an educational activity, or programmes, or institutions, or systems.

It is conducted mainly within its natural context and within an ethic of respect

for persons, informing the judgements and decisions of practitioners and

policy-makers or of theoreticians seeking to rationalise policy process. The

researcher collects sufficient data to be able to explore significant features of

the case, create "plausible" interpretations and construct a "worthwhile

argument" and relate the argument to any relevant research. Furthermore the

researcher must provide an audit trail by which other researchers may

validate or challenges the findings, or construct alternative arguments.

5.5 Research method. Collective case studies involve a small number of cases that are jointly examined in depth with contexts scrutinised and activities detailed. Each case has an individual voice that contributes to an overall view of issues, such as Ofsted's inspection method, which may have implications for the phenomena under investigation. The investigation was longitudinal - the fieldwork for the investigation took place over two year school years- and began by taking Ofsted's technical/rational view of inspection that focuses on the links between inspection, change and "school improvement". Schools' implementation of "key issues for action" was used as an indicator of change and "school improvement". A number of research questions were formulated that set the agenda for the research, enabling data to be collected and permitting their analysis to get started. These questions are set out below.

5.6 Research questions.

- **How far and in what ways do key issues for action become the school's agenda for change and improvement?**

- **Does implementation lead to change and improvement in all areas of school activity?**

- **Which factors in the inspection process, school and immediate environment influence schools' response to key issues for action?**

Each of these questions identified the actions to taken as well as the requisite research procedures and processes.

5.7 Collection of data. The previous discussion indicates that schools' implementation of inspection recommendations was used as an indicator of

change and "improvement". This raised several questions pertaining to the collection of data such as "Who provides information about implementation"? Previous studies (see Chapter 4) relied on the views of headteachers and senior managers. However this research made use of information grounded in the day-to-day experiences of teachers at all levels – not simply headteachers and senior managers – on the implementation process. This provided a comprehensive picture of schools' responses to inspection. What would be the focus of data collection? Earlier studies of Ofsted inspection had been concerned with understanding the inspection itself and thus they focused on schools' responses within a year of inspection (see Chapter 4). However, this current investigation was also concerned with changes that occurred after inspection and thus had been designed as a longitudinal investigation, the assumption being that some types of change, such as in teachers' beliefs and practice, occurs over time. What type of information was required? According to Ouston et al (1998) Ofsted inspection was a staged process and thus events at each stage influenced decision-making in the next stage. Thus this investigation required information from each stage of the inspection process: the teachers' attitudes towards Ofsted; the inspection process; responses to "key issues for action"; and extent of schools' implementation of key issues

5.8 Validity claims. The previous discussion indicated that "procedural objectivity" was central to Ofsted's claims for the "validity" of inspection judgements and findings (see Chapter 3). Ofsted's procedures linked the inspection method, inspection judgements, inspection findings and "key issues for action". The aim being to "objectivise" inspection findings and thus

depict the "facts" of school – to describe the "reality" of school. As a consequence this researcher took the view that teachers' claims about implementation required a check for any biases in their attention, candour and self-deception to ensure that such claims were well supported. Additionally a longitudinal investigation that lasted two school years – faced the issue of the reliability of participants' memories and capacity to process, interpret and recall information. These matters were seen as important issues in this investigation. Earlier research showed that there were other threats to "validity". For example Brimblecome et al. (1995) and Thomas (1996) highlight the issue of teachers' emotional responses to Ofsted's inspection method. This suggested that feelings of stress and anxiety might detrimentally affect individuals' capacities to memorise recall and analyse inspection feedback. Fielding et al. (1986) claims that the quality of data can also be affected by conscious and unconscious deception on the part of the interviewee where questions of hierarchy are attached to the matter under investigation. In a similar vein Cromey-Hawke (1997) identifies the issue of teachers' "denial" of Ofsted's influence on school change and attributed this to feelings of resentment towards the imposition of Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection". Cromey-Hawke (1997) claimed that there was a degree of conscious or unconscious deception in the responses to questions concerning the intention to change. This suggested that this investigation needed to adopt procedures to minimise bias. Thus the investigation used "data triangulation" (Denzin, 1978) to create multiple sets of data by collecting data from teachers working in a variety of contexts and settings within the school in order to establish a well-supported position on implementation.

5.9 Initial stance on participation and interviewing. The reader needs to be aware of this researcher's changing stance on "participation". This section describes the researcher's initial positivist stance which draws upon the notion of "participant observation" (Gold, 1969). A characteristic feature of this approach is that the interviewer or researcher becomes an instrument of data collection, adopting at any time a fieldwork role as "complete participant", "participant-as-observer", "observer-as-participant" or "complete observer". The first two roles are examples of "participant observation" and the second two as "non-participant observation" (Gold, 1969). However, they represent ideal constructs and as Burgess (1982) notes, the researcher may from time-to-time move between roles. This researcher's professional experience - leading a large secondary school that underwent Ofsted inspection - influenced the research design. It raised the question of his "prior picture" and the impact of this on the collection and analysis of data (Blumer, 1989). Clearly it was impossible for this researcher to approach the investigation entirely devoid of preconceived views about the supposed effects of inspection on school development. However he was conscious of these dangers and was determined that such experience would not colour his judgement and capacity to establish a well-supported picture of implementation. He was alert to the danger of getting caught up in the activities under observation and influenced by what was being observed. Arguably close identification with teachers participating in the Ofsted process could result in this researcher embracing the values held by the teachers. Thus Burgess's (1984) warning about the risk of "going native" was noted. However in ruling out "participant observation" in favour of a more detached

role this researcher accepted that an investigation into a sensitive phenomenon, such as Ofsted inspection, required high levels of trust. As a consequence he negotiated a degree of participation that would yield the most meaningful data and by taking the role of "observer-as-participant" in this investigation. This approach to "participation" had implications for the researcher's relationship and researcher's attitude to interviewing - the main method of data collection. Since the conventions of teacher professionalism tended to shape his behaviour and thinking, and believing that participants "consented" to their involvement, the researcher took control of the research process. However he adopted the view that the research interview was an event where the researcher and participant could draw on their own unique professional contexts in addressing mutually relevant themes relating to the Ofsted process.

5.10 Interview questions. The researcher's choice of interview questions was based on the proposals for semi-structured interviews developed by Denzin (1978), Wilson et al. (1994) and Fielding (1986). Each respondent was asked a series of questions with pre-set response categories, relating to Ofsted's system of inspection and schools' response to inspection, in five thirty-minute interviews.

The first interview took place two weeks before the inspection and asked questions about:

- teachers' attitudes towards the inspection process;

- teachers' views on the inspection method;

- and teachers' perceptions of schools' preparations for inspection and school priorities.

The second interview took place two weeks after the inspection and asked question about teachers' perceptions of:

- the inspection itself;

- the school's inspection findings;

- key issues for action; and

- and the intention to make a change.

The third interview took place six months later when the school had completed its post-inspection plan. The fourth and fifth interviews were held at intervals of between six and eight months after inspection. These interviews asked questions about teachers' perceptions of:

- the extent of implementation;

- factors influencing implementation; and

- and changes arising from implementation.

The interview questions were standardised for category of interviewee, for example headteacher, head of subject and subject teacher receiving questions in the same order, presented in as standard a way as possible. The schedules of questions can be found in Appendix 3.

Participants were encouraged to digress and expand on their answers and raise matters of concern and in this way issues emerged which this led to further questioning. Relevant questions are included in the text of the case studies in Chapter 8.

5.11 Initial stance on analysis. The previous section indicates that Ofsted's technical/rational perspective on implementation influenced the choice of interview questions. Teachers' responses to interview questions provided raw data, which were transcribed and stored as data items relating to pre-

determined issues and themes, each with a locatable reference. Such school

documents as school inspection reports were read and data items relating to

issues raised by the investigation identified and given a reference.

Triangulation within and between sources was used to corroborate

participants' claims about implementation. Creative and reflective thinking

about data items led to draft analytical statements or provisional themes, and

further questioning of the raw data led to a set of final propositions. The

reader can track the analytical process in the matrices in Appendix 5. When

the iterative process was exhausted final propositions were expressed as

research findings relating to schools' implementation of inspection

recommendations. This in turn led to "fuzzy propositions" about

implementation, change and "school improvement".

5.12 Changing research relationship. The discussion now turns to the shift

in this researcher's approach to the issue of implementation and the decision

to adopt a dual perspective on the implementation process (Chapter 3). As

this longitudinal study progressed the researcher maximised involvement by

encouraging participants to elaborate about matters of particular concern.

The research relationship and thus the type of participation were changing.

The binary notion of participatory and non-participatory involvement (see 5.9),

which informed the approach to participation at the start of the investigation,

seemed too simplistic. The earlier discussion indicates that the researcher

took control of the research and thus the participants' involvements could be

characterised as "consenting". However as the study progressed the

research relationship became "cooperative". This reflected a shared and

greater commitment on the part of interviewees to the necessity for such

research; a sense of being concerned with an issue of mutual interest, that control was more equally shared, and that the outcomes were of approximately more equal value to all participants in professional terms. In the early stages of the investigation the researcher focused attention on issues relating to Ofsted's technical/rational view of inspection through a series of pre-determined questions (see Appendix 3). However the use of open-ended questions allowed interviewees to digress and raise other issues and this led to a changing research relationship and perspective on inspection. For example participants indicated that micro-political interactions between headteachers, senior managers and their subordinates were significant in implementing Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement". Since such micro-political factors and processes were outside the scope of Ofsted's framework for school and inspection the question posed was whether this investigation should become a dual perspective enquiry. This would have implications for the research method. However a dual perspective would yield concepts beyond the range of a single view.

5.13 Changing the interview structure. What were the implications of a taking a political perspective on Ofsted inspection for the structure of interviews? The research comprised the collection of information about issues relating to Ofsted's technical/rational view of inspection and the implementation of "key issues for action". This anchored interviews within the process of implementation and yielded information about extent of implementation. However this researcher discovered that open-ended questions led participants to highlight day-to-day experiences, matters of concern and other types of issue. In this way participants began to influence

the direction of the research, provide meanings and highlight micro-poltiical interactions between senior managers and classroom teachers. This led this researcher to maximise the participants' involvement in the study. However this implied that the researcher had to monitor his own relationship with the participants and base his actions on what he learned about himself and the participant, building participation on both pre-determined issues and those issues that emerged. As a result interviews did not always follow pre-determined routes through implementation. However by responding spontaneously to participants' immediate concerns the study was able to tap into teachers' meanings towards implementation and in this way the investigation explored the micro-politics of the Ofsted process. The reader can locate research questions relating to political issues within the texts of the case studies set out in Chapter 8.

5.14 Approach to analysis. The emergence of political issues raised questions about the stance on analysis and interpretation of the data. This research had adopted a theory-testing approach to the initial stage of the fieldwork in seeking to test Ofsted's claim for inspection. However the emergence of teachers' meanings towards implementation implied a theory-emergent approach in the absence of a well-tried and tested political framework. Nevertheless this research avoided imposing a political framework but identified points of reference and political themes that encompassed the issues raised by participants. This study borrowed from Busher et al's (2001a) interpretation of teachers' responding to external pressure for control and change outside school. The salient theme is that teachers and individual groups serve their own interests through a variety of

measures, which may be held on principle, such as a belief that a particular teaching style was appropriate for particular circumstances or altruistically to meet the needs of others who were perceived to have no power. Thus this investigation began to collect information relating to micro-political interactions between headteachers and subordinate teachers. However this discourse was employed tentatively, not as a rigid framework, to capture teachers' meanings about implementation. As a result the research adopted new approach to collection, analysis and interpretation. Raw data were fitted into a series of political matrices. Creative and reflective thinking was used to illuminate teachers' understandings, identify issues and to build political themes and final propositions. The reader can track the emergence of issues, themes and concepts in a series of matrices in Appendix 5.

5.15 Changing stance on validity. The previous discussion indicated that this researcher's initial position was to view claims for "validity" in terms of Ofsted's stance on "procedural objectivity". However a micro-political perspective drew on non-objective claims made by participants that included both normative-evaluative claims and such claims as what their intentions are, how they are feeling and what their motives were. Thus "validity" was internally connected to the communication of meaning. Writers such as Carspeken and MacGillivray (1998) claim that qualitative researchers can achieve understanding of the validity claims made by actors in their communicative activities by reaching an understanding of the communications that actors make. Thus a researcher cannot achieve an understanding of the experience of others:

"Without understanding their claims about objective state of affairs; subjective feelings, intentions and modes of awareness; and normative-evaluative views

of what is right, wrong, good and proper, inappropriate...the vast bulk of such claims are made and understood tacitly." (Carspeken and MacGillivray, 1998: 185)

Thus "validity" originates in communicative practice when the researcher produces an effective reconstruction of a culture:

"If she articulates validity claims commonly and typically made by members...such articulation should be made, as much as possible, from the perspective of the actors: reconstruction must involve the principle of taking positions, or reflecting, as one's subjects do, following the logic of typifications in play and formulated from the first person of the actor." (Carspeken and MacGillivray, 1998: 186)

According to these authors such claims are also linked to the core structures of human motivation and thus research must identify the connections between validity claims and motivation. For example where the major motivation within a school organisation was the pursuit of personal and professional interest in responding to change imposed from above (see above), the researcher could strengthen comprehension by gaining an understanding of the cultural themes actors employ in routine efforts to construct a valid sense of self. This could be achieved by articulating the participants' meanings into discursive understandings. Thus where an investigation reveals participants' own understandings of the political factors that influenced implementation such claims are considered "valid".

5.16 Dual method interpretation. The dual method adopted by this researcher posed questions for interpretation. Arguably the two perspectives used in this research – technical/rational and cultural/political - were not necessarily compatible. The former is concerned with management systems that ensure a reliable, consistent and predictable school system, whereas the political frame is concerned with teachers' interests. This posed the question of whether this study should integrate or retain different perspectives. This
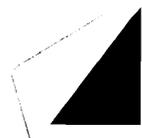
research expands the number of concepts by sequential interpretation from each perspective – Bolman and Deal (1991) describe this as a "dual metaphor approach". The intention was not to capture the reality of implementation but to represent implementation by a dual perspective, the applicability of which may vary with the event, situation and participants (Bush, 1995:148).

5.17 Choice of cases. By 1995 Ofsted's programme of mass inspection of schools had been in place for three years and inspection procedures were well established after minor modification. There had been some 900 secondary school inspections and a full representative sample was beyond the scope of one part-time researcher. The starting point for sampling was to seek schools of similar size and intake that were destined to be inspected during 1996/1997. It was decided to exclude schools functioning at the extreme ends of the spectrum of inspection performance, such as schools that were expected to go into "special measures" (see Chapter 2), in order to obtain a sample which was reasonably typical of the large majority of schools that were expected to receive essentially "satisfactory" reports. There was a need to involve both types of inspection teams – locally recruited and nationally recruited. A further dimension was that schools needed to be within easy reach that is in the Midlands and North of England to facilitate a steady flow of data.

The six schools chosen were given identifier names to preserve their anonymity. The schools included three LEA maintained, 11-18 comprehensive schools identified as "Border School", "Brimtown School" and "Edgetown School", and three LEA maintained, 11-16 comprehensive schools, identified as "Boundary School", "Rimtown School" and "Liptown

School". The schools were located in six different local education authorities in both city and urban settings. Pupils in the intakes came from a wide range of social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The schools key characteristics are summarised in Appendix 2. "Border School" and "Brimtown School" had locally recruited inspectors and the remaining schools had externally recruited teams.

5.18 Trialling procedures. Research procedures and processes were trialled with a representative sample of teachers in two large, 11-16 age group comprehensive schools that were not included in the final sample, which were typical of the majority of secondary schools inspected during 1995/1996. One school had been recently inspected and the other school was waiting to be inspected. A number of lessons were learnt about teachers' attitudes to this type of research. First the researcher had to ensure that participants knew and understood the research aims. Secondly the researcher had to remind interviewees that the research was using implementation as an indicator of change. Thirdly it was necessary to remind interviewees that the researcher was independent of Ofsted, local education authority and the school's senior managers. It was clear that the anonymity of participants was important in this study. Lessons were also learnt about the structure of interviews. For example the researcher had to achieve a better balance between pre-determined and emergent issues and this implied the use of more open-ended questions. Additionally this researcher had to pace interviews in order to cover both pre-determined and emergent issues. Preparing the recording equipment between interviews and positioning the hand-held tape recorders to ensure the audibility of interviewees required a great deal of care. The day-

to-day demands on teachers meant that there would be a tight interview schedule and thus very little scope for lengthening an interview and providing gaps between interviews. The researcher had to be adept at tape-recording.

5.19 Confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. The confidentiality of data and anonymity were major issues since the research used information relating to the schools' Ofsted inspections. Certain information was sensitive, for example information that could damage a school's interests if it was placed in the public domain. Clearly this researcher's professional experience and awareness of issues relating to schools' inspection here was an advantage - the assumption was that this researcher understood the concerns of the schools experiencing Ofsted inspection. It was necessary to guarantee the anonymity of schools participating in the study. Another dimension was the need to guarantee the confidentiality of individuals' views and opinions. For example this researcher obtained views that did not accord with the school's official line or Ofsted's views. Thus participants were given identifiers, which noted the gender, length of service, role and subject (see Appendix 1).

The principle of informed consent was central to the understanding that the person participating was a volunteer and as a free agent could withdraw at any time. This matter was highlighted in a letter inviting individuals to participate and also at the first interview.

5.20 Access. Gaining access to schools at such a sensitive time proved difficult. Schools were routinely busy and the Ofsted process made additional demands on teachers: gathering school data; bringing documentation up to date and preparing for visits by Ofsted inspectors. The research made more demands on teachers' time during the acquisition of information about a

school's weaknesses and failings and the collection of information from teachers at all levels about a school's response to inspection. As a result this researcher highlighted the benefits to stakeholders - such as those headteachers seeking improvements in the inspection process - of an independent study into the Ofsted inspection process. However three schools refused access on the grounds that involvement in such a project would be particularly onerous.

Headteachers were first contacted by letter and then by phone. Where a headteacher agreed to participate she or he was asked to seek the support of the staff and governors. Participants were sent a letter detailing the project, seeking written consent and providing a means of contacting the researcher.

5.21 Programming the longitudinal investigation. The reader is reminded that the researcher was a part-time student. The study involved a very demanding schedule of visits and interviews - the initial contacts took place with the six participating schools between January and March 1996 and the researcher briefed participating staff during the following term. Trialling of the research procedures took place during May 1996. The six inspections took place at different times between October 6th 1996 and April 21st 1997.

The previous discussion indicates the kinds of issues covered in the series of five interviews. The first interviews took place within two weeks of the school's inspection and were followed by interviews that took place in the immediate aftermath - usually within ten working days. The three remaining series of interviews took place at six monthly intervals and thus the collection of interview and documentary data took place between September 1996 and

October 1998. The task of transcribing, analysing and cataloguing data from 270 thirty-minute interviews was huge and was completed in late 1999. The thesis was written during 2000/2002 and subsequently revised in 2002/2003.

5.22 Interview procedures and selection of participants. Interview schedules were based on thirty-minute interviews. Between 7 and 11 interviews were held in each school at each stage in the inspection process. Interviews took place in various places, for example offices, classrooms, refectories, changing rooms and even large cupboards. Some took place against high levels of background noise but this did not appear to distract the interviewees though it affected the quality of some tape recordings. Participants were interviewed immediately prior to a week of inspection, in the immediate aftermath of the inspection and then at six monthly intervals over two school years. In planning the schedule of interviews it was necessary to allow for teaching commitments, duties, staff absence, internal and external examinations – all of which required goodwill on the part of the schools.

The researcher's involvement in selecting participants was confined to formulating rules for sampling. Headteachers selected a representative cross-section of the teaching staff including the headteacher and one senior manager, taking account of gender, length of service, seniority and curriculum responsibilities. The sample was to be ten per cent of a school's teaching complement. This approach can be challenged on the grounds that headteachers could bias the result by careful selection. However, this did not prevent participants from expressing views that were not in line with the headteacher's views (see Chapters 7 and 8). The list of participants can be found in Appendix 1.

Staff turnover is a potential threat to the integrity of a longitudinal investigation. For example staff turnover – staff moving to other posts - unconnected with the participant's willingness to participate was an issue in this investigation. Four interviewees were lost in this way and one participant withdrew from the study due to pressure of work. Arrangements were made to replace participants with individuals having similar profiles. The departure of two headteacher was followed by lengthy interregnums – schools made their own arrangements to appoint headteachers. However headteacher turnover and the impact on implementation was an issue in the research (see Chapters 7 and 8).

5.23 Recording interview data. The earlier discussion described how interviews were recorded using a hand-held tape recorder. Interviewees were asked to consent to a recording at the start of an interview. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and held in case files. However the particular model of tape recorder was subject to a technical failure that left the researcher unaware some 20 per cent of the tapes proved to be blank and thus it was necessary to resort retrospective notes. These notes were also held in case files.

5.24 Documentary data. The wording of documentary information posed a question for the research method. How should such information be interpreted? Who is the intended audience? What is to be recorded and what is omitted? Ofsted's inspection reports were interpreted as expressions of Ofsted's model of school (Ofsted, 1993b-2001b). The reports included descriptions of "educational standards achieved", "quality of education", "management and efficiency" of the school and its departments; main

inspection findings; "key issues for action"; "school characteristics"; and such data as performance in external examinations. These documents provided information about the links between inspection judgements and inspection findings and key issues and, therefore, information about inspectors' intentions towards the school. School inspection reports came in two versions: a full report and the school's own shorter version that was made available to stakeholders, such as parents. A school's own version provided an insight into its view of Ofsted's main findings.

Other documents included the school's post-inspection action plan – the school's formal response to main inspection findings and "key issues for action". These plans included targets, responsibilities, costs, time-scales and arrangements for monitoring. Such plans were usually subsumed into school development plans together with other school-wide priorities. Although governing bodies had an oversight of action plans, headteachers devised and executed such plans in consultation with senior managers. These documents therefore indicated the headteachers' real intentions towards Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement". While such documentation was in the public domain records of staff meetings were viewed as internal and private. Thus this research made use of documents only in the public domain, such as school inspection reports and post-inspection plans, with triangulation between and within data sources.

5.25 Looking ahead. The next four chapters present the research findings. Chapter 6 addresses the extent of schools' implementation of different types of inspection recommendation. A key theme is highlighted namely variations in the extent of implementation of inspection recommendations concerned

with teaching and learning. Chapter 7 reports on schools' implementation of inspection recommendations related to teaching and learning. Chapter 8 takes a political view of the implementation of key issues concerned with teaching and learning. Chapter 9 reconsiders the research findings, considers the implications for current inspection practice and identifies how the two different perspectives interact with each other.

Chapter 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS - EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Introduction. The aims of the investigation were to examine Ofsted's claim that inspection leads to "school improvement" and to illuminate the process of inspection-induced change through case studies of schools' implementation of inspection recommendations. The chapter contains an assessment of the extent of implementation of different categories of inspection recommendation.

6.2 Analytical process. Whether schools change as a consequence of inspection rests on the extent to which the inspection report is acted upon. An inspection report typically formulates a set of inspection recommendations, or "key issues for action", which may be regarded as a skeletal outline for school change. What did the inspectors recommend to be done? The research assigned inspection recommendations to one of several different categories that represented the major features of the curriculum, organisation and management of the schools. In cases where the main focus was not immediately apparent reference was made to the context of the recommendation in the school's inspection report. The classification of key issues was based on Wilcox and Gray's (1996:84) "taxonomy of secondary school inspection recommendations". However the categories were adjusted to reflect the range of activities covered in the research schools' inspection reports. Having suitably classified key issues in the research the central question concerned the degree to which they had been implemented. Here the research relied upon participants' accounts of actions within the school to establish the extent of implementation. Interviewees were asked to describe

actions that had been taken on each of the inspection recommendations and outcome. This information was used to rate the extent of implementation, covering the range from "none" to "full" implementation. The intention was to assess the degree of implementation two years after inspection. Further analysis determined whether the different categories of inspection recommendation varied in the extent of implementation.

6.3 Categories of inspection recommendation. Inspection recommendations were grouped into the following categories and assigned an identifier code (see Appendix 4 for identifier codes). Each category is shown here with an exemplar and identifier:

- "Management and Administration"

"Address the issues concerning staff and students' health and safety identified in the main body of the report." (Rim 7)

- "Management of Teaching and Learning"

"Establish formal procedures to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom." (Bor 3)

- "Curriculum Delivery"

" Make more provision for spiritual development by fulfilling the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship and give greater attention to the spiritual dimension across the curriculum." (Bou 3)

- "Resources"

"When funding permits, address the serious shortage of resources and other deficiencies listed above." (Edge 3)

- "School Environment and Accommodation"

"Create a better working environment by improving the quality and cleanliness of the accommodation." (Edge 4)

- "Learning Opportunities"

"Develop information technology provision to broaden the range of learning opportunities available to its pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3." (Bor 1)

- "Organisation of Teaching"

"Raise attainments in German at KS3, and in German and Urdu at KS4, with particular reference to:
a. the amount of time allocated to the study of the two languages in Years 8 and 9;
b. the present policy of teaching in mixed ability groups at KS3;
c. the need to provide work that matches the different ability groups at KS3; and
d. integrating Urdu more closely into the work of the department." (Lip 1)

- "School Planning"

"Improve whole school development planning by costing it, including success criteria and presenting more clearly an analysis of what has been achieved." (Edge 2)

- "Assessment of Pupils' Work"

"Make better use of assessment information in planning lessons and in setting pupils' subject-specific targets for improvement." (Brim 4)

- "Monitoring of Pupils' Work

"Further develop the role of the form tutor so that there is better monitoring of students' performance." (Rim 3)

- "Homework"

"Provide a more structured programme of homework that meets the needs of pupils of all abilities." (Lip 5)

- "Pupil Punctuality"

"In order to improve punctuality and obtain a prompt start to the day, continue with the local authority to improve the reliability of the bus service." (Bou 5)

- "Attendance"

"Persevere with the work with parents to improve attendance and attitudes towards education." (Bou 4)

This approach to categorisation raised the issue of Ofsted's intentions towards the school. For example, Border School received the key issue:

"Develop the library as a resource to support learning at Key Stages 3 and 4."
Border School (Ofsted, 1996W: 5)

This recommendation could be linked to three themes: "resources", "learning opportunities" or "environment and accommodation". However, the emphasis in Border School's inspection report is on widening the range of teaching styles to provide pupils with opportunities to work independently and thus the inspection recommendation was assigned to the category "learning opportunities". Therefore it was necessary to determine the main focus of an inspection recommendation before assigning it to a category.

The distribution of key issues over the thirteen categories of inspection recommendation is shown in Table 1. The six schools each received between five and seven inspection recommendations. About half of the recommendations belong to categories related to school management - "management of teaching and learning", "curriculum", "school planning" and "organisation of teaching" - reflecting Ofsted's concern with delivery of the National Curriculum via an explicit management system. For example:

"...ensuring that structures for planning improvement and monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum are made explicit to all staff, including the expectations of middle managers...making better use of the information gained from monitoring in identifying the key priorities for improvement and the priorities for whole-school and departmental programmes for teachers' professional development." (Brim 3)

This inspection recommendation deals with "monitoring", "quality of teaching" and "school planning" – issues central to Ofsted's discourse on school management. The proportion of recommendations devoted to the question of school management indicates that this matter was a major concern in the six inspections.

Table 1.   Distribution of key issues by school and category

Category   School

	Bou	Lip	Rim	Ed	Brim	Bor	Total
Management/administration			1				1
Management of teaching and learning	2	1	2	2	2	2	11
Curriculum	1		2	1	2	1	7
Resources	1	1	1	1			4
Accommodation/environment	1			1		1	3
Learning opportunities						2	2
Organisation of teaching		2					2
School planning				1			1
Assessment					1		1
Monitoring pupils' work			1				1
Homework		1					1
Attendance	1						1
Punctuality	1						1
Total	7	5	7	6	5	6	36

Key: Boun=Boundary School; Lip=Liptown School; Rim=Rimtown School;

Ed=Edgetown School; Brim=Brimtown School; Bor=Border School.

When the remaining categories were examined it was clear that six key issues

deal with the level and allocation of resources and the remaining

recommendations address a relatively diverse set of concerns: health and

safety; accommodation; homework; pupils' attendance and punctuality. The

overall distribution of key issues reflects the key theme of managerial control

embodied in Ofsted's (1995) *Handbook* and *Framework*: namely management

of pupil behaviour, effective use of resources, delivery of the National

Curriculum and compliance with statutory regulations.

6.4 Scale of implementation. Having suitably classified issues for action

the second issue that needed to be addressed was the degree to which

they had been implemented. Inspection recommendations were assigned a

rating on a scale of implementation covering the range: "full", "some", "limited"

and "none". The criteria attached to these levels of implementation are shown

in Table 2.

Table 2.   Scale of implementation of inspection recommendations

Extent of implementation	Description
Full	All components of inspection recommendation are implemented in line with Ofsted's intentions for the school.
Some	Some components are fully implemented or progress made towards full implementation on all components, for example staff training/allocation of funds/ new facilities/ monitoring progress
Limited	Implementation remains at an early stage, for example staff discussion to determine the school's stance before taking action.
None	School takes no action or rejects the change embodied in the inspection recommendation

When the descriptions were examined some differences in the ratings of implementation were apparent. For example headteachers and senior managers tended to give more favourable ratings than heads of subject and classroom teachers. Responses to questions about Brimtown School's plan to press the idea of monitoring of teachers' work in the classroom to middle managers reflects such differences. For example:

"Generally people welcomed it [middle management training] *with requests for further work on some aspects on monitoring and evaluation...we also has a twilight session in terms of monitoring and evaluation...we are saying that monitoring and evaluation is here to stay."* (WM, Headteacher)

"It [management training] *didn't necessarily broaden my perspective...there was resentment from some people."* (WC, Coordinator Humanities)

"To be honest I don't see anything coming out of that training" (DC, 2ic Maths)

"People were happy with the [exchange of] *good practice but some were sceptical about things being monitored...they thought it could be done another way."* (PJ, History)

The lack of consensus appeared to reflect the situation "on the ground" suggesting that there were several perspectives on the issue of implementation. In such circumstances the research looked for consistency and corroboration before assigning an overall rating of implementation.

6. 5 Extent of implementation. The result of applying the scale of implementation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Extent of schools' implementation of key issues two school Years after inspection.

Degree of implementation

Category	Full	Some	Limited	None	Total
Management/administration	1				1
Management of teaching and learning	1	4	3	3	11
Curriculum	1	3		3	7
Resources		3	1		4
Accommodation/environment	1	1		1	3
Learning opportunities	1	1			2
Organisation of teaching		2			2
School planning	1				1
Assessment		1			1
Monitoring pupils' work			1`		1
Homework		1			1
Attendance			1		1
Punctuality	1				1
Total	Full 7	Some 16	Limited 6	None 7	Total 36

When the scale was applied to the inspection recommendations 7, or 19 per cent, are considered "fully" implemented, 16, or 44 per cent had "some" implementation, 6, or 17 per cent, had "limited" implementation and 7, or 19 per cent, have "none". The majority of key issues were at some stage of

implementation two school years after the inspection.

Did some categories have a greater chance of "full" implementation than others? Inspection brought about schools' compliance with statutory regulations, such as Border School's adoption of National Curriculum requirements for Technology and Religious Education (Bor 6), and Rimtown School's adoption of health and safety regulations (Rim 7). Other key issues were either "fully" implemented, such as recommendations concerning school plans (Bor 4; Bou 5; Edge 5), or had no implementation, for example recommendations relating to a daily act of collective worship (Bor 6; Edge 6; Bor 3; Brim 5), cleanliness of playing fields (Bou 7), and the school's curriculum (Rim 5). This suggested that senior managers had taken a view where inspection recommendations lay within their own sphere of influence and this had resulted in either "full" implementation or outright rejection or referral to the local education authority. The analysis was complicated by the number of key issues assigned to each category. The number of key issues varied between one and seven in eleven categories and in only two categories - "Curriculum" and "Management of Teaching and Learning" – were all schools represented. However, all schools had at least received one key issue concerned with teaching and learning. Furthermore, implementation covered the range "none" to "full". There were a total of 11 inspection recommendations – 1 had received "full" implementation, 4 "some" implementation, 3 "limited" and 3 no implementation. That is 8 key issues were at some stage of implementation. This raised the question why implementation varied? The discussion now turns to case studies of schools'

implementation of inspection recommendations concerning teaching and learning. These case studies describe factors and processes that influenced the extent of implementation, change and "school improvement".

Chapter 7

CASE STUDIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Introduction. Analysis of extent of implementation indicated that eleven inspection recommendations in the category "management of teaching and learning" covered the full range of implementation. When the pattern of implementation was examined it was apparent that implementation varied across schools and inspections. Case studies of implementation identify the factors and processes in the Ofsted inspection process, school and immediate environment that influence implementation.

7.2 Analytical process. Inspection findings are linked to inspection recommendations and Ofsted's intentions towards teaching and learning are identified. Information about teachers' attitudes towards Ofsted and the inspection itself, perceptions of inspection findings, inspection recommendations and schools' implementation of inspection recommendations are used to identify factors influencing implementation. An evaluation of change arising from inspection is made in each case.

7.3 Case studies of implementation. The full list of participants can be found in Appendix 1. The following key is used in the text:

ST=subject teacher; HOS=head of department; 2ic=second in department; HT=headteacher; AH=assistant head; DH=deputy head; Coor= School coordinator. Each participant is also allotted a code, for example "CW, STHIST" where "CW" represents an individual, ST represents "classroom teacher", and HIST represents the subject History.

BORDER SCHOOL

(i) Inspection recommendations. Border School received two key issues in the category "management of teaching and learning":

"Develop strategies pre-16 for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, drawing on the good practice post-16." Bor 2 (Ofsted, 1996W).

This recommendation was linked to the following inspection findings:

Paragraph 18 – "...*opportunities for extended reading are limited*"

Paragraph 19 - "*... investigative skills are underdeveloped.*"

Paragraph 24 - "...*younger pupils have less opportunities for individual work*"

Paragraph 27 - "...*given the opportunity to direct their learning...* [pupils are] *responsible and imaginative.*"

Paragraph 35 - "*Limited range of teaching strategies used*"

Paragraph 103- "*teacher direction* [is] *too dominant*". (Ofsted, 1996W)

Inspection findings concerning pupils' learning skills were linked with the school's existing approach to teaching – the implication being that this restricted pupils' opportunities for learning. Ofsted recommended that the school employ teaching strategies that encouraged pupils to learn independently.

"Employ formal procedures to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom" Bor 3 (Ofsted, 1996W)

This recommendation was linked to these findings:

Paragraph 106 – "...*there is no formal monitoring of the quality of learning or quality of teaching*"

Paragraph 113 – "...*there are no formal procedures for the systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and for disseminating good practice*"

"...evaluation that takes place is mainly at a more personal or informal level and needs to be more rigorous." (Ofsted, 1996W).

According to the inspectors the school's existing approach to the evaluation of teaching lacked consistency and rigour and, therefore, they recommended that the school use a more systematic approach to the monitoring of "teaching quality".

(ii) Attitudes towards the Ofsted process. Attitudes towards the inspection process varied with position, seniority and length of service. For example: LM, Headteacher, accepted the principle of inspection and took the view that the Ofsted process would provide an external view of the school and identify areas for improvement:

"...[inspection] offers the prospect that it will be good to have people in to have a look at what we are doing...a fresh view...and from our experience elsewhere...we could highlight one or two areas where further improvement is possible...it is action research that we have not got time to carry out." LM, Headteacher, Border School

LM also expressed confidence in the "professionalism" of the locally recruited Ofsted inspection team. LM used the Ofsted Handbook (Ofsted, 1995b) to review various school policies, such as the approach to pupils with special educational needs (HOS, GEOG; ST/HOY; 2icMaths). He also arranged pre-inspection evaluations of subject departments (HOS, RE; ST/HOY; ST.MFL). Senior managers undertook classroom observation using Ofsted's (Ofsted, 1995a) Inspection Framework (2icMaths). The school's documentation was up-dated.

By contrast heads of subject and long-serving teachers expressed a number of misgivings about Ofsted's inspection method. Interviewees highlighted the following issues:

- close scrutiny in the classroom -

"There is an element of edginess. I do feel anxious because it is the first quantifiable time that I have been up front and being seen doing a job as a head of department." (DC, HOSGEOG);

" I think there is an element as class teacher one is autonomous and getting someone to dissect performance gives a personal edge." (JS,HOSRE)

- inspection is a snapshot evaluation that provides an incomplete picture of the usual state of affairs –

"[I think] *what a shame that they did not see the excellence of two seconds before...a snap shot...a continuous shadow over my shoulder would be fairer"* (DC, HOSGEOG);

- inspection is time-consuming and expensive –

"I think it is an expensive time. A lot of stuff I am doing I can see no purpose for other than doing it for Ofsted...production of paper that I would not have done otherwise...there are things that I cannot see any rhyme or reason for." (JS, HOSRE)

Newly recruited teachers were more positive about the Ofsted process and

looked forward to receiving an objective, external view. For example:

"The principle of inspection I am happy about...we need to be formally inspected by an outside body...that's the only way to get the truth – an objective picture." (JG, STMFL)

When respondents were asked about their hopes and expectations for

inspection prior to the event, their responses revealed the need for affirmation

and recognition of their contribution:

"I hope it will confirm what I genuinely believe that the staff have moved the school forward and that they are not afraid that there is scope for further improvement." (LM, Headteacher)

"To be reassured that we are doing a good job...a pat on the back...and [confirmation] that we are doing a good job." (JG, STMFL)

"I want people to feel what we are doing is good." (PB, Coord Ofsted)

"Recognition that we are doing a good job...recognition that the team is doing a good job." (DC, HOSGEOG)

"Everything which is being done is being done in a steady and progressive manne.r" (RJ, STPE)

These responses indicated that the participants saw the primary purpose of inspection as assessing their own professional worth.

Views on Ofsted's decision to employ a locally recruited team of inspectors, most of whom were known to the teachers, were divided. For example LM, Headteacher, took the view that the team was *"professional and knowledgeable about the school."* DC (HOSGEOG) expressed the view that this type of team would have knowledge of the context in which the school operated. However, other teachers, such as CW (ic ROA), a member of the school's senior management team, viewed the inspection team's prior knowledge of the school as a potential source of bias. The question was whether such preferences would affect the response to inspection findings.

(iii) Preparation for inspection. Respondents commented that they had been well served by the school's preparations for inspection. For example

"...exhaustively...we have had an Ofsted person in the senior management team who has coached us...guided us...Ofsted's been coming for a long time...we have been through the mighty tome [Ofsted Framework]. *There have been INSET days, staff meetings, working parties...it's stunningly comprehensive...he [the LEA adviser] has checked the handbook and advised us on how to improve it."* (DC, HOSGEOG)

RJ (STPE); CW (HOY) and JN (2ic Maths) expressed similar views.

(iv) Response to the inspection itself. The response to the inspection itself varied with position and seniority and the extent of the individual's involvement in classroom observation. For example LM, Headteacher, had never experienced a classroom observation and he was the most positive about the inspection. He claimed that the school had emerged with a "good"

report. His leadership had been affirmed and Ofsted had endorsed his agenda for change:

"The school came through it rather well…the initiatives they would like us to take in some areas…I approve of…half of those were areas where we had every intention of moving forward and in some respects there is legitimacy now created by the fact that the inspectors have picked it up as well might facilitate the management of those issues rather than hinder them" LM, Headteacher, Border School.

Given the headteacher's pivotal role in setting the school's priorities this implied that inspection recommendations would become an integral part of the school's development plan. By contrast teachers who had been more closely involved in Ofsted's programme of classroom observation expressed doubts about the consistency and fairness of inspection procedures, such as the rating of "teaching quality". For example:

"I was inspected three times…some of my department were seen once, some twice…very few people were observed more than once or twice…there is resentment…the system was unfair." (JH, 2icMaths)

"The idea that if you were watched three times you get three scores and two are a one and one is a six you don't get a one…there are too many flaws in it." (RJ, PE/HOY)

"…The number of visits that were made and the different groups that were seen and the feeling that one of the department had not been identified as good whereas two others had…it does not seem a fair system." PM, HOSART).

There were complaints that the inspection process had led to feelings of anxiety, stress and exhaustion:

"Absolutely shattered exhausted…very jaded…still physically very tired…" (DC, HOSGEOG)

Very, very tired…afterwards I found it difficult to keep the momentum going…I am beginning to rally myself…I was ill immediately afterwards…a lot of people were…people had days off with stomach upsets." (JS, HOSRE)

Respondents questioned the effects of inspection on teachers who are dealing with the day-to-day demands of school life (JT, Assistant Head; JS, HOSRE; JH, 2ic Maths).

(v) Intention to make a change. The question arose whether such views on Ofsted's inspection method would affect the intention to make a change. It became apparent that teachers would comply with Ofsted's advice where it accorded with their own views:

"[We have] *Already made one major change...that's my second in department takes a managerial role which he revealed through the Ofsted work...I have reformulated it* [his role]..." (DC, HOSGEOG)

"*All points have been acted upon. If you are told something is excellent you carry on doing it.*" (RJ, STPE)

"*Changes will be made...when the written report comes we will read it...looking at different styles of teaching.*" (JH, 2icMaths)

"*Yes...it was very reassuring to know we are on the right lines but had swung too far* [in one direction]." (PM, HOSART)

This suggested teachers' interests expressed as professional agendas influenced the intention to make a change.

(vi) Implementation of inspection recommendation Bor 3. The school began implementation by testing the reactions of Curriculum Managers to Ofsted's stance on the monitoring of teachers. The school's traditional teaching discourse, which upheld the autonomy of teachers and the independence of subject departments, influenced teachers' views on this matter. For example PB supported the idea of sharing good teaching practice but asserted a right to decide what happened in her own classroom:

"*I would say this is my own classroom but come in. Help me. You can see things that I can't see because I have blinkers on. I'm not too arrogant because I have been teaching twenty odd years that I can't learn.*" *(PB, Coord Ofsted)*

This appeared to reflect the views of the majority of curriculum managers and as a result the senior management team decided to allow departments to experiment with classroom observation in the belief that this would encourage subjects to adopt formal systems of evaluation:

"We have kept it low key. In bringing it in gradually we have not rushed it…by not making it a hierarchical approach we have not lost the friendliness of departments…in actual facts when you get down to it a lot of people spend time in each other's classrooms. It's just they don't want if on paper." (JT, Deputy Head)

At the same time the Headteacher sought to alter attitudes towards the evaluation of teaching through a programme of training in the skills of classroom observation:

"The heads of department are being invited in sequence to become trained in classroom observation where they will be going in and formally saying to colleagues in their department I shall be coming in to monitor teaching and learning in your classroom in a formal sense. I will be a mini-inspector. That is the next stage of development…teaching will be judged on issues made by heads of departments." (LM, Headteacher)

In this way middle managers would be prepared to accept a more systematic approach to the assessment of "teaching quality".

(viii) Extent of implementation of Bor 3. The research took stock of these steps to inculcate new thinking by asking questions about how middle managers approached the question of knowing what was happening in their areas of activity; about the issue of "teaching quality"; and Ofsted's recommendations for "effective" teaching. The Heads of Art (JS), Geography (DC) and RE (JS) were continuing to employ informal methods of evaluation. No action had been taken on the issue of assessing "teaching quality" or on Ofsted's recommendations for teaching. By contrast the heads of Maths and Science, who favoured a more formal approach to classroom observation, intended to employ the Ofsted Framework (1996) for assessing "teaching

quality" (JH, 2icMaths). The research took the view that this represented

"some" implementation of inspection recommendation Bor 3 .

(ix) Implementing inspection recommendation Bor 2. Various tasks

relating to implementation of the inspection recommendation about teaching

styles (Bor 2) were listed in the post-inspection plan (Ofsted, 1997W):

improving access to the school library; providing more computers; a

programme to raise standards of literacy in the intake; providing more

individual texts; student target-setting; and monitoring of homework. The plan

did not give information about of how the school intended to evaluate the

effect on teaching styles.

According to the participants the school created four fully equipped IT

rooms; allowed all students to use the school's library; installed more

computers and provided more books and learning resources (JT, Deputy

Head). The Headteacher also initiated a debate about the nature of homework

(LM, HT; CW, KS3 Coordinator). However it was not clear that

implementation clearly related to Ofsted's inspection findings (see 7.2) –

"*teacher direction is too dominant*"; "*limited range of teaching strategies*" and

"*younger pupils have less opportunity for individual work*", and Ofsted's

intentions for the school – "*develop strategies for pupils to take responsibility*

for their own learning". This showed that implementation was more

concerned with the school's pre-existing priorities than with Ofsted's agenda

for change.

(x) Extent of implementation of Bor 2. The research thus took the view that

there was no implementation of inspection recommendation, Bor 2. Arguably

there was no intention to bring the school's approach to pre-sixteen teaching

in line with the inspectors' views embodied in the inspection recommendation. Nevertheless, the senior management team implemented a post-inspection plan, which gave the impression that the school was addressing issues that underpinned inspection recommendation Bor 2.

BOUNDARY SCHOOL

(i) inspection recommendations. Boundary School received two key issues concerning "management of teaching and learning":

***"Improve basic skills through the introduction of a whole school language policy which has its main focus in Key Stage 3."* Bou 1 (Ofsted, 1996 DH: 5)**

The inspection report highlighted inspection findings relating to listening, reading and speaking skills:

Paragraph 21 – *"At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils lacked confidence in speaking and have a limited vocabulary. Many have poor listening skills and their reading is often slow. Written work is usually brief and undeveloped"*

Thus the school was required to develop listening, reading and speaking skills together with teaching methods that encouraged the pupils' use of these skills.

***"Raise the aspirations, enthusiasm and commitment of pupils by providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning."* Bou 2**

The inspectors had found a strong emphasis on teacher control:

Paragraph 35 – *"Teaching styles are highly structured and much of the work is closely directed"* (Ofsted, 1996DH)

Thus it was recommended to provide more opportunities for its pupils to engage in self-directed learning.

(ii) Attitudes towards the Ofsted process. Attitudes towards the inspection process varied with position and seniority and reflected divisions of aims and purpose between the senior management team and the staff. Expectations for inspection were linked to different interests. For example senior managers expected that the process would give impetus to their plans for imposing change:

"I hope that inspection will give an impetus to plans initiated by the senior management team" (JR, Headteacher)

" I hope it will give our development planning an impetus…I feel we need change…the school is very traditional…we have been working very hard to move things on…it has the value of an external perspective" (RR, Deputy).

Additionally, JR expressed concern about the school's prospects in inspection:

"The school's standards are not high enough…it is losing children in the middle range [to other schools]…the staff need to improve the quality of teaching…unexciting teaching…pupil misbehaviour…there is a [union] dispute between the staff and governors over a decision to reduce the lunch period." (JR, Headteacher)

JR also expressed concern that the school was failing to meet Ofsted's benchmarks for pupil attendance, punctuality and the percentage of GCSE A-C grades achieved. Furthermore, the school's survey of parents and teachers' attitudes revealed criticisms of the Headteacher's leadership which implied that her leadership would be an issue in the inspection.

Some of the interviewees were hostile towards the senior management team and were expecting redress from the inspection process. For example:

"We hope the headteacher and deputies are asked to tighten things up. We have experienced every bandwagon there is to deal with pupil motivation and poor behaviour…I hope it will redress funding deficiencies in Science…reduce teacher stress by getting to the heart of the school's problems." (CH, icLower School SC)

"I hope that it will reveal weaknesses in the leadership of the school...SMT need to acknowledge that they need to be more supportive in the case of behaviourally challenging pupils...classroom observation has been a failure because senior managers have been judgemental." (TC, HOSTECH)

However, others took a more detached view of the inspection process:

"It offers an external view but it is constrained by the "Ofsted Framework for Inspection"...I hope it will give an external view of the department." (JM, HOSENG)

" I am looking forward to having an external view of the department." (KS, HOSMATHS)

The question was whether such differences would influence views on

inspection findings and recommendations.

(iii) Response to the inspection. Given the headteacher's concerns about

the school's prospects in the inspection, the indications of divisions of aims

and purpose and the widely held view within the staff that Boundary School

was a "difficult school" (RR, Deputy Head; CB, STGEOG; JM, HOSGEOG;

KS, HOSMATHS), the main inspection finding came as a complete surprise to

the participants:

"This is a sound school which is showing considerable determination and imagination in its efforts to change attitudes and raise standards of attainment in a community with high unemployment and low expectations." (Ofsted, 1996DH)

The inspection report also praised the quality of teaching, claimed that

students were making "satisfactory" progress and saluted the Headteacher's

leadership and sense of vision (Ofsted, 1996DH: 4). The question was

whether this would affect teachers' views of Ofsted. Interviewees spoke

approvingly of the inspection process:

"It was a big tick as far as we were concerned...He knew his subject really well...One of the few occasions I have talked Technology...which gives you respect...[He] *always gave you positive feedback."* (TC, HOSTECH)

"I think it's improved it [the department] tremendously to be honest because if I am frank there was not much of a department there...we have meetings more often...we have a rigid assessment policy...Ofsted created a deadline." (CB, STGEOG)

"We got a good report...it pointed out problems we knew existed...on some of the shortcomings...it reassured us. (CH, icLower School Science)

JR claimed that she had been vindicated:

" [the inspection] also confirmed what I have always believed...it is actually the right approach...the SMT...go into classrooms and focus on the classroom order...so the SMT affects the quality of learnin.g" (JR, Headteacher)

However some respondents took the view that the inspection had not served

their interests:

"The inspection didn't do what they wanted it to which was they wanted to expose great problems in the [school's] management...because it didn't cause some bloodless revolution certain people feel that the inspection was wrong instead of realising that our perception was wrong." (TC, HOSTECH)

Others expressed doubts about the inspection method. For example:

"I don't think the system of inspection is able to reflect what I consider the biggest weakness in the school – the gap between senior management and the rest of the staff." (TC, HOSTECH)

"I would like them to see me teaching my subject...others were in a similar situation...I never got feedback...I would like to have been seen by a specialist." (LH, STEXARTS)

"[There were] inconsistencies in the number of times observed." (CB, STYGEOG)

"What surprised me was that there were no teachers classed as "failing"...they outperformed...so much so that week following it was not sustained" (SF, icLower School SC)

The question was whether Ofsted had changed teachers' perceptions of their

school. Some participants believed that inspection had endorsed their view of

the school. For example:

RR, Deputy Head:

"....we used to be a control school and now we are a learning school...we need to get people to think in terms of being in charge of their own learning."

SF, ic Lower School Science, referred to the school's capacity to change:

"The inspectors said...there were enough teachers who were attempting to give children responsibility for their own learning...control is going to be an issue...but we seem to be ready to make a move to more imaginative ways of doing things."

CB, STGEOG, commented:

"I thought we were going to get slaughtered. High lateness, poor attendance, poor exam results...it has been a boost to staff morale because I feel that in this school there is a poor relationship between certain members of the senior management and staff...some members of staff are cynical...they feel they are being walked on...this Ofsted report said that you are doing something right...it raised morale"

Clearly Ofsted's praise had led to an immediate improvement in teacher

morale. However, it was unclear whether the inspection report had

persuaded teachers to change their views. The question was whether an

improvement in teacher morale determined the school's implementation of

Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement".

(iv) Intention to change. Participants were ambivalent about the main

inspection findings. For example some teachers had no knowledge of the

school's inspection findings:

"I don't know because I have not seen it [the inspection report]." (CH, ic Lower School Science)

"I don't know because I have no information." (LH, ST, Expressive Arts)

By contrast senior managers accepted the main findings:

"Levels of attainment below average. Attendance and punctuality is a worry but we are doing pour best. The quality of teaching is very good...so we can harness the excellent teaching with all imaginative ways we are trying to motivate the kids...we must be looking for an action plan to raises standards of attainment...the split site is an issue." (SF ic Lower School)

They were intending to use Ofsted as a lever for change:

"The Ofsted findings will may give us the opportunity to look at the whole picture [of curriculum issues."] (SF, ic Lower School)

"We will take the opportunity to re-schedule our development planning…we will be giving feedback to the staff from the verbal report." (RR, DH)

"We are going to put more emphasis on the developments we began…I am confirmed in the route I am going. There is nothing I have to do that I am not already doing." (JR, HT)

This gave the impression that those teachers who were mainly concerned"

with teaching a subject were indifferent to inspection findings relating to

school - wide matters.

(v) Implementation of Bou 1 and Bou 2. There was an assumption that the

departments and two school sites accepted Ofsted's recommendations for

teaching and supported the school's plan for implementation of inspection

recommendations Bou 1 and Bou 2. This was a risky assumption. A school

working party, chaired by JM Head of English, was established to formulate

the school's language policy and to promote a different approach to teaching

and learning. The working party produced recommendations that were

presented to the staff on a training day six months after the inspection.

However subject departments appeared to ignore the proposals. JM, Chair of

Working Party, attributed this to a failure in leadership at all levels:

"The lead has to come from the top…that can't be at the moment [JR had resigned]*…in my own department it's coming from me…there's managers right through the school* [taking no action on the working party's report]   (JM, HOSENG);

He blamed the response on a tradition of teachers working in isolation :

"People don't talk to each other enough…about what we are doing in the classroom…it is not an easy problem to crack…if you come up at half past three you find me here…and one of my colleagues…the rest of the place will be empty" (JM, HOSENG);

Another member of the working party, LH, emphasised that her colleagues

had a firm belief in classroom control and highly structured teaching methods

as the reasons for rejecting Ofsted's proposals for teaching. As a result her

colleagues took the view that Ofsted's proposals were inappropriate for the

context in which the school operated:

*"The discipline in a school like ours is such a major thing...they have the
children sat behind desks where they have control over them...suddenly to let
them have freedom is almost like a suicide attempt."* (LH, STEXARTS).

Having delivered the report the working party disbanded and the subject

departments and different school sites continued to address the more

immediate priorities.

(vi) Extent of implementation and change. The research took the view that

"little" implementation had occurred in the case of the inspection

recommendation proposing the introduction of a whole school language policy

in Key Stage 3 Bou 1. No implementation had occurred in the case of the

inspection recommendation, Bou 2, which called for the school to adopt a new

approach to teaching and learning. While the inspection led to an

improvement in teacher morale it had failed to address the school's main

weakness – a failure in leadership at all levels.

BRIMTOWN SCHOOL

(i) Inspection recommendation. Brimtown School received one key issue

that concerned the "management of teaching and learning":

*"Improve the ways in which senior and middle managers plan for
development by*
  - *ensuring the structures for planning improvement and monitoring
    and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum are
    made explicit to all staff, including the expectations of middle
    managers;*

- *making use of the information gained from monitoring in identifying the key priorities for improvement and in setting clear benchmarks for evaluating the relative success with these priorities;*
- *establishing clear links between targets for improvement and the priorities in the whole-school and departmental programmes for teachers' professional development."* Brim 3 (Ofsted, 1996V: 4).

The findings linked to this recommendation were:

Paragraph 73 – *"A more general weakness of middle managers is the lack of systematic monitoring and the evaluation of the quality of teaching and the curriculum."*

Paragraph 74 – *"...approaches used* [by senior managers] *to plan for development...are insufficiently rigorous...this means clear structures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' attainment are not in place to guide the setting of priorities"*
(Ofsted, 1996V: 19)

Thus it was recommended that adopt the monitoring of teaching quality and assessment of "relative success" and link these procedures to the professional development of teachers. This implied that middle managers needed to accept more responsibility for school priorities.

(ii) Attitudes towards inspection. Senior managers drew on their experience of the local education authority's system of inspection in expressing views about Ofsted inspection. The assumption was that the Ofsted process linked inspection, advice and redress. For example:

WM, Headteacher, expressed confidence in the LEA Ofsted team:

"I am not looking forward to it but I am certain...the team will do a good job...I hope and expect that inspection will find the school is under funded."

DG, ADH, expected feedback on the school's weaknesses and advice on how it could improve. WC, Coord Hum, and JH, HOSART, expected to be told about their departments' weaknesses and to receive advice. Since Ofsted's policy was to separate inspection from advice the question was whether these views would influence senior managers' attitudes towards the inspection itself.

By contrast long-serving teachers whose main responsibility was in the classroom were concerned about Ofsted's inspection method. For example:

"I am concerned about inspection...I am one of two RE teachers and I expect to see a great deal of the inspectors in my classroom." (AH, STRE/HIST)

"I am very worried about it. The Technology department is not well led. I am concerned I will be held responsible for its weaknesses." (PC, 2ic TECH)

Some interviewees were influenced by rumours emanating from other schools:

"I have heard reports about Ofsted inspections in other schools. Some of these have been critical, for example the school where inspectors reported there wasn't a reading programme. There was but they didn't pick it up." (MM, HOSENG)

"My girl friend is being inspected in another school...concerned pupils' work that has not been marked....the behaviour of difficult pupils...and having an inspector in the classroom." (SG, STTECH)

Would transmission of these myths about the Ofsted inspection process affect the response to the inspection itself?

(iii) Response to inspection itself. Although WM, Headteacher, accepted that the inspection *"had been conducted very professionally"*, *his* view of certain subject departments had not been confirmed and this had increased his doubts about the inspection method. For example Ofsted had not detected the weaknesses in Technology:

"You would assume professionals would look for indicators [of management]. *You would think they would be talking to children. Pupils in years 8 and 9* [in Technology] *are doing a completely different system than pupils in other years. Changing and not knowing where they are going. Discussions with staff would have picked up enough...the more I think about it it's a superficial inspection...The three problematic reports were from non-county* [LEA] *people"* (WM, Headteacher)

In spite of this WM accepted that Ofsted had raised "valid" issues: "teaching and learning styles" and "the school's approach to management". However

these matters were already in the school's management plan. DG, ADH,

described how the inspection had affected the school:

"It was more intensive than I anticipated...Day one was horrendous and after that it was fine...the kids were quieter and in the end they did not find them orally responsive...they were subdued around the place...I don't think that one inspector knew what he was on about...that gave me a lot of concerns...that was the cause of the stress." (DG, ADH)

In spite of this DG accepted the validity of the main findings and "key issues".

By contrast middle managers and classroom teachers questioned the

inspection method. This group highlighted the following issues:

- the lack of feedback - *"....because of the pace of the inspection there wasn't much feedback given at the time."* (JH, HOSART)

- the rating of "teaching quality" – *I think I would have scored higher in certain of my lessons....I was with a new group which was the first time I had seen them...I was seen most of the time in my non specialist subjects."* (PJ, STHIST/ECON)

  "I may be cynical that it was a policy not to give a [grade] one to anybody because it implies you can't improve. I can improve." (DC, 2icMaths)

  " I am disgusted by that side of it. I think it is totally unfair...there are no 1s and 2s... in my girlfriend's school they have over half the staff...this raises questions about the Ofsted inspectorate." (SG, STTECH)

- inconsistency in the number of classroom observations – *"only half the lesson observed in my case...differences in number of observations."* (DC, 2icMaths)

- inconsistency in interpretation of Ofsted's inspection guidelines - *"He said he didn't give top grades and the bottom grades...it sounds like his personal view...he didn't like Ofsted and he was only doing it because he had to."* (MM, HOSENG)

What effect would this have on the intention to change?

(iv) Intention to make a change. Inspection had endorsed key elements in

the school plan and thus senior managers intended to employ inspection as a

lever for change:

"There is nothing in there which is not in the management plan. You focus on the ones that they are highlighting because it has to be part of their action plan...it does raise their importance simply because it raises the importance of some things with the staff." (DG, ADH)

However other teachers took a different view. Some claimed that they had

learned nothing new:

"it hasn't helped me with directing the department...he gave me advice on how to do it [monitoring teachers' work in the classroom]." (MM, HOSENG).

"Some of the these [inspection findings] *were weaknesses we recognised before."* (AH, STHIST/RE)

By contrast other interviewees indicated that they accepted the validity of the

inspection findings:

"We will work towards what they suggested...we agreed with it." (PJ, STHIST)

One participant argued that the time required to implement key issues was a

constraining factor:

"We will see if we can address some of the issues...at the end of the day it's time." (DC, 2icMaths)

Another participant claimed that inspection would not change anything in his

department:

"It would be extremely difficult to alter anything...the running of the department...it says everything is fine...there won't be changes" (PC, 2icTECH)

How could such differences of view be summarised? Senior managers

intended to implement the inspection recommendations concerning the

management of teaching. However middle managers and classroom

teachers viewed inspection findings in terms of their unique contexts, which

implied that engagement with the school's new approach to planning was

uncertain.

(v) Implementation. The "complexity" of the inspection recommendation

(Brim 3) was an issue in implementation. The multi-layered character of the

"key issue", which included three linked strands – "planning improvement",

"monitoring the quality of teaching" and "professional development", gave rise

to the perception of "complexity". WM, Headteacher, sought the assistance of

the education authority inspectors and external consultants in coming to

understand Ofsted's intentions towards the school:

"We needed a coherent programme. It's taken a term to looking at this and reflecting...I do not need any conversion to the idea [the inspection recommendation]." (WM, Headteacher)

However six months later DG (AHT) confirmed that the senior managers were

still wrestling with the inspection recommendation:

"It [the recommendation] is still a problem for us and we are still trying to address it with the inspectors...we are still inviting people in to have a look... we have got to do something about the management...if we don't sort it out we will never move forward."

Eventually the senior management team devised a strategy of "selling"

Ofsted's views on "planning", "monitoring" and "performance" and assessing

the "quality" of teaching:

"We really need management of the school to get people to see that it is part of my job to manage" (WM, Headteacher).

"What we are going to do is to have...management training...where we are looking at the management of the whole school...I have been talking to one of the lads on my team...he wants to be left alone to get on with it...I said as long as we are going down the same path, dancing to the same tune...we all go forward in the same way." (DG, Assistant Head)

Senior managers devised a programme of staff training intended to bring

managers' thinking in line with Ofsted's stance on planning. It was believed

that such training would alter middle managers' attitudes towards planning.

However this involved a major change in thinking – the complete "recultering" of the school's approach to teaching.

Would middle managers be won over by the school's pressure for change? Interviewees claimed that their departments were sticking to existing practice. For example PJ, ST History, insisted that the department was continuing with a policy of informally exchanging views about what constituted "good" teaching practice:

"It has been agreed that, relatively informally, people are going to look at each other's books to see what comments have been made and to see if there is consistency across the department...people are happy with [exchanging] *good practice but some were sceptical about things being monitored."* (PJ, STHIST)

MM, HOSENG, claimed *"nothing has happened yet"*, while others questioned key the school's new policy. For example JH, HOSART, argued that the school's proposals represented *"another form of bureaucracy"* and that the notion of *"performance"* was inimical to the spirit of the Art department. WC, HOS History, questioned the practicality of the school's proposals to assess the department's "performance". Additionally DC, 2ic Maths, questioned the efficacy of the school's programme of training:

"I feel that the people who went for training have not yet done anything different apart from the monitoring and evaluation we were doing anyway." (DC, 2icMaths).

Two themes emerged from these interviews: distaste for the notion of " teacher accountability" and dislike of top-down change. For example:

"They [colleagues] *can see through these things...which are being sent to monitor them closely...it depends on the senior management team to determine how closely we want to monitor...we have always known what goes on...this is a more formal...external.... national programme."* (JH, Head of Art)

"There is tacit acceptance that it needs to be done. There are uncomfortable feelings...they don't want too much of that...especially if it generates paper work. They won't like that." (WC, Coordinator of Humanities).

"Maybe it [a lack of confidence in school's strategy] comes down to a clique at the top...we know they are senior managers but at times...it appears.... they sit in their office thinking of things for us to do." (DC, 2icMaths).

By contrast senior managers favoured a top-down approach to change. For example DG, AHT, claimed that a *"change in mind set"* had occurred. According to DG the issues of "monitoring" and "assessment" were now seen by all of the staff as a school matter. However WM, Headteacher, admitted that there had been adverse reactions:

"Some people found it insulting...people don't think we should have structure in the classroom...."

In spite of this the school was intending to impose new job descriptions and procedures to assess the performance of departments and individuals:

"The next stage tomorrow night is to move on to look at the sort of teaching that goes on...along side this is how do you as a head of department know what's going on? We hope eventually to change job descriptions...as well introduce 'Yellis' [a measure of Key Stage 4 progress] *and target-setting for Year 10* [estimating students' progress in Key Stage 3]." WM, Headteacher.

The question was whether implementation had led to change. WM claimed that the school had taken a firm line with the staff:

"We have taken a firmer line of policy making...we have a lot of policies that we want enforcing...we are a lot firmer...having had the endorsement of Ofsted that things are right." (WM, Headteacher).

What effect was this having on their subordinates? It was clear that middle managers and classroom teachers were employing tactics to limit the "worst" effects of the school's policy on "monitoring" and "performance". This implied that subordinate teachers used micro-political activity to defend their own interests. Teachers did not comply with school policy.

Ofsted (Brim 1) called on the school to develop the pupils' capacity to think about their work for themselves and recommended that the school develop the pupils' oral skills. WM indicated this was not a high priority:

"The school will focus on developing middle managers, monitoring and stretching high attainers...there would be no change in the school's direction." (WM, Headteacher)

Six months later MM, HOSENG, claimed that the school had implemented Brim 1:

"We have acted on this recommendation...they are limited orally...so it was important for the school that we got it right...it is good for the department to look at actual practice and how lessons are taught...we got money for it...but we will have it next term" (MM, HOSENG)

However, discussions about a new approach to language and learning were still taking place two years after the inspection. For example:

"We have been talking about language skills and learning skills" (JS, icSixth)

Other participants were not aware that the school had an official policy on oracy skills and teaching styles that encouraged pupils to think for themselves.

(vi) Extent of implementation and change. The research took the view that "some" implementation had occurred in the case of inspection recommendation Brim 3. Senior managers imposed new policies on classroom management, monitoring and evaluation of "teaching quality" and assessment of departmental "performance" and sought to change the school's approach to management through staff training. However the school had not won support for key elements in Ofsted's planning discourse. A whole school approach to oracy was still under discussion two years after inspection and the research took the view that "little" implementation had occurred.

EDGETOWN SCHOOL

(i) Inspection recommendations. Edgetown School received two key issues relating to "management of teaching and learning":

*"**Disseminate the best teaching practice within and between the departments by more systematic identification of the much good teaching that exists.**"* **(Edge1)**

The inspection findings linked to this inspection recommendation were

Paragraph 39 – *"The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mixed and is generally insufficient [in Key Stage 4]...the teaching...is good in those departments that use appropriate strategies...matching work and materials closely to pupils' needs."*

Paragraph 41 – *"Despite the overall good picture, 15 per cent of lessons in Year 9 are taught unsatisfactorily."*

The inspectors linked the issue of "unsatisfactory" teaching with the school's use of teaching methods that were either inappropriate or failed to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and so the inspectors called for the identification and dissemination of "good" teaching practice to match teaching methods to pupils' needs.

*"**Improve the quality of education of pupils with special educational needs by reconsidering the deployment of support staff and providing individual education plans for all pupils who need them.**"* **Edge 2**

The finding linked to this recommendation was:

Paragraph 9 – *"The support provided in lessons for pupils with special educational needs is mixed and generally insufficient."*

The intention was that pupils with special needs should receive support in Key Stage 3 subjects. Furthermore the school was required to comply with the statutory requirement to provide annual statements of need.

(ii) Attitudes to the Ofsted process. Respondents expressed the hope that inspection would confirm their views of the school and affirm their particular contributions. For example:

ML, Headteacher:

" there is recognition that we are on our mission...I suppose I would like validation...after eight years I want to know."

PL, 2icENG:

"Affirmation of what I am doing is good practice...we are a good school...I would like that confirmed...we have our faults and in a sense I would like them picked up and also what I perceive as strengths."

SC, STCHEM:

"I hope it will provide the incentive to improve practice [in the department]*"*

DS, HOSDT:

" I hope it will pick up on the good work we are doing here and the team effort...hard work of the teachers...we have a good spirit"

Nevertheless there was a fear that Ofsted's inspection method might fail to

depict what was happening in lessons and the complexities of the school:

"We hear they may not come in for a full lesson. They may walk into a room and the students are reading documents and I am sitting at the front. I have said that I am going to give you 5 minutes and then we will talk. What will he think?" (JA, STHIST)

"Part of me is anxious...I have friends and colleagues who have had experiences [of the Ofsted process] *where they have been badly treated...will they be able to appreciate the complexities of the school – the split site...the multifarious levels of the school...the real implications of constraints and resources with which we operate"* ML, Headteacher.

It was apparent that the process would be under scrutiny:

"The real test of the Ofsted process lies in the "validity" of the inspection judgements." (KM, DHT)

When the participants were asked about the school's preparations

for inspection it was clear that they had raised awareness of the school's

strengths and weaknesses:

"Ofsted has been helpful in raising my awareness of...monitoring...I have been asked do I know what is happening in the school?...More penetrating questions about performance...preparation of documentation...the practical

advice to people has been don't invent things that don't exist...we have had INSET days." ML, Headteacher.

"We have had a look at the school. We have had to look at it and question it more." (PL, 2icENG)

Two related themes emerged during the first interview. First all teachers took the view that Edgetown School was a "good" school and expected Ofsted to confirm this view. All teachers expected Ofsted to affirm their contributions.

(iii) Response to the inspection itself. Ofsted met expectations in one respect - the school emerged with a "good" inspection report:

(ML, Headteacher; CL, HOSGEOG; SC, STCHEM; BS, HOSADT):

"The school has come out of it well. The praise give in the opening sentence is very encouraging. [I am] not sure that the staff appreciates fully the success of the school. There is a delicate balancing act to ensure that the findings do not result in complacency. Relationships between the school and the team were good." (ML, Head teacher).

"School has done well" (KM, AH).

"It was a good report and was much as expected" (BS, HOSADT)

"It was a good report in terms of the Ofsted Framework" (PL, 2icENG)

Nevertheless the interviewees complained that Ofsted inspection had not met their expectations. For example Ofsted's inspection method:

- Assessment of "teaching quality." – *" A bit of a lottery...depends on the group you have."* (CL, HOSGEOG); *"Members of the department not seen the same number of times."* (JE, STHIST); *"Must be seen the same number of times. It depends which group you have when they make the observation."* (HR, SWTHIST).

- Inspection feedback – *"There was no personal feedback."* (SM, STSC)

- Lack of rigour – *"The head of department came out of it unscathed...he must have covered things up"* (HD, STENG)

- Classroom observations – *"These varied between two and six."* (BR, HOSENG); *"He has not seen* [the teaching] *enough times to make a valid judgement."* (DM, HOSGNVQ); *"Only seen twice."* (CL.HOSGEOG); *"Only seen once"* (DM, HOSGNVQ)

- Lack of knowledge of department – *"The inspector seemed unaware of the department's priorities."* (BS, HOSADT)

- Ofsted Framework – *"It seems the Ofsted Framework is insufficiently comprehensive to evaluate the work of AD."* (BS, HOSADT)

There were also complaints about the way that some inspectors behaved towards teachers. For example:

"The behaviour of the Music inspector was seen to be aggressive." (LM, Headteacher),

"He was formal, distant and cool." (SM, STSC)

Some teachers believed that inspection judgements had been coloured by the inspector's prior agenda:

"…[she] *came with a prior agenda as she was the Head of Science in a girl's private school."* (SM, STSC).

The question was whether these views would influence the implementation of the inspection recommendation, Edge 1, concerning systematic identification of "good" teaching practice

(iii) Intention to make a change. In spite these reservations there was an intention to change in line with the feedback given by the subject inspectors. For example

"Agreed with the findings and will be aiming to disseminate good practice around the department." (CL, HOSGEOG);

"We must aim to standardise assessments." (DM, HOSGNVQ);

"We need to focus on the pupils with special needs in normal lessons." (PL,

2ic ENG).

However there were exceptions to this trend. For example

"Nothing [no changes will be made] *as a result of the inspection."* (BS,

HOSADT).

ML, Headteacher, was guarded when asked about his intentions:

"Nothing fundamental – we will focus on the inspection findings."

This implied that the Headteacher had yet to decide how to respond to the

school's inspection feedback.

(iv) Implementation. Sixth months after the inspection the school had

implemented the inspection recommendation, Edge 2, concerned with the

deployment of support staff:

"We employed three special needs teachers. We were able to use our special needs teachers with withdrawal groups for Maths and reading and spelling. We were able to use support assistants…we combined it with our ESL support and SUMES staff…The second of our training days was focused on special needs…we are working at it." (KM, DHT)

"What has happened is the SEN Department has had a kick up the backside….they [senior managers] *have made it more accountable…it is much improved."* (CL, HOSGEOG)

The school was approaching the issue of systematic sharing of "good"

teaching practice, Edge 1, by implementing a programme of classroom

observation and sharing "good" practice:

"Within the first half term everybody on site would have the duty of observing someone else teach. At the training day we discussed the observations in an attempt to have a discussion on what is good teaching. It was done on a department basis and the head of department was asked to organise observations to check that everyone had seen someone else teach…we are beginning to get feedback now but after the training day everyone had to make a return for SMT. *The plan now is to extend that so by the end of the year there will be at least three observations. The plan is to extend that across departments."* (KM, DHT)

However the departments had different perspectives on what constitutes "good teaching practice". For example Geography identified criteria for "effective teaching":

They came to some conclusion and have got some bullet points as to what is effective teaching. Then we discussed these to identify what stopped us from being as effective as we would like to be. I am looking forward to the next stage – to go and watch outside our department." (CL, HOSGEOG),

The Science department had selected factors that hindered "good teaching":

"Every member watched another member of the Science Department...we were making a list of good practice but it ended up being a list of things hindering good practice....everybody knew what was good practice." (SC, Science)

History had focused on "methods that work":

"The discussion was more useful...it reinforced some of the things that I did and made me feel that I was going in the right direction...I picked up little wrinkles...people felt we talked anyway with other colleagues – what works and what doesn't." (JE, STHIST)

KM, Deputy Head, argued that the value of such an exercise lay in the resulting discussions rather than lists of "good" practice. Additionally, the senior management team observed Year 9 classes. This was a response to the inspection finding that 15 per cent of lessons in Year 9 were taught *"unsatisfactorily"* due to *"inappropriate behaviour being tolerated, tasks being pitched too high and the needs of the least able being not accommodated"* (Edgetown School, 1997KT). ML, Headteacher, claimed that Ofsted had legitimised senior managers' interest in teaching styles:

"The role of the Senior Management Team is that of the awkward squad – questioning them...my role is to be an advocate for staff and pupils and to develop the individuality of teachers." (ML, Headteacher)

(vi) Extent of implementation. The school's Ofsted report indicated that "full" implementation of Edge 1 involved sharing of "good practice" within and

across departments and strategies, "matching work and materials closely to pupils' needs" (Ofsted, 1997KTS). While there was a sharing of "good practice" within departments, the issue of "matching work and materials to pupils' needs" was not addressed. Thus "some" implementation had occurred. By contrast there was "full" implementation of inspection recommendation, Edge 2 - senior managers provided special needs support for all pupils in Key Stage 3.

(v) Extent of change. Did implementation influence teachers' attitudes towards pupils drawn from a much wider intake? Certainly the headteacher, ML, clarified the school's position on a common approach to teaching. ML claimed that teachers formulated their own approach within the school's framework of shared educational values:

"Teachers are the ones who mediate change – this must be the starting point...quality is dependent upon feeling supported, resourced, a climate where one can take risks...teachers feel empowered as professionals and have rules to observe, a sense of common purpose but above all else is the school's framework of shared values." (ML, Headteacher).

His mission was to develop a "truly comprehensive" school:

"It is the richness of the school and its sheer energy that validates the educational experience. I am not someone who wants to play safe...some of my efforts are to disorganise the school to make it a more exciting community...putting the youngster first."

It was unclear whether teachers shared this vision. Replies to a question on the departments' discussions on what constitutes "good practice" suggested that matching materials to pupils was not a priority. The departments were more concerned about their more immediate priorities, such as "effective teaching", "things that hinder good practice" and "what works and what doesn't". Clearly the requirements of pupils with special educational needs were not central during the discussions about "good teaching practice".

However the deployment of support staff, Edge 1, was viewed as an

administrative task that lay within senior managers' sphere of influence.

LIPTOWN SCHOOL

(i) Inspection recommendations. Liptown School was given one key issue

relating to "management of teaching and learning":

> *"Increase the monitoring of the work of teachers in the classroom in order to:*
> * *identify and disseminate the substantial amount of good practice that exists;*
> * *identify weaknesses and provide appropriate professional support*
> * *and plan developments based upon reliable information."* **(Lip 4)**
>
> **Ofsted, 1997RHS)**

The inspection findings linked to the recommendation were:

Paragraph 43 – *"A number of lessons show inadequate challenge for the more able pupils."*

"Overall, senior and middle managers do not spend sufficient time in the classroom observing the work of colleagues in order to highlight and disseminate strengths, and to identify and rectify constraints and weaknesses."

Paragraph 69 – *"...there is a mismatch between what is thought to be happening and what actually takes place."*

The inspectors linked weaknesses in teaching the more able students with

other constraints and the school's managers lack of knowledge of what

happened in classrooms.

(ii) Attitudes towards Ofsted inspection. The key element in the school's

response to inspection was the headteacher's idiosyncratic views about

inspection. He expected inspection to discover and disclose, *"how the parents*

see us" and *"parental confidence in the school and public image."* and to

confirm his views on the school, the staff and his own leadership:

"I am looking for confirmation...that we are on the right track...I don't want inspection to tell me what I don't know."

The staff were *"an above average lot...who are working jolly hard."* CL made

a comparison of Ofsted with HMI's approach – in his view the HMI were

"seasoned professionals who were capable of comprehending the

complexities of Liptown School." Ofsted focussed on systems of evaluation.

AC, Assistant Head, echoed this stance:

"...why should we have people coming in for a week and telling us what we already know...it's a snap shot...how can they tell us... what is happening in the school."

"What does not come out of the PICSIs is the quality of people who work in the school...the humanity of the kids."

"You want someone to come with whom you can create a relationship...they said they are inspecting and not advising." (AC, Assistant Head)

CL, Headteacher also questioned whether the lead inspector had an objective

view of the school's approach to management. He claimed that the lead

inspector had a *"prior agenda about school management"*:

"He [the lead inspector] *is a member of Ofsted's in-set who have a mission to implement Ofsted's approach and the government's current concerns about standards...seemed to dislike mixed ability teaching...and the way the school placed pastoral care at the centre of its mission."* CL, Headteacher.

CL also expressed a strong personal dislike for the lead inspector:

...the man is obnoxious and unprofessional."

Clearly both the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher were strongly

opposed to Ofsted's approach to inspection and took a particular dislike to the

lead inspector's views on mixed ability teaching and pastoral care.

The question was whether these views influenced attitudes towards

Ofsted within the school. Other interviewees expressed misgivings about the

Ofsted process. For example:

"I suppose deep down my response is hostile...its because its initiated by government...it would be...more helpful if it was something from people your are familiar with, coming in and advising you...the immediate reaction from government is that teachers are not doing a good job, so I think its political." (HD, STENG)

"I am one of the staff who can remember the HMI inspection...the horror is mounting. It's the unknown...we had feedback from local inspectors." (SM, STSC)

Nevertheless participants hoped to receive a "good" report. For example

"I hope we come out of it as a successful school...I hope it comes across that we work hard...giving the children good friendly fun when they are here...they get a reasonably good education...I think in the department we know that there are areas we need developing that need doing and we have come a long way in the last few years." (HD, STENG)

"I hope to get confirmation [that I produce good work] *from it."* (SM, STSC)

Although the Headteacher had made no secret of his views about Ofsted he

prepared the school to give a "good performance":

"We have known that we are being inspected since July [9 months previously]. *We had a training day in October...each subject has had their own advisor into lessons...we had a training day last week...so there has been a lot going on."* (CL, Headteacher).

"Schemes of work last term...last year the Science adviser gave us a pre Ofsted inspection...a lot of paper work.... we had an INSET day last week and last term...we have had a couple of years to prepare." (SM, STSC)

"Well my room has been decorated...didn't get carpets though...furniture moved about...we've been told to look at polices...you should have them in the handbook...nobody has any reason for not knowing what the aims and the objectives of the school are...there are people who duck to pick up litter...things have been put on the wall." (HD, STENG)

"I hope to get confirmation from it" (SM, STSC)

Would the Headteacher's views on Ofsted's inspection method influence his

colleagues' reactions to the inspection itself?

(iv) Response to the inspection. The Headteacher was still dissatisfied with

the lead inspector and in particular the way that he had conducted the

inspection. CL explained that the experience of the inspection itself had left

him emotionally upset - the lead inspector had *"a prior agenda about school management."* and had commented unfairly on the work of the senior management team. He alleged that the lead inspector disliked mixed ability teaching and the way the school placed the pastoral care of children at the centre of its mission. CL claimed that the lead inspector was *"abrasive"* and that he found that it was *"difficult to relate to him"*. The inspection team had *"a disproportionate number of members from the private sector"*. According to CL the lead inspector had not found it possible to comment favourably on his leadership and the school's management team. He was considering a formal complaint to Ofsted. Furthermore he was intending to leave the school by taking early retirement. Other respondents echoed these views. For example:

"We had problems with the RGI [lead inspector], which was a matter of considerable concern...he seemed to come with a prior agenda and it was though he didn't like the way we managed the school." (AC, DHT)

"It was more negative than we expected...I felt they came with a prior agenda to knock the school. The RGI [lead inspector] in particular seemed to want to prove something in line with government's agenda." (HD, STENG)

CL, Headteacher, also questioned the "validity" of inspection findings, such as those relating to the school's use of mixed ability grouping (Paragraph 9, Ofsted, 1997RHS); the handling of the most able students (Paragraph 17. Ofsted, 1997RHS); and his own leadership qualities (Paragraph 17, Ofsted, 1997RHS). Other participants expressed misgivings about the "validity" of the rating of "teaching quality":

"How can it be fair if we have a different number of visits...so much is down to luck?" (SM, STSC);

" Its [rating of teaching quality] a bit of a lottery. " (BR, HOSENG);

"It's [rating of teaching quality] a bit of a joke." (HD, STENG).

It was clear that misgivings about the conduct of the inspection, inspection method and particularly the rating of "teaching quality" might influence the intention to change.

(v) Intention to make a change. In the immediate aftermath of the inspection AC, assistant head, could not say whether changes would be made as a result of inspection:

"We want to vet the draft report over the weekend before we decide to do anything." (AC, DHT)

There were mixed views about the intention to make a change. For example:

"It's a bit to early to say...we will try to improve the library" (BR, HOSENG)
"I shall not be making any changes...the rest is up to the Headteacher."
(SM STSC)

"Difficult to say...some are line with the school's findings and this will need a school response." (HD, STENG)

It was difficult to form a view on whether the school would implement "key issues for action".

(vi) Implementation. CL's early retirement allowed BLJ, Acting Headteacher, to convene a number of school committees to consider Ofsted's inspection recommendations. Ofsted's recommendation to increase the monitoring of teachers in the classroom was referred to Curriculum Managers. The outcome was a statement of school policy that asserted a teacher's right to determine what happened in his or her own classroom and the school's need to maintain its leading position in local examination league tables:

"It [monitoring] *should be divorced from teacher appraisal. It is something that the department and senior managers ought to be involved in...we would introduce it with a focus...at the moment to boys' underachievement...it's getting people into the classroom with a purpose."* (BLJ, Acting Headteacher)

It was clear that the teachers had rejected Ofsted notion of "teaching quality".

BLJ argued:

"That [idea] *would be frightening for staff...I don't want the Ofsted approach full stop"*: and *"some staff would have difficulty with accepting people looking at their work if they were not doing it according to instructions."* (BLJ, Acting Headteacher)

However the idea of "monitoring" was acceptable where it maintained the

school's position in the local GCSE examination tables:

"We need to be more focused on the classroom. Monitoring is something we ought to do...we are working on attainments of Year 10 at the moment...we want to get the best out of the boys in year 10...we are setting targets in departments." (BLJ, Acting Head)

" I would like to look at monitoring as a whole school issue rather than the departments monitoring little bits in their own ways...whether departments will see that the right way of going about it we have yet to see...I will present a paper to the next group which sums their view" (BLJ, Assistant Head)

Six months later BH was appointed Headteacher and so BLJ stepped down.

AC, Assistant Head, explained that the Headteacher had made "monitoring" a

school priority:

"Monitoring is a priority. I don't think it is a priority because of Ofsted. It is his [BH, the newly appointed Headteacher] *priority which is being blazoned abroad...the school is now monitoring...in order to raise standards [of attainment], results etcetera."* (AC, Deputy Head)

"It certainly seems to me that if you are doing monitoring there is no point in doing through the back door...His [the new Headteacher] *interests are quite different than the previous head...he is interested in finance...but..."* (AC, DHT)

It was that BH had brought a fresh impetus to the issue of "monitoring" the

"badly performing" Year 10 and 11 groups. Whether this represented an

acceptance for Ofsted's position of "monitoring teachers' work in the

classroom" was unclear.

(vii) Extent of implementation. In response to a question about the extent of

implementation BR, HOSENG, claimed that:

"The new headteacher has brought in a new system of pupil monitoring. I know that teachers come later...the monitoring of teachers has been on the agenda of various committees...but it has yet to become involved in

monitoring teachers as Ofsted meant [classroom observation]. But with a pupil monitoring system in place it will mean questions are being asked why this teacher is performing badly there. This will inevitably lead to some sort of monitoring of teachers." (BR, HOSENG)

However the situation on the ground was different. For example

"We have done less than we did last year [the year of the inspection]." (SM, STSC)

Others questioned the idea of "monitoring" on grounds of principle:

"It hasn't affected the classroom yet. There is a group of people discussing what we should do...we hear odd things that come out suggesting that we should do this and that.... there seems to be extremes like somebody checks everything you mark ...in between you have people in your classroom...to my mind it the senior management judging the people underneath...I find it amazing that management needs to find out what people are doing." (ST, Staff Governor)

By contrast CD, HOSMATHS, was in favour of "monitoring":

"I go there if there are problems with particular groups...it is not a penalising monitoring. It is supportive." (CD, HOSMATHS)

It was apparent that senior managers intended to monitor the progress of

GCSE examination groups. This involved observing teachers whose groups

were in danger of failing to achieve the expected percentage of A-C grades.

The research took the view that "some" implementation of Lip 4 had occurred.

The school's Ofsted report indicated that "full" implementation would involve

the systematic identification of teachers' weaknesses, providing support and

planning based on information obtained from the monitoring teachers' work in

the classroom.

(viii) Extent of change. Had implementation led to a change in teachers'

beliefs about the management of teaching? It was clear that teachers at

Liptown School clung to the existing norms relating to relationships between

managers and teachers. This allowed senior managers to "monitor" the

progress of GCSE groups. BH, believed that the staff implicitly accepted the

idea of "monitoring":

"I view the Ofsted inspection as helpful in forging the immediate agenda...I use the Ofsted report as another set of eyes looking at the school. ...What Ofsted has done is to give the school a focus for change which my colleagues would not have readily accepted themselves had it not have been for Ofsted...The school has got to change...it hasn't changed for a variety of reasons....we have an ageing staff." (BH, Headteacher)

In spite of this teachers had not changed their views on monitoring teachers'

work in the classroom by the end of the end of this investigation.

RIMTOWN SCHOOL

(i) Inspection recommendations. Rimtown School received two key issues

relating to "management of teaching and learning":

"Promote a greater sharing of best practice so that all teachers:
- **use a wide range of teaching styles in order to encourage more students to think for themselves and organise their own work;**
- **apply greater consistency with regard to marking and day to day assessment;**
- **have high expectations as to the level and volume of work especially homework."** (Rim 1) Ofsted, 1997KN

The inspectors found that existing teaching methods prevented the pupils

using their initiative, the marking of pupils' books was inconsistent and the

homework set was undemanding. Hence they recommended the school to

employ a wider range of teaching styles to encourage the students to reason

for themselves, achieve greater consistency in the setting of homework and in

marking pupils' work.

"Senior managers aim to monitor the work of each curriculum area, but this process has not yet been fully implemented across all departments and currently the outcomes lack a clear focus." (Rim 2) Ofsted, 1997KN.

The inspectors found that the school's evaluation of departments lacked focus

because of an absence of explicit criteria.

(ii) Attitudes towards the Ofsted process. The Headteacher's attitudes

towards Ofsted had a major impact on the school's response to the inspection

process. PE claimed that Ofsted's inspection method simply provided a

snapshot of school life in contrast to the school's annual review of the work of

subject departments which was more systematic, rigorous and effective:

"We are looking under more stones than Ofsted"..."Their observations are not as searching as mine." PE, Headteacher.

PE described key elements in the school's review of departments:

"Quality control is called "daisy chain" when middle managers review each other within a very defined structure. They look at marking, they look at books and the management of resources...they may not look at methodology but certainly they look at the outcomes of practice and resourcing"

PE claimed that this performance discourse dominated the school's approach

to management:

"Lot's of competition. Competition goes to the heart of it all. So they [departments] compete for funding. The way they get funding is through.... funding of the action plan expressed in terms of standards for development... capitation...raising standards of attainment...targeted at annual percentage improvements. Departments bid against each other."
(PE, Headteacher)

"Staff are used to me saying...we are measuring your department's performance and we are going from here to there and that is your target for next year." (PE, Headteacher)

He was confident that he was leading the school in the right direction:

"I am monitoring such things as subject departments and individuals ' performance. I am monitoring such things as the incidence of children going to the loo and am publishing league tables in the staff room. Subject reviews are under way. I am unconcerned about inspection from the point of view that I am doing what is needed."

In spite of these views about Ofsted PE arranged a series of briefings, in-

service training and a series of visits and inspections by LEA subject advisers.

The school's documentation had been reviewed and brought up to date

(HOSENG; SW icSEN; ES, STMATHS: GW, Dir. Studies). It was clear that

PE had prepared the school to ensure that it performed well under inspection. He described this process as "filing the teeth of the Ofsted hamster" – an exercise in damage limitation. Nevertheless these preparations had not eliminated teachers' feelings of uncertainty about the inspection process. For example:

- Classroom observation - " *very anxious about it...classroom observation is the reason for apprehension...heard very critical things from other teachers...things can go wrong. Children can play up*" (ES, STMATHS).

- Wide range of work to be inspected - DA was unsure how to approach the inspection given the department's situation..."*there has been a lot of turnover...there were only two full-time members of staff.*" (DA, HOSENG)

- Wide range of teaching commitments – "*I am the only SEN specialist, teaching on a 50 per cent time table and also responsible for EIPs.*" (SW, icSEN)

Had the Headteacher's stance on Ofsted influenced his subordinates' attitudes? When asked about his hopes and expectations for the inspection GW, Director of Studies, expressed concern about the capabilities of the inspection team:

"*There must be better ways of doing it...the school should be held to account...hope the inspection team is up to it.*" (GW, RIRST)

However, other participants were more positive:

"[I] *hope...*[my] *leadership and management of the department will receive recognition*" (DA, HOSENG)

and "*I hope that the inspection will be conducted fairly.*" (SW, icSEN)

(iii) Response to the inspection itself. PE, Headteacher, claimed that the school's inspection lacked rigour, failed to uncover known weaknesses and merely confirmed what he already knew about the school:

"*They were fair. It was well done. It was a fair appraisal of what we do. I think some teachers got away with it...some teachers clicked themselves up a*

notch...a couple got away with murder...their observations were not as searching as mine...I knew some areas were failing and Ofsted came and told me...[Ofsted] will leave me with a plan I have already got...if we have to have confirmation so be it."" PE, Headteacher

Some participants argued that Ofsted inspection was less rigorous than the

school's system of departmental review. For example:

"Our inspector was only here for three days. So we were seen less frequently than we might be. I felt it was not enough to make judgements on. I was seen three times...everyone thought that too." (DC,STTECH)

"I was never seen by the English inspector. Never. The History chap saw me for 25 minutes...never spoke to the kids... I offered a lesson plan. It was never picked up... I felt very cheated by the special needs inspector. He said he didn't know a great deal about special needs....It was a thoroughly deflating experience... It was all second hand evidence." (SW, icSEN)

However views on the inspection varied:

DA, HOSENG, had a largely favourable experience:

"I found it quite stressful. By the end of the week I was feeling happy about it. I was quite content with the way it had gone...it's a confidence booster for all my reservations about the tenor of the report...I felt we did as well as we could in the circumstances."

By contrast ES, STMaths, complained about the inspectors' cool and distance

manner:

"[the inspector was] cool and distant and this was disconcerting...some questioning seem aggressive...feedback was confined to the head of department...she felt excluded, suspicious of a stitch up, between the inspector and the head of department."

This raised the question whether such views would influence the intention to

make a change.

(iv) Intention to make a change. There was a mixed response to a question

about the intention to make a change:

"Very few [changes]. *The feedback was not something I could relate my own teaching to."* (PC, STTECH)

"I don't know." (SW, icSEN)

"So much of it boils down to resources or staffing which are beyond my control…I don't think there will be changes in terms of organisation or practice. No money has been promised" (DA, HOSENG)

"That's up to P----[Headteacher]" (GW, DirST)

It was clear that teachers were waiting to see how the Headteacher, PE, would react to the inspection report. It became clear that PE intended to make a few minor changes to the school's arrangements for Year 11 work experience and the registration period. He justified a decision to change the school's arrangements on pupil registration by claiming that Ofsted insisted on a change:

"So I said Ofsted have said it…to cut out debate." (PE, Headteacher)

(v) Implementation. The Headteacher prepared a post-inspection action plan (Ofsted, 1997KN) that endorsed his own school agenda: a plan to report on curriculum areas included arrangements to share the school's "best" practice in teaching; to ensure consistency in the marking and assessment of pupils' work; and the use of a "the sharpened framework" for reviewing the work of the departments. PE intended to focus the staff's attention on his own rather than Ofsted's priorities. His subordinates made clear their views about the Headteacher's leadership and management style:

"The atmosphere is very fear driven. We seem to be so worried we are going to lose pupils to surrounding schools…it's a worry…the management team are worried what the inspectors will say…there is a general fear what will happen if they come back and find we have not done something…the next time they comes everything will be running smoothly." (ES, Maths)

"it's been quite challenging - the management style – he [PE] has introduced…there is no room for sitting back and taking it easy…he certainly wants people to come up with things…there may be a feeling within the staff…that the human perspective gets lost…maybe we are focusing on outcomes very much…we are all very clear what his vision is for the school…he makes things happen." DA, HOD English.

The school's main priority was to improve the percentage of GCSE grades A-C (PE, HT; DA, HOSENG). Would this affect the school's response to Ofsted's agenda for change?

The inspection recommendation, Rim 1, called on teachers to share "best" practice on a wider range of teaching styles, consistency in marking and assessment and higher expectations towards homework. The school's post-inspection action plan (Rimtown, 1997) included a proposal for a school policy on marking and setting homework as well as providing reports on classroom practice. Two years after inspection participants claimed that there had been no change in the school's approach to assessing pupils' work and the setting of homework:

"We do have [high] expectations in top sets in Key Stage 4...also in set twos
we expect them to do homework...if you have strict rules about homework
you can create problems for yourself." (RW, STMFL)

"Nothing so far." (ES, STMATHS).

Furthermore, a systematic approach to the sharing of "best practice" leading to the use of a wider range of teaching styles had been ruled out (Rim 1). For example DA, HOSENG, explained that there were a number of constraints:

"That...presupposes that we do a fair amount of observing of one
another...with the constraints of the time table this is very difficult to do...the
other way of sharing practice is to talk about it in department meetings. I am
sure other departments do this...we do it to a certain degree on an informal
level. I know that one of the responsibilities of middle managers... is to
monitor...it is quite difficult – barriers must be broken down...we have had
plenty of it in the last eighteen months...lesson observation, department
reviews for example."

Did the school's annual review of the departments' work involve sharing of ideas on what constitutes "best teaching practice"? The situation was unclear. The school had introduced three classroom observations to "sharpen up" the

monitoring of departments in response to inspection findings concerned with

the school's system of review (see Rim 2):

"There is an increase in the level of classroom observation. There is now an involvement by the students in their perceptions of teaching. It's customer driven. There is now a springboard into [teacher appraisal] and development. The whole thing is tidier and focused." (GW, DirST)

"The new system was in place before Ofsted. I think the revision suggests that it will be sharper." (GW, DirST)

PE, Headteacher, claimed that the Ofsted Framework (Ofsted, 1996) was

being used to assess "teaching quality". However respondents were uncertain

about the school's criteria for judgments about teaching. For example ES,

STMaths speculated that *"Ofsted's criteria"* might be used to judge teaching.

This suggested there was an emphasis on "teaching quality" rather than the

sharing of "best practice".

(vi) Extent of implementation and change. There had been "some"

implementation of inspection recommendation Rim 2 - senior managers

introduced a more systematic approach to assessments of teaching. The

research judged that "little implementation" had occurred in the case of the

key issue relating to teaching styles, marking, assessment and homework

(Rim 1). Rimtown School's inspection report (Ofsted, 1997NHS) linked

notions of "best practice", "a wider range of teaching styles" and students

"thinking for themselves", the implication being that learning was too heavily

teacher-directed. However, the school's real priority was the percentage of

GCSE A*-C grades. As a result teachers stayed with tried and tested teaching

styles rather than implementing Ofsted's prescriptions for "effective" teaching.

7.4 Research Findings. This part of the investigation focused on Ofsted's

technical/rational perspective on implementation, change and "school

improvement". It identified factors in the school, inspection process and immediate environment that influenced the schools' implementation of inspection recommendations concerning teaching.

Teachers' attitudes towards Ofsted were highly significant, that is whether or not the inspection confirmed their view of the school and affirmed their particular contribution to "school improvement". Teachers questioned whether Ofsted – the "new" inspection agency – shared their priorities. As a consequence senior managers and their subordinates had different perspectives on the inspection process. The headteachers and senior managers' main interest was achieving a "good" school inspection report and thus the *Handbook* and *Framework* were used to evaluate the school, plug gaps in the curriculum and remedy weaknesses. As a result the school's documentation and administrative procedures were brought up to date, local authority subject adviser/inspectors undertook pre-inspection visits and teachers briefed about Ofsted's inspection procedures. By contrast those individuals whose main interest was teaching were more concerned about being observed in the classroom. For example long serving teachers had not been observed in the classroom in recent years and thus were anxious and unsure about classroom observation. By contrast newly qualified teachers were more confident.

Although the schools achieved "satisfactory" inspection reports classroom teachers expressed disquiet about the system of classroom observation: variations in the number and length of the observations; pupils' behaviour being untypical; and those teachers who had the capacity to performed well. This led to the view that Ofsted had been unable to observe

"normal" teaching and learning and to doubts about the reliability of inspection findings and the grading of "teaching quality". However, where the inspection findings were based on a large number of observations, such as across a curriculum area, the view was that these inspection findings reflected the "real" state of affairs.

The headteachers played the key role in determining the school's stance on Ofsted. However their views on Ofsted's inspection method varied from outright opposition to qualified support. For example two headteachers expressed misgivings about the rigour and efficacy of Ofsted's method - whether Ofsted could catch the complexities of the school. They questioned the value of Ofsted inspection, the accuracy of inspection reports and whether key issues form the basis for "school improvement". It was clear that the Ofsted process was not an integral to "school improvement" in these schools. However the majority of headteachers adopted a more pragmatic stance, judging that where the inspection confirmed their own perspectives it also depicted the "reality" of the school. However Ofsted and headteachers' intentions towards teaching did not always coincide and as a consequence certain key issues relating to the school's approach to teaching were deemed "inappropriate" or "impractical". Schools' action plans did not address the weaknesses identified by Ofsted inspectors and the schools' implementation of inspection recommendations had little to do with Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement". Thus the implementation of inspection recommendations had more to do with the headteachers' agenda for teaching than Ofsted's demands.

Three interrelated factors influenced the schools' implementation of inspection recommendations concerning the management of teaching: the headteacher's agenda for the school, stance on Ofsted's discourse and approach to implementation. Some of the key issues contained broad themes or guidelines, such as *"implement a systematic approach to monitoring teachers' work"* and *"identify and disseminate good teaching practice."* In contrast other key issues contained detailed prescriptions; frameworks with several linked concepts, such a "monitoring", "relative performance" and "target-setting", drawn from Ofsted's discourse. While the headteachers prioritised the issue of control over teaching the majority did not comply with Ofsted's prescriptions. Instead they selected elements from Ofsted's discourse that were consistent with the school's existing approach to the management of teaching. Thus their treatment of the inspection recommendations had more to do with the school's approach to teaching than Ofsted's demands. At the same time the headteachers' approach to implementation had a significant influence on teachers' reactions to the idea of management control. Where the headteacher consulted, operated within existing norms and encouraged the subject departments to experiment with new ideas implementation progressed. By contrast where the headteacher used coercive strategies to achieve radical change in the school's approach to teaching there was resistance and implementation progressed slowly. The descriptions of implementation showed the persistence of the existing beliefs about teaching and a reluctance to damage relations between managers and teachers. This implied that teachers viewed Ofsted's teaching discourse as alien.

Participants also questioned Ofsted's approach to inspection on other grounds – high workloads; feelings of stress; exhaustion and even ill health before, during and after the inspection. There were claims that the inspection itself was so intense that it created a sense of inertia once it was over. However six months later participants reported that the school had returned to "normal": teachers were once more dealing with day-to-day exigencies and responding to others pressures, such as the school's position in local GCSE examination league tables. The regular monitoring of the schools' progress on implementation – research interviews took place at intervals of six months – revealed that that implementation was not a linear process. It was clear hat Ofsted's agenda for teaching was placed on the backburner where the school had to improve its GCSE results. The perception grew that Ofsted's recipe for teaching and learning was irrelevant.

The research showed that these factors in the school, inspection process and the immediate environment interacted to influence the implementation of inspection recommendations. As a result the extent of implementation varied. The key factor was the headteacher's stance towards Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" and the approach to implementation. Those headteachers who employed Ofsted's discourse to develop the school's beliefs about teaching made more progress with implementation.

7.5 Discussion. This section considers how the research findings relate to findings in the wider literature (see Chapter 4). The inspections studied represented a sample of schools, probably similar to many large secondary schools in England, which were coming to terms with the profound

educational changes initiated by central government in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Chapter 2). In essence these changes were concerned with delivering a nationally prescribed curriculum through the agency of an explicit management system embodied in Ofsted's *Handbook* and *Framework* (see Chapter 3). A bias towards the concerns of management was reflected in the pattern of inspection recommendations identified; nearly half of the recommendations dealt with the necessary management conditions for effective teaching and learning, use of school resources and delivery of the National Curriculum. The remaining inspection recommendations covered a wide range of school activities – health and safety, accommodation, homework, attendance and punctuality. A contemporaneous study, Wilcox and Gray (1996), also revealed also bias towards management concerns in the initial stages of Ofsted's programme of school inspection. However the current study also identified certain pedagogical themes concerning the schools' approach to teaching including recipes for "effective" teaching and learning: developing the students' oral skills and encouraging the pupils to think for themselves. This implied that the agency was using the inspection process to promote pedagogy. The assumption was that Ofsted was drawing on its bank of inspection knowledge in laying down pedagogy. However the research showed that teachers questioned whether Ofsted's recipes for "effective" teaching and learning could be applied in the context in which they operated. This suggested that teachers confined Ofsted's views to something like Bernstein's (1996) "field of inspection knowledge" alone, not wider school improvement knowledge. Furthermore they took the view that Ofsted's

teaching discourse challenged the teacher's right to determine what was appropriate teaching.

Earlier research studies, such as Ouston et al. (1998), highlight the issue of the "quality" of the "key issues for action". For example, whether a key issue viewed as "important" or "easily fixed" or "difficult" influenced the schools' approach to implementation. This was based on Fullan's (2001a) framework for the quality of change. Ouston et al. (1998) claimed that schools made "good progress" with "easily fixed" key issues and "less progress" with the inspection recommendations that involved the whole school. The discussion in chapter seven indicated that key issues within the senior managers' domain were fully implemented or rejected outright. However this investigation showed that it was the headteacher shaped the "official" view of the "quality" of the key issues. Key issues were viewed as "important" where they facilitated the headteacher's agenda for change, for example those inspection recommendations concerning the issue of management control over teaching. In contrast key issues concerning the school's approach to teaching were viewed as "inappropriate" for the context in which the school operated. A small minority of the key issues were viewed as impractical where the schools' financial resources were insufficient or were beyond the school's sphere of influence.

While writers, such as Gray and Wilcox (1995) and Fidler et al. (1995), question the efficacy of Ofsted's inspection procedures they appear to endorse Ofsted's technical/rational perspective on inspection. By contrast writers, such as Brimblecome et al. (1995), claim that Ofsted's technical approach to inspection by its very nature generates feelings of anxiety and

influence the intention to make a change. Cuckle and Broadhead (1998) claim that Ofsted inspection produces professional uncertainty, with teachers experiencing, confusion, anomie and doubt. These authors claim that the inspection process has the effect of further intensifying teachers' workload. Intensification was not simply confined to the actual period of inspection but extended retrospectively in preparing for inspection and prospectively in responding to subject inspectors' feedback. In some cases intensification led to high stress levels, lack of sleep and bouts of illness. In spite of this inspection reports confirmed teachers' views, affirmed their work and thus raised morale. The current study also revealed that teachers experienced intensification of their work, fatigue and even bouts of illness but where Ofsted confirmed views and bolstered beliefs teachers' sense of professionalism and self-worth were enhanced. However, while teachers valued the external perspective on their work, this did not represent unqualified acceptance of Ofsted's technical/rational inspection discourse. Arguably senior managers were more aware of the discourse but the research showed that Ofsted had not always entered the consciousness of their subordinates. This contrasts with Cromey-Hawke's (2000) study that claims that teachers at all levels accept Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection. This implies that Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection" has become the basis for decisions about teaching and learning. The current research speculates that teachers use different discourses including Ofsted's technical/rational inspection discourse in various activities or domains. The assumption being that domains, such as management and teaching, have their own underpinning frameworks or discourses. The descriptions of

implementation appear to support this view. Furthermore other writers, such as Simkins (2000), claim that managers and teachers do not necessarily share the same interests and beliefs and indicate that there is a widening gap between teachers and managers. Orton and Weick (1990) also claim that school organisations are "loosely coupled systems" characterised by different and even conflicting interests. This research is unable to substantiate Cromey-Hawke's (2000) claim that there is a *"rational, systematic, displacement of existing school lexicons by Ofsted's discourse"*.

Clearly Ofsted inspection led to schools' complying with the national curriculum; updating school documentation; introducing new management and administrative procedures; improving library and computer facilities and using a rational approach to allocating school resources. However the implementation of inspection recommendations concerning teaching was an unreliable indicator of Ofsted's intentions for "school improvement".

Chapter 8

MICRO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Introduction. This chapter takes a micro-political perspective on the implementation of key issues concerned with teaching. Six case studies identify how political themes emerged from micro-political issues relating to implementation. The chapter concludes by considering how the research findings relate to themes in the wider literature.

8.2 Approach to analysis. The previous discussion (see Chapter 7) indicated that micro-political interactions between senior managers and subordinate teachers influenced the implementation of inspection recommendations concerned with teaching and learning. Since such micro-political interaction provided information about schools' implementation of key issues the research took on a political perspective. This research became a dual – technical/rational and cultural political perspective investigation. The discussion in Chapter 5 indicates that the research adopted a theory emergent approach to the collection and analysis of political information. Political issues relating to implementation were identified and linked to a political discourse concerning use of power within school organisations. The research borrowed from the political discourse used by Busher et al (2000a; 2000b) to investigate how two secondary schools responded to pressure to change from external agencies such as Ofsted. The key theme within the discourse is that teachers respond to pressure to change from external agencies, such as Ofsted, by struggling to assert their own interests and values. Political issues raised by the participants were linked to seven initial

exploratory threads developed from the discourse. The threads were questioned, refined and developed into broader political themes.

8.3 Initial exploratory threads. The discussion above indicates that five initial exploratory threads – lines of enquiry – were formulated to guide the collection and analysis of data. The exploratory threads are listed below:

- The school's teaching and management culture is affected by and interacts with pressure from Ofsted.

- How headteachers and senior managers deal with Ofsted's pressure through the inspection process.

- How headteachers mediate Ofsted's message to staff.

- How middle managers and classroom teachers respond to pressure for change created by Ofsted and headteachers.

- Teachers respond individually and collectively to Ofsted's pressure for change.

The reader can examine how broader political themes were developed by questioning issues relating to the exploratory threads in the series of matrices in Appendix 5.

8.4 Case studies. Each case study identifies key issues and charts the emergence of political issues and themes relating to implementation of inspection recommendations concerned with teaching and learning. As a consequence the descriptions do not follow a pre-determined structure. However the descriptions include accounts of particular issues and themes. For example:

- headteacher's reactions to Ofsted's pressure for change;

- senior managers' use of Ofsted; senior managers' strategies for

implementation;

- middle managers and classroom teachers' responses to pressure for change created by headteachers;

- teachers' responses to Ofsted's demands for management control over teaching;

- teachers' responses to Ofsted's prescriptions for teaching;

- teachers' responses to pressure in the school's external socio-political environment;

- how schools' internal cultures are affected by and interact with pressure from Ofsted;

- strategies used by teachers to defend values and beliefs embodied in a school's teaching culture.

Each case study description begins by highlighting the key features of implementation from the micro-political perspective.

BORDER SCHOOL

Introduction. This case revealed that the Headteacher made use of Ofsted's dominance during the inspection process to promote his interest expressed as the school's agenda for change. An important feature of this agenda was the improvement of "teaching quality" through management control over teaching and learning which involved the "monitoring" of teachers' work in the classroom. However teachers viewed the idea of "monitoring" as inimical to the school's teaching culture and thus used various strategies of resistance to prevent the school's implementation of Ofsted's notion of "monitoring". The Headteacher employed political tactics, such as appealing to middle

managers' interests by providing training in the skills of classroom observation, to mediate a new position on "monitoring".

Pressure for change.   Ofsted pressed for a change in the school's approach to managing teaching through Bor 3:

Inspection recommendation Bor 3: *"Establish formal procedures to monitor teaching and learning within the classroom."* (Ofsted, 1996WCS).

ML, Headteacher, used Ofsted's dominance during the inspection process to promote an agenda concerned with management control over teaching. He claimed that Ofsted inspection had confirmed his view of school:

"...the school has come through it [Ofsted inspection] *rather well...and the initiatives they would like us to take...I also approve of...half of those areas where we had the intention of moving forward and in some respects there is legitimacy now created by the fact that the inspectors have picked it up as well and it might even facilitate the management of those issues. Now it might have had a different view if it had thrown up issues where we were thinking that's surely not the case...it rounded off a cycle of five or six years of development."* (LM, HT)

Since LM's writ did not extend to determining the approach to teaching and learning within the subject departments' implementation of Bor 3 provided the means of achieving influence:

"the intention is to switch the focus back to heads of department to say that you are supposed to be monitoring your department. We [the senior management team] *are sure you are but we need some proof and some kind of pattern. We have discussed it with the heads of department and most have no problems with it except for perhaps time."* (LM, HT)

In spite of this comment the situation on the ground was somewhat different – teachers were firmly opposed to the idea of management control over teaching and were using various strategies of resistance to resist implementation. For example middle managers argued that "monitoring" was inconsistent with the school's internal culture:

"The immediate response was that no way can we cope with this in the time allocations...a lot of talk about it was not a responsibility of ours...a lot of them felt they did not have the skills to be able to cope with this...and so there was a fair degree of hostility to begin with." (JT, DHT)

I wouldn't like to think we are doing it [monitoring teachers' working the classroom] *by the back door"* (PB, Ofsted Coordinator)

"Some people see it [classroom observation] as an intrusion...because they are working behind closed doors." (JT, HOSART)

"We don't monitor each other [at Border School]." (JS, HOSRE)

Consequently there were tensions surrounding the issue of "monitoring" and these tensions influenced implementation. In contrast some of the larger subject departments were already using formal procedures to "monitor" teachers' work in the classroom:

"We found quite a lot of distinction between them according to the ethos of the department. Maths and Science were happy to conform to whatever they accepted as the norm" (JT, DHT)

This implied that the idea of "monitoring" was acceptable in some quarters and thus these departments were encouraged to develop their own systems. However the Headteacher's main strategy was to mediate Ofsted's message about control over teaching by building alliances with the subjects to address matters of immediate concern:

"We began with a gentle notion of monitoring, and homework is something we hit upon, we have been allocated a certain number of borderline youngsters to monitor and mentor" (PB, Ofsted Coordinator).

Clearly the school's GCSE results were below par and were a matter of concern and the Headteacher negotiated a position on "monitoring that involved tracking the progress of "borderline" GCSE candidates. This also involved the senior managers going into classrooms where progress have rise to concern. LM also fed middle managers' interest in developing the skills of management by providing training in classroom observation:

"the heads of department are being invited to become trained in classroom observation...where they will say...I will be a mini-inspector...it's begun with one or two departments." (LM, HT)

The belief was that this would change attitudes and encourage these

managers to undertake formal classroom observations to assess the quality of

teaching. In spite of this middle managers were still refusing to become

involved with formalised classroom observation two years after the inspection:

"the model that is proposed...where you sit and observe a lesson the way an Ofsted inspector observes a lesson isn't necessary." (PM, HOSART)

"I have not interpreted it [Ofsted's inspection recommendation] *as more* [than monitoring homework]." (DC, HOSGEOG)

"The way I monitor is to look at homework diaries." (CW, STIT)

Even so the Maths and Science departments were continuing with their own

systems of "monitoring". However the study was unable to discern whether

such training was changing the school's teaching culture.

The case also indicated that teachers were responsive to other

pressures in the school's external socio-political environment that influenced

the approach to teaching. The agency had pressed the school to change the

existing approach to teaching through this key issue:

Inspection recommendation Bor 2 "Develop strategies pre-16 for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, drawing on the good practice post-16." (Ofsted, 1996WCS)

It was clear that such a radical change in the school's approach to teaching

was unwelcome. Senior managers questioned whether the inspectors had

seen "normal" teaching:

"I think that's a nonsense [the idea of pupils' taking responsibility or their own learning] *because what Ofsted saw was a lot of highly controlled lessons where people were making sure that nothing went wrong."* (JT, DHT);

the key issue was appropriate for the context in which the school operated:

"Independent learning and a better resources environment…without those this [independent learning] cannot be made to work…the children will not have the resources if they do not have the numeracy and literacy skills to access…our focus became literacy and numeracy because we have had a significant shift in our intake…towards people with learning difficulties and social disadvantage." (LM, Headteacher);

and its practicality:

"If you are teaching something to a very limited time scale…there is not as much time as you might think there is [to engage in independent learning]." (JT, DHT),

"You only get so much time with directives over content [for the National Curriculum] *to give the confidence and the stimulus or the pupils to take in the directions that they see."* (JS, HOSGEOG)

Thus senior managers linked their misgivings about the proposal to doubts about Ofsted's inspection method and also to the educational context in which the school operated: lower levels of literacy and numeracy in the changing pupil intake, pressure for external examination results and the need to deliver the National Curriculum. Consequently Ofsted and the headteacher's intentions towards teaching did not coincide and as a consequence the school's post-inspection plan (Ofsted, 1996WCS2) did not address the inspection issue relating to the dominant role of teachers in the students' learning. Instead of focusing on giving the students more responsibility for their own learning teachers focused on the issue of student access to the school library and to computers. As the term progressed the school began reacting to other pressures within its external cultural/political environment. PB described how the Headteacher had reacted to below par GCSE results:

"When I first saw the results I don't think I realised how bad they were and then we realised where we were in the league tables. There was a definite sense of what are we going to do about this…if you get a lot of good results you [members of the subject department] *are sitting pretty…LM did indices of every member of staff and how many A-Cs they had got. It was very threatening…everybody had a sense of not letting the school down."* (PB, CoorOfsted)

PB now imposed measures, such as "monitoring" teachers' work in the classroom, which had been rejected previously as inimical to the school's norms concerning relations between managers and teachers:

"I do feel pressure. My results stand out as being poor with the children I should have done better in the summer."

JS, HOSART, explained that his colleagues were sticking to tried and tested teaching methods:

"They [experienced staff] *don't perceive the need to change* [the approach to teaching] *if there is a risk of dropping standards."* (JS, HOSART)

Clearly a radical change in the approach to teaching was inappropriate and this implied that Ofsted's influence over teaching was short-lived.

Summary. Several political threads ran through the implementation of inspection recommendations:

- the Headteacher used Ofsted to promote his agenda concerned with control over teaching;

- middle managers and classroom teachers' used strategies of resistance towards Ofsted's pressure for management control over teaching.

- teachers' responsiveness to pressures within the school's external political environment;

- the Headteacher used his authority to resist Ofsted's pressure to change the school's approach to teaching and learning.

BOUNDARY SCHOOL

Introduction. Micro-political interaction between the headteacher, senior managers and subordinate teachers was a major factor in determining

teachers' attitudes towards the Ofsted inspection process and the

implementation of key issues concerning the school's approach to teaching

through the inspection process.

Pressure for change. The school received two key issues concerned with

teaching and learning:

Inspection recommendations:

Bou 1 *"Improve basic skills and self confidence through the introduction of a whole school language policy which has as it main focus in Key Stage 3."*

Bou 2 *"Raise the aspirations, enthusiasm and commitment of pupils by providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning."*
(Ofsted, 1996DHS)

During the initial stages of the study participants highlighted the issue of

"weak" management determining teachers' attitudes towards the senior

management team. For example

"In this school a lot of the senior staff are seen to be weak or over strong. The feeling is that it is being led in a far too dominant way – the headteacher...They feel that the senior management is weak...a lot of senior staff are seen not to have a work load which reflects the amount they are being paid...I have heard that if such and such turns up you should not be bothered...you have three options: it might be sorted out or it might be a complete waste of time or if you get one particular member of staff you are going to be told that you are wrong...some kind of [pupil referral]*unit is required because the problem is that large."* (TC, HOSTECH)

These tensions surrounding management of the school also influenced views

about the school's inspection:

"I hope that the headteacher will be asked to tighten things up. We have experienced every bandwagon there is to deal with poor pupil motivation and poor behaviour." (CH, ic Lower School Science)

Senior managers were also critical of their subordinates:

"There are a few people who are a few people who are difficult in terms of their perceptions about what is going on...what we are doing...When we [senior managers] are in discussions...about the quality of our staff and our

teaching there are occasions when we [senior managers] *tend to be subjective, very emotive and influenced by irrelevant negatives."* (RR, DHT)

Thus it was unsurprising that the local professional associations were in dispute with the school's governors over timing the school day:

"There is a dispute between some staff and governors over a decision to reduced the lunch period to accommodate a better start in the morning." (JR, HT)

"The governors were bitter about being threatened with an injunction." (JR, HT)

It was clear that the inspectors were stepping into a situation where teachers expected the Ofsted to take sides. For example:

"I hope the Maths department comes out of it well" (KS, HOSMATHS)

"I hope it will reveal weaknesses in the leadership of the school" (TC, HOSTEC)

"I hope it will redress funding deficiencies in Science…reduce teacher stress by getting to the heart of the school's problems"

"We hope the headteacher and deputies will be asked to tighten things up" (CH, icSC Lower School)

"I hope Expressive Arts gets the recognition it deserves" (LH, STEXARTS).

Thus Ofsted was stepping into an arena where teachers at all levels were seeking support for their particular view of the school

The school's main inspection findings came as a surprise to the staff (Ofsted, 1996DHS). Ofsted praised the quality of leadership and management - the senior managers had given a clear sense of direction and had united the staff with common objectives:

"*The evidence suggests that there were many disparate voices in the early days of the school, but now there are few dissenters and the great majority of staff are committed to the common aims."*

"The governors and senior management have provided a clear sense of direction and leadership to the school in its relatively short life...they have been successful in securing the commitment of the great majority of staff." (Ofsted, 1996DHS)

Ofsted also praised the overall quality of teaching:

"The quality of teaching is good and in a significant number of lessons it is very good...teachers have a good command of their subjects and work hard to communicate their enthusiasm to their pupils...lessons are well planned and management and discipline are good." Ofsted, 1996DHS)

The inspectors concluded that Boundary was a "sound school":

"[this is a school] *which is showing considerable determination and imagination in its efforts to change attitudes and raise standards of attainment* in a community with high unemployment and low educational expectations." (Ofsted, 1996DHS).

Participants believed that they had been vindicated,

for example:

- Headteacher – *"I am confirmed in the route that I am going. There is nothing I have to do that I am not already doing."* (JR, HT)

- Head of department - *"It was a big tick as far as we were concerned...he told us that we were the best team he had seen in three years of inspecting."* (TC, HOSTECH)

- Classroom teacher - *"The report was pretty much what we were expecting." (CB, STGEOG)*

- Middle manager - *"We had a good report...it pointed out problems we knew existed most of which we are taking steps to rectify."* (CH, ic Lower School Science)

The question was whether this had changed teachers' perceptions of the school or whether it had reinforced existing positions

A few months after the inspection JR, Headteacher, resigned from her post on health grounds and RR, Deputy, became the acting Headteacher. The school's senior management team decided to implement a common approach to teaching and learning and a school working party was established with the task of formulating a policy on the development of

language skills. LM (HOSENG), Chair of the working party, explained how he was approaching the matter:

"It was a gathering of ideas of different departments about...organising oral work...and how it might be developed. When the ideas came back I collated them...it was then used to for further departmental discussion. What we did was to isolate skills such as cross-curricular drafting skills, presentational skills, speaking skills. We looked at identifying what was common across departments to make working on these skills more cohesive...The purpose of INSET was to help them to understand that we were talking about belong to each department and not the special needs and English departments...the only way is to change attitudes and practices in the classroom." (JM, HOS, ENG)

Clearly this represented a radical change but six months later JM revealed that a language skills policy was a low priority. As a result he was moving to a post in another school:

" I am leaving to take up a new post in another school. I am disillusioned. I have spent months on developing a whole school language policy with departmental representatives...a whole school language policy is not now a school priority and thus it has been a waste to time...subject departments were not directed to adopt the plan and it was left to each subject to see what they wished to include in their plans." (JM. HOSENG)

CB - a member of the working party - CH and KS confirmed that the subject were addressing matters of more immediate concern:

"The subject was addressing its own priorities...the school was not adopting a school language policy." (CB, STGEOG)

"Science is preoccupied with its own agenda to do with new curriculum orders." (CH, ic Lower School Science)

"I am giving priority to departmental priorities...I was unaware that the school was doing something to implement key issues." (KS, HOSMATHS)

Clearly teachers had doubts about the school's capacity to translate talk into action and impose a common approach to teaching and learning, for example:

"We have discussed it [a school language policy] *in our TABS groups* [school planning committees]...*maybe I sound cynical but as far as I am concerned they seem to talk and there is no action." (CB, STGEOG)*

"Nothing happens...I get the feeling that TABS was introduced during my first year once they had found out about the Ofsted time...nothing has ever come out of anything that I have discussed at TABS" (CB, STGEOG)

"One day you had one response [from senior managers]. The next day you might have a completely different response." (LH, ic Drama)

"I am speaking for a lot of staff here when told that there is a TABS they go 'aargh' could be doing x, y and z." (LH, ic Drama)

Furthermore teachers questioned the need for change since the school's

inspection report had praised the overall quality of teaching. For example:

"We were having fake Ofsted inspections with senior managers coming into the classroom to see how we were teaching as though the problem was what we were doing in the classroom.... we were then told [by Ofsted] it was right." (TC, HOSTECH)

Participants argued that Ofsted's recipe for "effective" teaching was

inappropriate where teachers had to struggle to maintain control in the

classroom, for example:

"A lot of staff said you can't do that [give pupils responsibility for their own learning]...discipline in a school like ours is such a major thing...they have got to have control over the children...suddenly to let them have freedom is almost like suicide because it is such a difficult area." (LH, ic Drama)

As a result there was "little" implementation of the two inspection

recommendations.

Summary. The following threads ran through implementation:

- teachers at all levels strove for dominance;

- teachers used strategies of resistance in response to pressure for

  change created by senior managers;

- teachers view inspection as a political event concerned with asserting

  their own interests;

- the persistence of existing teaching cultures.

BRIMTOWN SCHOOL

Introduction. This case describes how the Headteacher used Ofsted to impose management control over teaching. Teachers opposed the idea and reacted to the Headteacher's pressure for change and his approach by asserting their interest by using various strategies of resistance to hinder implementation.

Pressure for change. Ofsted provided a detailed prescription for "effective" management:

Inspection recommendation, Brim 3:

"Improve the ways senior and middle managers plan for development by:
ensuring that structures for planning improvement and monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum are made explicit to all staff, including the expectations of middle managers;
making better use of the information gained from monitoring in identifying key priorities for improvement and in setting clear benchmarks for evaluating the relative success with these priorities;
establishing clear priorities in whole-school and departmental programmes for teachers' professional development." (Ofsted, 1996VCS).

Ofsted provided the focus for WM's plan for management control over teaching:

"All the issues for action are in our management plan. It may be that they give us a focus to move on." (WM, HT)

WM's strategy was to use key elements in Ofsted's planning discourse, such as "monitoring", "target setting" and assessment of "relative success", to change the school's teaching culture. However there were differences of view within the senior management team over the school's approach to implementation. For example DG, Assistant Head, saw implementation as a cooperative process – winning her colleagues' support:

"What we want from this management initiative is that we all go forward together in the same way...we have got to take our managers on board, then you have a chance of winning over others." (DG, AHT)

By contrast WM saw the process as the top leading the change process. He

believed that he would prevail:

" We really need the management of the school to see it is part of my job to manage...you have got to be interventionist and rattle a few more branches than I have done in the past...we were actually moving irrespective of Ofsted in terms of senior managers' monitoring in a way that reflects the Ofsted model...Ofsted has given us a focus...we will use some of the Ofsted criteria to beat the staff with...I want the staff to use data [on relative success] *to explain themselves."* (WM, HT)

However it became clear that WM preferred more coercive methods of

implementation: he monopolised staff discussions; insisted that the middle

managers attended training and after-school seminars to inculcate Ofsted's

thinking and specified certain agenda items. WM and DG were optimistic

about the outcome:

"The training was well received...people welcomed it with a request for further work on management of monitoring and evaluation which we did last week...we are saying that monitoring and evaluation is here to stay" (WM, HT)

"We now have a whole-school approach." (DG, AHT)

Did their subordinates share the same view of the training?

Respondents had doubts about the efficacy of the training, for example DC,

2ic Maths:

"To be honest I don't see anything coming out of it" DC (2ic Maths)

WC claimed that he had learned nothing new:

"Management training has occurred. It didn't broaden my perspective...what it did was to confirm my views...the framework for it was set up by senior management, which in some respects raised a difficulty as some of my colleagues saw that there were more relevant issues...we actually left it [monitoring] *open to colleagues."* WC (Coordinator of Humanities)

However certain individuals declared their opposition to the idea of "monitoring", for example JS, HOS Art, argued that Art had a unique culture where "monitoring" was inappropriate:

"Because of the nature of what we do and the style of what we are doing I am always having to say how we can adapt it for our area. That's the difficulty...we work in a different way." (JH, HOSART)

He also identified Ofsted's discourse of management control as a threat to teachers' interest in determining what happened in their own classrooms:

"They can see through these things [Ofsted's stance on monitoring]. *These things* [policies such as monitoring] *are being sent to monitor them closely. It depends on the senior management team to determine how closely they want to monitor...we have always known it goes on...this is more formal...external...national...the Head will listen to me and understand but whether governors understand* [is uncertain]. " (JH, HOSART)

Other participants, such as PJ (STHIST), whose main concern was teaching asserted a teacher's right to determine what happened in his or her own classroom:

"I think we are individuals...we agreed on the principle that we should stick to...there has got to be some professional scope...got to use your own judgement." (PJ, STEconomics/History)

Clearly the opposition to Ofsted's discourse was not confined to those individuals who had attended the staff training

Six months later teachers had yet to be won over to the idea of "monitoring" teachers:

"We have not got anything in place." (AH, ic RE)

"We have not done anything with it." (JS, ic Sixth Form)

"I didn't realise she was the line manager...don't tend to see her to be honest." (SG, ST, CDT)

The second key issue included a detailed prescription for the school's approach to teaching:

"Develop pupils' capacity to think for themselves by providing:
more activities that challenge and stretch pupils by requiring them to
investigate, analyse, generate ideas, explain, reason and review and
modify their work;
fewer activities that encourage pupils to depend too much on their
teachers and give them scope to take responsibility and show initiative
within their learning;
a planned whole-school programme to improve pupils' oral skills so that
they are willing to learn from each other though the discussion of and
reflection on their understanding." (Ofsted, 1996VCS)

The research examined the school's post-inspection action plan to determine

how the school was planning to implement this inspection recommendation. It

seemed that the Headteacher supported the idea of a common approach to

language or "key skills". He had appointed MM, Head of English, to chair a

working group to formulate the school's policy towards language skills:

"We have acted on the recommendation that we should promote oracy…we
have acted upon it because it is a reservation of mine…they [pupils] are
limited orally so people seemed to agree it was an issue because it was a
cross-curricular matter and therefore issue was important for the school to get
it right. It was good for the [English] *department to look at actual practice and*
how lessons were taught." (MM, HOSENG)

Although the English department had identified current practice the framework

for a cross-curricular approach was still under discussion two years after the

inspection:

"There have been a number of meetings…we had an INSET day on Friday…I
think that there is more acceptance [of a common approach to key skills]." (JS
ic Sixth Form)"

It was clear that the working party had yet to win support for its proposals for

key skills and this implied that implementation had not progressed much

beyond the discussion stage. Since the school was not monitoring whether

the teaching throughout the school gave more emphasis to the development

of key language skills the research was unable to establish whether

implementation was succeeding.

Summary. The main theme in implementation was the headteacher's use of Ofsted to impose a discourse of control over teaching. There were two threads within this theme:

- the Headteacher used coercion to promote his interest in control over teaching;

- teachers used strategies of resistance to defend values and beliefs encapsulated in the school's existing teaching culture.

EDGETOWN SCHOOL

Introduction. This case illustrates how Ofsted used its power to influence teaching by working through the school's teaching culture. A key issue invited the school to disseminate the "good" teaching that existed to meet the needs of the wider pupil intake – the main element in the Headteacher's mission to create a "real" comprehensive school. As a result the Headteacher was able to carve out a new role for senior management, promoting the school's framework of shared values. Another key issue empowered the school's management team to use the school's limited financial resources to improve the support of pupils with special educational needs.

Pressure for change. The school received two key issues concerning teaching and learning:

Inspection recommendations:

Edge1 *"Disseminate the best teaching practice within and between departments by more systematic identification of the much good teaching that exists."*
Edge 2 *"Improve the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs by reconsidering the deployment of support staff and providing individual plans for all pupils who need them."* (Ofsted, 1997KTS)

Edge 2 was perceived as a "management issue" and thus the senior

management team achieved "full" implementation in a matter of months. The

school created a number of additional posts for support staff and new

arrangements for in-class support. This represented an improvement in the

school's arrangements for those pupils with special educational needs, for

example:

"Very quickly a number of improvements on that. We had a heads of department meeting on Tuesday and we were asked about our initial reaction to the school's plan to improve this area. We have employed extra staff at Lower School to support in the classroom…it has started well." (CL, HOS GEOG)

"What has happened is the SEN department have had a kick up the backside. It was bit cosy…they [senior management team] *have made it more accountable."* *(JE, ST HIST)*

"We employed three new special needs teachers plus we had a part-timer…so what is happening you have got a lot more classroom support…we were able to use our special needs teachers in maths and specifically for reading and spelling…we were able to use our support assistants for support [in more subjects]*…so we have done quite a lot…we have spent part of that day [INSET day] looking at the special needs register…we are working on it."* (KT, DHT)

Nevertheless Ofsted was less successful in getting teachers to match

materials and methods to the wider pupil intake. The inspectors had found

shortcomings in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs within

Key Stage 3 and particularly within Year 9:

"The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in those departments that use appropriate strategies, matching work and materials closely to pupils' needs." (Ofsted, 1997KTS: 11)

"Despite the overall good picture, 15 per cent of lessons in Year 9 are taught unsatisfactorily. This is largely due to inappropriate behaviour being tolerated, tasks being pitched at too high a level for most of the group and the needs of the least able not being accommodated." (Ofsted, 1997KTS: 11)

Thus the assumption that underpinned Edge1was that the identification and

exchange ideas on "best teaching practice" would lead to more appropriate

strategies that matched materials and methods more closely to the needs of

the wider intake. The Headteacher took charge of mediating Ofsted's

message about teaching to the departments through a programme of

classroom observation:

"We spent time in departments watching each other teaching. Then we had a Baker Day...where we shared that good practice...every department did that." (HR, STHIST)

"Subjects are responding differently. Science and the small subjects have voluntarily discussed the issue of good practice. They have undertaken classroom observation. Practice is different in other departments. Maths has its own form of classroom observation. Funding has been made available to fund classroom observation." (KM, AHT)

However the subjects placed their own interpretations on what constituted

"best teaching practice", for example practice "that worked":

"Addressing the issue of teaching quality is too complex. We focused on "what works well." (HR, ST, HIST);

that made a "good lesson":

"[the department] *tried to analyse a good lesson...but started to run into problems with the notion of a [evaluative] code. There is an emphasis in this school on staff who are individuals. There is no in-house style...there is a corps of staff who set the teaching discourse. At the heart of our professional values is not letting people down and respect for colleagues."* (JE, HOSDT);

that was "effective":

"We have got some bullet points on what is effective teaching" (CL, HOS ENG);

and what hinders "good practice":

"We were making a list of good practice but it ended up being a list of things that hindered good practice...it was apparent that nobody knew what was good practice...whether it was modesty or not" (SC, ST, CHEM).

It was clear that the subjects had adapted Ofsted's message about "good

practice" to their own particular educational contexts rather than changing

their strategies to accommodate the needs of the wider intake. This reflected

the dominance of the subject departments in questions of teaching.

Nevertheless the Headteacher used implementation to carve out a new role

for the senior managers in the management of teaching and learning:

"The role of the senior management team is that of an awkward squad – questioning them [classroom teachers]. *My role is to be an advocate for staff and pupils and to develop the individuality of teachers"* (ML, HT)

Thus while it was the teachers who mediated change senior managers

promoted the framework of shared values by acting as the "awkward squad",

questioning whether the teaching met the needs of all the pupils:

"Teachers are the ones who mediate change...teachers feel empowered as professionals and have rules to observe, a common sense of purpose but above all else a framework of shared values...which affect how the school thinks and operates." (ML, HT)

This implied that the senior managers' influence stemmed from the school's

framework of educational values. The question was whether senior

managers, middle managers and classroom teachers shared the same set of

educational values or was the notion simply part of the rhetoric of school

management within Edgetown School

Summary. Two themes ran through implementation:

- the Headteacher's use of Ofsted to promote the school's framework of

   values and beliefs;

- teachers asserted interest in controlling teaching and learning in their

   own spheres of influence.

LIPTOWN SCHOOL

Introduction. This case highlights the pivotal role of the headteacher in the

school's response to Ofsted's pressure for change. The school had three

successive headteachers with different attitudes towards Ofsted at various stages in the inspection process and this influenced the school's approach to implementation. The case also highlights the persistence of the school's teaching culture and teachers' sensitivity to parents' views on appropriate teaching.

Pressure for change. Liptown School was given a detailed prescription for the "effective" management of teaching:

Inspection recommendation Lip 4:

"Increase the monitoring of teachers in the classroom in order to:
    a. *identify and disseminate the substantial amount of good practice that exists;*
    b. *identify weaknesses and provide appropriate professional support;*
    c. *plan developments based upon reliable information."* (Ofsted 1997RHS)

CL, Headteacher, took the view that Ofsted was unable to catch the complexities of Liptown School and thus was not worthy of the task of school inspection . AC, Assistant Head, shared the same view:

"What does not come out of the PICSIs [data on relative success] *is the quality of people who work in the school...you worry that they will come here for a week, which will be a special week.... the pressure to have one off lessons particularly in English where there is not a continuous flow of ideas."* (AC, AHT)

AC also doubted the professionalism of Ofsted inspectors:

"It's not inspection. It's a snap shot...there are people on the list [of inspectors] *who have no experience of a school of this kind."* (AC, AHT);

as well as the lead inspectors' objectivity:

"Throughout the inspection we had misgivings about the RGI [lead inspector]. *He appeared to be saying that he did not like the way we managed the school. He is one of Ofsted's main RGIs and it was as though he had something to prove about school management. He intimated that he had a preferred model of school management."* (AC, DHT)

CL reported that his relations with the R.G.I or lead inspector were strained:

"I had strained relations with the RGI [lead inspector} who seemed to come with a prior agenda about school management...he seemed to dislike mixed ability teaching and was disinterested in the way that the school placed pastoral care at the centre of its mission." (CL, HT)

Clearly CL was expecting the worst from Ofsted inspection.

The next interview took place in the immediate aftermath of

Inspection - CL claimed that he was *"deeply upset by the inspection"* and

"seriously thinking about early retirement". He had doubts about the "validity"

of the inspection findings relating to his leadership of the school:

"There was no direct comment on my leadership...this seemed to be criticism by omission...the school was successful and popular and I deeply regret that the RGI had not found it possible to comment favourably on my leadership and the school management team. Several heads of department had been placed in a similar position...I was unhappy about the finding that the school needed to stretch the most able." (CL, HT);

CL appeared to be in a state of shock and was unable to continue the

research interview. AC, Assistant Head, confirmed that CL had no confidence

in certain inspection findings and indicated that the school would *"take issue*

with Ofsted if we are not satisfied". It was unclear whether the

Headteacher would accept the school's inspection report.

Six months into the inspection process DST (STENG), RDS

(HOSMATHS) and SC (STPHYS and Staff Governor) claimed that middle

managers and classroom teachers had acted on the feedback given by the

subject inspectors. These participants claimed that the Headteacher was

responsible for implementing the school's inspection recommendations. The

research established that clear that the Headteacher had taken no action on

the school's key issue. Furthermore CL had taken early retirement and BLJ,

Deputy, had been appointed acting Headteacher. BLJ took the view that it

his duty to convey Ofsted's message about "monitoring" to the school's

curriculum managers. He described the discussions:

"I gave them a dictionary definition on what "monitoring" was. It was in effect making sure that things were done in a disciplinary way as opposed to keeping abreast of what is actually going on and working together if improvement was necessary. What I was conscious of was the difficulty some staff have about accepting people looking at their work in the classroom and with a fear of discipline if they were not going according to instructions...we decided that monitoring should be divorced from appraisal." (BLJ, Acting Head)

Clearly Ofsted's notion of "monitoring" was inimical to the staff's beliefs and

values and thus was unacceptable as the basis for relations between

managers and classroom teachers. The heads of subject continued to use

informal approaches to the issue of knowing what was happening in their

areas. As a result Implementation of Ofsted's prescription for management

did not progress much beyond this point.

BH was appointed Headteacher a year after the inspection. Unlike his

two predecessors he took the view that monitoring the students' progress was

a high priority:

"The Head has got a mentor system where a senior member of staff is attached to departments...people would be visiting classrooms to look at progress...this inevitably means questions being asked why this teacher is performing badly there...this will inevitably lead to some sort of monitoring. So I again say "some." (BR, Coordinator of Monitoring)

"Monitoring is a priority...I don't think it is a priority because of Ofsted. It is his priority. I think this is a priority, which is being blazoned abroad. The school is now monitoring accountability...in order to raise standards, results etc and the much more difficult issue of trying to motivate colleagues...we are monitoring children...his interests are different from those of the previous head." (AC, AHT)

Clearly BH was advocating key themes within the "new managerialist"

Discourse, such as "standards", "accountability" and "monitoring", but was

adapting the discourse to socio-political context in which the school was

operating. Here the major factors were was the school's status within the

local community and the school's leading position in the local examination league tables. There was also the need to sustain a stable and long-serving staff. His strategy was to mediate a new position that did not entail the routine "monitoring" of teachers' work in the classroom but entailed the monitoring of the students' progress. This position did not infringe the norms concerning relations between teachers and managers.

The question was whether teachers accepted the idea of the idea of the senior managers entering classrooms to scrutinise the teaching in external examination groups. It became clear that teacher were still firmly opposed to the routine "monitoring" of their work. For example:

"it hasn't affected the classroom yet…there is a group discussing what they should do. We hear odd things that come out suggesting that we should do this and do that…to my mind it's senior management judging people underneath…from my experience in the steel industry I find it quite amazing that heads of departments need to be told to find out what people do…I get the impression that when the recommendations [on monitoring] *come out they will be quite drastic."* (ST, ST, Science/Staff Governor)

Such practice was acceptable where the quality of teaching undermined the school or a department's position within the local community, for example

"We had some monitoring in place because we had problems with a member of the department. It helped a great deal…it helped to see that there was good practice…there is less than last year [inspection year]*."* (SM, ST Science)

Thus the staff maintained status quo.

Summary. Teachers asserted the right to determine what happened in their own classroom. This includes the following threads:

- the school's management culture interacted with pressure from Ofsted;

- Ofsted's message about "monitoring" was mediated through the school's teaching culture;

- teachers resisted key elements within Ofsted's teaching discourse;

- teachers responded to pressures in the school's external political

  environment.

RIMTOWN SCHOOL

Introduction. This case revealed that Ofsted's influence was diminished

where the agency was viewed as an agent of central government concerned

exposing the school to public scrutiny rather than an integral part of "school

improvement". The Headteacher took the view that Ofsted

threatened his dominant position within "school improvement" and as a

consequence Ofsted's inspection recommendations were sidelined. The

school made little progress with the implementation of key issues concerned

with teaching and thus Ofsted had only a limited impact on the school.

Pressure for change. Rimtown School received two inspection

recommendations relating to teaching and learning:

Inspection recommendations:

Rim 1 *"Promote a greater sharing of best practice in teaching so that all teachers:*
use a wide range of teaching styles in order to encourage more students to think for themselves and organise their work;
apply greater consistency with regard to marking and day-to-day assessment;
have high expectations as to the level and volume of work, especially homework."

Rim 2 **"Sharpen and clarify processes for monitoring the work of departments so as to be more evaluative and to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement."**
(Ofsted, 1997NHS)

The Headteacher bolstered his grip on decision-making within the school by

operating an internal market. He conducted an annual review of the subject

departments that rewarded "success", penalised "failure" and allocated the

school's financial resources. The school's management discourse highlighted

notions such as "competition", "performance", "academic standards", "quality

control", "efficiency" and "effectiveness". The main element was a competition

for the school's financial resources:

"Competition goes to the heart of it [school's management culture]. *So they now compete for funding. The way they get funding is through a three layer process. One is we fund an action plan in a curriculum review of a department. The other one is a basic tick over capitation. The other one is fund aimed at raising academic standards...that is targeted at annual percentage improvements. Departments bid against each other. Some departments are more successful than others. The quality control is called "daisy chain"...when middle managers review each other within a definite structure. They look at marking; they look at books and management of resources...they look at the outcomes of each other's practice."* (PE, HT)

DA (HOSENG) described PE's leadership style as "challenging":

"It has been quite a challenging management style that he has introduced. There is no room for sitting back and taking its easy...there may be a feeling within the staff that human perspectives are lost. That maybe we are focusing on outcomes too much...I think we are clear about his vision for the school. I don't think there is any doubt about it...he makes things happen...if you do them that happens and if you don't they just don't happen at all." (DA, HOS ENG)

There was a perception that the Headteacher controlled pupil-teacher

interaction through the school's management discourse, for example

"Interactions between staff and the children is customer-driven...there is a message running, which is running and is continuing to run"
(GW, Senior Teacher)

However other teachers, such as ES (STMATHS) claimed that the school's

managers were driven by a fear of losing pupils to surrounding schools than

by a belief in such a discourse :

"The atmosphere is very fear driven...we seem to be worried that we are going to lose pupils to surrounding schools...it's a worry what the inspectors will say and we are worried about what the management team will say" (ES, ST, MATHS)

This raised a question about the Headteacher's attitude towards Ofsted's

discourse of "improvement through inspection". PE claimed that

"I am unconcerned about the inspection from the point of view that I am doing what is needed for the school." (PE, HT).

Clearly Ofsted was not part of the Headteacher's plans for "school improvement". He questioned the efficacy of Ofsted's inspection method and claimed that Ofsted simply produced a *"snap-shot of school"* and *"lacked he rigour of the school's own systems* [of self evaluation]." However, PE took the view that Ofsted represented a threat to the school and claimed that he was intending to *"draw the teeth of the Ofsted hamster"* by preparing his colleagues to *"perform well."* His immediate colleague GW (DirSt) agreed with the Headteacher's stance on inspection: "[PE]*tried to ensure that we are clued up"*

The interviewer visited the school immediately after the inspection and was unsurprised when the Headteacher claimed that he *"had earned very little from the inspection."* and that there would only be *"one or two small changes"*. However GW, the Headteacher's immediate colleague revealed that the school was implementing the changes within Rim2:

"Ofsted set a rather lightweight requirement. Having said that we are not casual about their observations. We took them on board...I have taken a look at quality control issues...we have restructured classroom observation...what we call best practice." (GW, Senior Teacher)

So it appeared that the Headteacher had in fact bowed to Ofsted's pressure for a more systematic approach to reviewing the departments' work (see Ofsted, 1997KHS). This also highlighted the issue of the Headteacher's denial of Ofsted's influence on "school improvement".

The research examined the school's post-inspection action plan (Ofsted,1997KHS2) and this showed that the school intended to produce a

school policy on assessing pupils' work and homework (see OfstedKHS).

However the Headteacher claimed that this issue was already part of the

school's plans.

Two years after the inspection the participants were asked about the

fate of the key issue concerned with assessment and homework. Their

replies indicated that implementation of Rim 1 varied with the subject

department. For example:

"Nothing so far." (ES, STMATHS)

*"I can't think we have done anything different...we do have expectations of
top sets in Key Stage 4. We would expect them to do two and one written
homework. Also in set twos we expect them to do homework. Set three it is up
to the teachers. If you have strict rules about homework you can create
problems for yourself."* (RW, STMFL)

By contrast the English department had acted to tighten up its approach to the

setting of homework:

*"We meet regularly to exchange ideas...we have tightened up on the setting
of homework...[however] a school policy on homework was inappropriate for
English where students work on set pieces of writing that last for two to three
weeks and which require comment."* (DA, HOSENG)

It was clear that the teachers were far more concerned about the school's

annual review of the departments, for example:

*"Certainly the school is focusing very much on raising achievement...i
suppose the Ofsted report has made us look at practice in attempt to sharpen
it up a bit."* (DA, HOS, ENG);

*"I am told that classroom observation [by senior managers] is to become
more common...It is going to happened more and more in the future."* (DA,
HOS, ENG);

*"The department is having its annual review this term so next week the senior
management team is going to watch three of our lessons. They have got
criteria they are going to judged us against...I suspect the criteria will be
based on Ofsted's criteria for teaching."* (ES, ST, MATHS);

ES (STMATHS) singled out the issue of the school's performance in local

examination league tables as the main influence on the school's approach to teaching: *"it's league tables more than Ofsted."* This indicated that the school was making little progress in implementing its plans for homework and the assessment of pupils' work. Clearly the school's annual review of departments and the school's position in local examination league tables dominated decision-making. This implied that Ofsted's influence soon waned once the school learned that it had achieved a "satisfactory" inspection report.

Summary. The Headteacher's performance-led management discourse was a major theme in "school improvement". This included the following threads:

- the Headteacher rejected Ofsted discourse of "improvement through inspection";

- teachers responded individually and collectively to the headteacher's pressure for change

8.5 Research findings. The discussion in chapter seven indicated that technical/rational perspective on the inspection process provided information about the factors in the school, inspection process and immediate environment that influenced the schools' implementation of key issues concerned with teaching. By contrast the cultural/political perspective allowed the participants to identify the issues and processes that underpinned implementation. This information allowed this study to illuminate the process of inspection-induced change by linking these issues to a number of political themes.

The cultural/political perspective showed that Ofsted was acting as an agent for change, using the inspection process to impose particular values

and understandings of management and teaching. The research focused on teachers' perspectives towards Ofsted's teaching discourse and in particular the issue of control over teaching. Teachers' reactions to certain inspection recommendations - Bor 3; Brim 3; Edge 1; Lip 4; and Rim 3 – were significant since the key issues encroached on teachers' interests in teaching and learning. These interests were expressed as different views about the implementation of inspection recommendations. For example headteachers and senior managers used implementation to achieve control over teaching and learning. Nevertheless this group did not share the same stance towards Ofsted's discourse about "control over teaching" – while the minority of headteachers expressed their interest as Ofsted's discourse, the majority sought to influence teaching through the school's existing discourse. Middle managers and classroom teachers reacted to Ofsted's discourse and demands for change by asserting their interest in the school's teaching culture expressed as beliefs about teaching, subject traditions and agendas. Resistance to Ofsted took a number of forms: radical action such as resigning teaching posts; active resistance - delaying implementation by questioning procedures; and passive resistance - ignoring school policy. Such resistance delayed or hindered the implementation of Ofsted's agenda and led to variations in the extent of implementation (see Chapter 6). However Ofsted's discourse was consistent with the ethos struck by a minority of subjects. For example, some of the larger departments, such as Maths and Science, were using "performance" models such as "Yellis and "Allis", to assess progress and relative performance. As a consequence their interest was expressed as Ofsted's discourse on teaching. However the large majority continued to

resist the school's pressure for a more systematic approach to "the monitoring of teachers' work in the classroom".

The discussion in Chapter 2 indicates that Ofsted's power is based on "procedural objectivity" - the "reliability" of inspection judgements, the "consistency" of inspection findings and the "validity" of descriptions that emerge from inspection. Here "power" is defined as capacity to achieve desired outcomes (Giddens, 1984). The question was whether teachers accepted that "procedural objectivity" produced a "true" picture of the school. The participants had doubts about whether Ofsted inspection method depicted the "true state of affairs". For example, the number and length of the classroom observations varied, the sample of lessons was unrepresentative pupils and the behaviour of pupils and teachers was untypical during the inspection itself. Thus classroom observation was something of a lottery. The headteachers exploited these doubts in promoting their own views on teaching. Thus where their intentions did not coincide Ofsted's recipes were deemed inappropriate and the schools' post-inspection plans had very little to do Ofsted's intentions for teaching. This suggested that there was a political dimension to the schools' responses to key issues concerning teaching.

It was clear that Ofsted's power over the schools' approach to teaching was short-lived. Once the agency's gaze was removed teachers began to respond to other pressures within the school's external socio-political environment. For example, attention was focused on the school's examination results and teachers continued with teaching styles that had been criticised by Ofsted. The perception was that the agency's beliefs and recommendations were irrelevant in the context in which the school operated

8.6 Discussion. This investigation showed that the implementation of inspection recommendations was neither linear development nor a planned change process. It was an uncertain affair characterised by unpredictable patterns of interactions between senior managers and subordinate teachers, which led to outcomes that had little to do with the issues within the schools' inspection reports. Teachers did not blindly follow Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement" but, rather, gave shape to inspection feedback. That is, teachers interpreted, adapted and even transformed inspection recommendations as they put them into place. This resonated with Coburn's (2001) notion of "*collective sense making*". Coburn (2001) contends that the way that teachers make sense of external policies in discussions with colleagues gave these a place within the context of school.

How did teachers interpret Ofsted's proposals for "school improvement" in an active manner? This researcher supports Busher et al (2001a; 2001b) claim that teachers make sense of external pressure from agencies such as Ofsted by asserting interests expressed as beliefs, values and practice associated with the school's internal culture. The current research showed that teachers employed various strategies of resistance to assert their interests. Such resistance occurred in many ways and in varying intensity, from the large scale – a headteacher resigning his post – to the small – teachers prolonging discussions about school policy. This caused delays and even prevented the implementation of Ofsted's policies, such as "monitoring teachers work in the classroom". Ganderton (1991) and van der Westhuizen (1996) argue that resistance is a "normal" part of the decision-making process within organisations. Arguably teacher resistance is a

"normal" characteristic of implementation where Ofsted threatens teachers' vital interests.

The headteachers brought pressure to bear on teachers who opposed their plans. For example the headteachers at Brimtown School and Rimtown School used coercive methods: tightly controlling staff discussion, rewarding compliance and punishing non-compliance. In contrast Edgetown School Border School's headteacher used more cooperative approaches: consulting with the staff, working within the school's existing norms and prudently moderating existing practice. However this author is not claiming that a particular kind of strategy is always effective. He supports Busher et al's (2000a: 79) claim that internal leaders who adapt their styles to the context in which they operate are more likely to win support. For example, teachers at Rimtown School took the view that the headteacher's forceful leadership style and radical, performance-led, managerial discourse was appropriate for stemming the decline in pupil numbers. By contrast Edgetown School was popular and over-subscribed teachers held the view that the headteacher's strategy for implementation should accommodate existing norms. This principle also applied where there was a sudden change in the school's environment, for example where the staff came under pressure from below par GCSE examination results. Here the headteacher was expected to reverse a decline in the school's standing within the local community. 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.

The research showed that showed that Ofsted's capacity to influence teaching and learning was confined to producing the school's inspection report. Those headteachers who took the view that Ofsted's capacity to influence was limited to "the field of inspection knowledge" (Berstein, 1995) and not to the pool of school improvement knowledge manoeuvred to feed teachers' interest in controlling teaching and learning. This triggered change and improvement.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS AND REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction. The chapter indicates the extent to which the research

questions have been answered, describes the political processes and themes

that underpinned the implementation of inspection recommendations and

considers the implications for current Ofsted inspection practice. A number of

themes that need to be followed up by further research are identified. The

chapter concludes with a review of the research method and a number of

propositions designed to make inspection integral to school improvement.

9.2 Research questions. The main aim was to examine Ofsted's claim that

inspection leads to "school improvement" and this was achieved by assessing

the extent to which change occurred as a result of Ofsted inspection. The

research focused on the implementation of different categories of "key issues

for action" or inspection recommendation. It assessed the extent of the

implementation of inspection recommendations and identified factors in the

school, inspection process and immediate environment that influenced

implementation. Three questions were posed about schools' implementation

of inspection recommendations:

Which factors in the inspection process, school and immediate

environment influence a school's response to key issues for action?

Do key issues for action become the school's agenda for change and

improvement?

Does implementation lead to change and improvement in all areas of

school activity?

9.3 Research findings. The study found that nearly 20 per cent of "key issues for action" were "fully" implemented, 44 per cent had "some" implementation, 17 per cent had "limited" implementation and 19 per cent had "no" implementation two years after inspection. Thus 80 per cent of the key issues were at some stage of implementation and this suggested that Ofsted inspection was making a significant contribution to "school improvement". However when the researcher examined each category of inspection recommendation this revealed that good progress had been made with certain types of inspection recommendation. For example, the key issues concerning the school's compliance with the National Curriculum and health and safety regulations, management and administrative systems and procedures. Almost all of these key issues were "fully" implemented. Where the key issues were within the senior managers' sphere of influence they were more likely to be fully implemented, for example key issues viewed as "management matters".   It was clear Ofsted was making an impact within the management domain: complying with the National Curriculum and health and safety regulations; providing a deadline for the school's own projects and giving impetus to the school's management and administrative systems. There was an exception - Ofsted failed to persuade the schools to introduce a daily act of communal worship. Headteachers questioned whether this was practical where the school lacked suitable facilities and appropriately experienced staff. Nevertheless it was clear that implementation was a reliable guide to the changes within the management domain.

In contrast the implementation of key issues concerning teaching and learning was problematic since the whole staff was involved not simply the

school's senior management team. The reader is reminded that Wilcox and Gray (1996) reported that the notion of management control was a major theme during the initial stages of Ofsted's programme of the mass inspection of schools (see Chapter 4). The research schools received at least one key issue concerning the issue of management control over teaching and this suggested that "management" was a recurring theme in Ofsted's school inspections. The idea of control over teaching was expressed as a detailed prescription or a set of guidelines for achieving control within the "key issues for action". However the degree of implementation varied from "none" to "full".

What gave rise to this variation? This researcher first looked to the factors within the school. Writers, such as Ouston et al. (1998), claim that the headteacher plays a pivotal role in the school's responses to Ofsted inspection and this also accords with this researcher's own experience of Ofsted inspection (see Chapter 2). The headteacher's agenda was a significant influence the implementation of inspection recommendations. However the research showed that Ofsted and the headteachers' intentions towards teaching did not always coincide. While Ofsted's intentions were made clear in the schools' inspection reports the researcher had to examine the schools' post-inspection action plan to detect the headteachers' real intentions towards Ofsted's agenda for teaching. These plans showed that the majority of the headteachers were intending to work within the school's existing norms, values and beliefs to bring management practices more in line with Ofsted's thinking. However the research indicated that middle managers and classroom teachers were hostile to ideas that questioned the teacher's right to determine what happened in their own classroom. As a result the

headteacher's pressure to come in line with Ofsted's thinking was met by resistance. This suggested that "school improvement" was a political process and not simply rational planning (Ofsted, 1995). This resonated with the views of writers, such as Blase (1991), Keltchermans (1994; 1996), Busher et al. (2001a) Van den Berg (2002), who argue that the actions of teachers are determined to an important degree by their interests. This is considered more fully in section 9.5

The research indicated that senior managers and their subordinates had different perceptions of the implementation of inspection recommendations - senior managers were more optimistic about the outcome. While these differences could be attributed to the classroom teachers' incomplete memory and partial knowledge of what was occurring elsewhere within a large school it could imply that Ofsted had not entered the consciousness of all teachers. This was an important issue – this author took the view that Ofsted inspection could be viewed as social action (see 3.3). For example Habermas (1984; (1987) considers it is essential that for knowledge to have wider public value it must go through what he calls an "ideal speech" state of discussion and interaction by all stakeholders. The discussion in Chapter 3 argues that the Ofsted inspection process has some limitations in this respect. Teachers had been excluded from this dialogue through Ofsted's non-negotiable audit (see 3.5), not advice model, resulting in the limitation of inspection findings to something like Bernstein's (1996) "field of inspection knowledge", not wider school improvement knowledge. The case studies of implementation (see Chapter 7) indicated that classroom teachers and middle managers denied that their agendas were directly linked

to Ofsted inspection. This implied that Ofsted was not integral to "school improvement" in certain teaching domains in contrast with the school's management domain (Simkins, 2000).

The research also identified factors within the Ofsted inspection process that influenced implementation. The inspection method - whether inspection depicted the "normal" state of affairs – had a significant effect on the reactions towards key issues concerning teaching. Writers, such as Fidler et al (1998) and Fitzgibbon and Stephenson-Foster (1999), question the efficacy Ofsted's inspection method. Participants in this study claimed that the inspection produced a snapshot of the school that failed to depict the "real" state of their teaching. They also questioned whether Ofsted had observed a representative sample of lessons; students had behaved "normally" and whether certain that teachers were more skilled than others at "performing". This led to the view that Ofsted's grading of "teaching quality" was unfair. Nevertheless where Ofsted confirmed teachers' judgements, affirmed their contributions and highlighted their strengths, there was satisfaction with inspection findings. However where Ofsted and headteachers' intentions towards teaching did not coincide headteachers questioned the "validity" of inspection findings and the "quality" of inspection recommendations. Ofsted's recommendations for the school's approach to teaching and learning were deemed inappropriate and thus implementation had little to do with Ofsted. This implied that views on the "validity" of inspection findings and the "quality" of key issues had a political dimension relating to teacher interest were not simply a question of the reliability and consistency of Ofsted's inspection procedures (see Chapter 3).

Several authors highlight the issue of teachers' emotional responses to inspection. For example, Brimblecome et al (1995) argue that there is link between teachers' emotional response to Ofsted inspection and the intention to make a change. This study showed that the intensity of the inspection - the number and length of classroom observations, the type of class observed, the inspectors' behaviour towards teachers and students and the nature of inspection feedback – caused participants to question Ofsted's approach to inspection. Teachers claimed that inspection had left them exhausted and unable to deal with even routine matters. However these responses did not appear to influence the intention to make a change - school agendas had a greater impact on the intention to make a change.

Earlier studies focus on factors in the school and the inspection process (see Chapter 4). This investigation also looked for factors within the schools' immediate environment that influenced the schools' implementation of inspection recommendations. It soon became apparent that the schools reacted to the more immediate pressures within the external environment. The schools switched from Ofsted to focusing on local GCSE examination league tables having achieved a "satisfactory" inspection report - local league tables had a significant influence on the recruitment of pupils. This changed the environment - teachers took the view that the key issues contained untried and risky pedagogy – and thus Ofsted was placed on the backburner. Wilcox and Gray (1996) argue schools' responsiveness to external pressures is an issue since inspection methodology is based on the notion that schools remain unchanged during the inspection process. This allows Ofsted to claim that inspection depicts the "reality" of the school. This research indicates that

the schools changed in response to other external and internal pressures and this called into question whether Ofsted inspection can provide a formula for "school improvement" in a turbulent environment.

9.4 Conclusions. To what extent have the research questions been answered? Did the "key issues for action" form part of the schools' agenda for change and improvement? Did implementation lead to change and improvement in all areas of school activity? The research showed that where key issues were viewed as "management matters" senior managers gave them high priority and this led to the "full" implementation. However the schools' responses to key issues concerning teaching were another matter. The headteacher's agenda had a major influence on the school's "official" view of key issues concerning teaching and learning. Here priority was given to the quality of teaching, levels of student attainment and the school's performance in the external examinations. As a consequence the Headteachers gave preference to key issues relating to the issue of control over teaching. However the majority of the headteachers did not comply with Ofsted's requirements but used the management discourse embodied in the key issues as the yardstick for moderating the school's existing teaching culture and management practices. The headteachers rejected Ofsted's prescriptions for the school's approach to teaching and learning – these were viewed as risky and inappropriate. This researcher drew the conclusion that while the Ofsted inspection process inspection had a direct impact on management systems and administrative procedure it had only an indirect influence on teaching and learning.

The second aim was to illuminate inspection-induced "school improvement". This investigation showed that various technical factors within the school, inspection process and the school's immediate influenced the schools' implementation of key issues. However the identification of these "factors" yielded a monochrome description of "school improvement" and this research was looking for a much richer description. As a consequence it adopted a micro-political perspective on the political processes that underpinned the schools' implementation of inspection recommendations.

9.5 Micro-political perspective on implementation. This investigation took the view that the implementation of inspection recommendations was not simply a rational/technical process but also a policy process concerned with the use of power within Ofsted inspection. It is useful to recall that Ofsted's authority resides in the agency's statutory right of access to all state maintained schools in England and Wales (see Chapter 2). This empowers the agency to collect information, report and make public the state of education within these schools and provide agendas for "school improvement". Ofsted can sanction schools that fail to meet its standards, subject them to close scrutiny and recommend closure and thus inspection can be viewed in terms of disciplinary power. The discussion in Chapter 3 indicated Ofsted inspection could be viewed in terms Foucault's (1997) notion of "disciplinary power" and "examination" as the means of achieving organisational efficiency and control (see 3.4). Here "examination" is defined as a *"normalising gaze, a surveillance that that makes it possible classify and punish"* (Foucault, 1977: 191). The procedures for "examination" allow an individual to be viewed as "case" that can be *"described, judged, measured,*

compared with others, in his individuality" and then *"trained or corrected, classified, normalised and excluded"* (Foucault, 1977: 192). As the investigation progressed Ofsted's system of inspection was viewed in terms of "asymmetrical power relationships" between the agency, senior managers and subordinate teachers (see section 3.8). This author employed Busher et al's (2001a) notion that school systems are characterised by "asymmetrical power relationships" between leaders and their subordinates to speculate on the political framework for inspection-induced change. Thus the perspective taken by this research is based on the notion that Ofsted uses power to impose certain values and beliefs and in turn headteachers use Ofsted's dominance to assert their interest in teaching and learning. Subordinate teachers respond to the resultant pressure for change by struggling to assert their interest in teaching and learning. The discussion first outlines the political issues that underpinned teachers' response to inspection and the implementation of inspection recommendations.

How did teachers react to the exacting discipline of Ofsted inspection? While there was support for the idea of the external, detached and objective perspective on the school, albeit the Ofsted framework, teachers expected Ofsted to confirm their views, affirm their contributions and acknowledge the uniqueness of the educational context in which they were operating. This implied that Ofsted inspection was viewed in terms of the teacher's personal and professional interest. How was this interest expressed? The headteacher's interest was expressed as an agenda for the school and a "satisfactory" inspection report. The headteachers prepared the staff for Ofsted inspection by identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses,

plugging gaps and raising teachers' awareness of Ofsted inspection. In contrast the classroom teachers were far more concerned with the issue of surviving classroom observation. This showed that teachers were responding to Ofsted's disciplinary capacity in different ways and by having different perspectives on school improvement.

The investigation showed that the headteachers used Ofsted to promote their interests. This took a number of forms. For example one headteacher took the view that Ofsted was unworthy and unfit to inspect his mission for the school and another rejected Ofsted inspection as the basis for school improvement. These headteachers portrayed Ofsted as a threat to school's mission. The remaining four headteachers expressed support for the principle of inspection but gave heavily qualified support to Ofsted's discourse "improvement through inspection". However this group of headteachers used different strategies for harnessing Ofsted's power to promote their interest in teaching and learning through the implementation of inspection recommendations. Here "power" is defined authority operating in a discipline mode. For example two headteachers foisted a "standards", "performance", "monitoring" discourse on the staff: setting agendas, controlling discussion and the content of INSET. The reactions to this varied with the context: where teachers accepted the need for forceful leadership and powerful discourse there was compliance; where teachers took the view that such a discourse was inappropriate there was resistance. The majority of headteachers appeared to acknowledge the potency of the school's existing teaching culture by selecting and elements from the Ofsted discourse and carefully moderating existing management practice. The headteachers also gave tacit support to

Ofsted's discourse in the departments that favoured a more managerialist approach. This implied that while they maintaining status they were also negotiating new positions on issues such as "monitoring".

Subject specialists reacted to the pressure for control over teaching by asserting interest expressed the right to determine what was appropriate teaching in the subject. They had recourse to informal centres of power – teacher networks - in resisting Ofsted. Here "power" is defined as "influence" operating through informal resources where there is no recourse to authority. The research indicated that heads of subject used various strategies of "passive" resistance: prolonging discussions, questioning the practicalities, switching attention to more immediate priorities, ignoring school policy and questioning the time available. Some used more active forms of resistance: resigning their posts, taking early retirement and formally complaining about inspection findings. This hindered the implementation of "key issues for action". Nevertheless senior managers formed the view that implementation was progressing and full implementation was only a matter of time. This implied that senior management's view of implementation might be incomplete (see Chapter 4).

Resistance to Ofsted's pressure for change was not confined to the middle and junior ranks - headteachers and senior managers resisted any proposal that involved radical change in the school's approach to teaching. Various strategies of resistance were used. The previous discussion indicated that the headteachers questioned the "validity" of inspection findings and the "quality" of inspection recommendations relating to teaching and learning. The schools' post-inspection action plans failed to address the

weaknesses identified within the school's inspection reports. Instead they highlighted other issues: learning opportunities, access to the school's library and also information technology rather than the issue of teaching styles. Headteachers argued that Ofsted's pedagogy could risk the schools' reputation for "good" teaching. This implied that the messages encapsulated in "key issues for action" had little affect on the schools' approach to teaching.

9.6 Emergent themes. The discussion now turns to the four major political themes emerged from the research data on the implementation of "key issues for action", elaborating the initial themes that the research set out to explore (see Chapter 8). These can be summarised under the following headings

- the headteacher's use of Ofsted;

- the headteacher's approach to mediating Ofsted's message on school improvement and moderating internal processes through implementation;

- the assertion of teacher interest through strategies of resistance;

- teacher responsiveness to pressures within the school's external socio-political environment.

What do these themes indicate about the micro-politics of "school improvement"? Headteachers use Ofsted's dominance during the inspection process to promote their own agenda for the school but are also obliged to build alliances and support with internal stakeholders, such as curriculum managers, to facilitate the implementation of inspection recommendations. However implementation can be complicated by how teachers' respond to certain elements within Ofsted's discourse for "school improvement", for example the notion of "control over teaching", that generate tensions between

potential allies – managers and teachers. Furthermore other internal actors in a school have powerful internal and external connections, such as subject networks, making them important assets in the struggle to impose change, or serious threats. Headteachers need the support of these groups to successfully implement controversial proposals. This implies that Ofsted's technical/rational discourse of "school improvement" is an insufficient focus for understanding how inspection brings about change in schools. Appropriate internal processes for change cannot be imposed through the implementation of key issues regardless of the external and internal contexts in which schools operate. Yet Ofsted (2001c) views "school improvement" as a rational and systematic process progressing through six stages: identification of strengths and weaknesses, planning, implementation, establishing change as part of the on-going routine of the school, and assessing outcomes and results. It prescribes the management systems model of the school as a cure – all. This research shows that teachers need to believe that they can gain from "school improvement" before supporting the school's attempts to implement "key issues for action. The research indicates that teachers' meanings about the school's internal and external environments determine attitudes to Ofsted's agenda for school improvement. For example, teachers may be more willing to accept radical change in the school's management practices to stave off an even more threatening scenario where the school is "unsuccessful". By contrast the staff at a "successful" school, may be more willing to accept Ofsted's proposals that build on existing "good" practice and thus acknowledge the staff's sense of professionalism.

This study showed that teachers respect the headteacher who has the capacity to respond swiftly to changes in the school's environment. Where the headteacher is out of touch with the current demands of schooling and firmly wedded to an educational vision that related to another era he is unable to use Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection". Furthermore headteachers who respond to Ofsted's critical commentary on them by and their schools, by adopting a dirigiste or managerialist approach to implementation, can become isolated from their staffs. Such an approach widens gaps between managers and teachers by generating the view that these groups do not share the same interest in teaching and learning. These Headteachers depend on the school's formal structures – filtering Ofsted's message through layers of management, formal meetings and briefings. The result is that their subordinates feel less consulted and inclined to accept change. By contrast where the headteacher employs strategies that give support to teachers, recognise their interest, acknowledge their professionalism and sensitively moderate existing practice, implementation is more successful. However the investigation shows that where the internal leadership styles adapt to the school's environment and yet at the same time concentrate on teaching and learning there is a positive reaction to the school's agenda for change.. This suggests that the issue of internal leadership styles is a key factor in the implementation of inspection recommendations.

Teachers respond to Ofsted's pressure for change by seeking to serve their own interests. Such interests may be expressed altruistically as beliefs in appropriate teaching strategies for particular circumstances or more

selfishly as influence over a particular activity. Teachers embrace agendas that are created by their heads of subject so long as they have belief in the competence and the efficacy of the strategies that they propose. As a consequence Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement" is viewed within the framework set by subject departments and this frequently creates tensions between subject teams and senior managers. This study shows that subject teams meet the school's pressure for change with various strategies of resistance, informed by their various needs and perspectives. Resistance occurs in many ways but is mainly passive and on a small scale - prolonging discussions, querying the practicalities and questioning whether Ofsted's recipes are appropriate. This delays the implementation and institutionalisation of inspection recommendations.

The political perspective recognises that teachers are complex beings, not simply instruments of central government, trying to balance different demands within their personal and professional lives. Within this framework the values and beliefs of key players who are at a particular stage in their professional lives are likely to influence the ways that particular pressures are managed and the outcomes that are sought for them. This investigation found that well-established teachers tend to be more critical of Ofsted's agenda and since they occupy key positions they have a major influence on the schools' responses to Ofsted. By contrast newly qualified teachers tend to accept the idea that Ofsted's inspection provides a detached and objective view of the school. However the research indicates that their support can evaporate where the agency fails to confirm their views.

Pressures with the school's external socio-political environments also have an impact on schools' internal management processes - teachers may need to consider where their real interest lies - with Ofsted or the local community. This research indicated that teachers' interest was expressed in the school's below par performance in the GCSE examinations and subsequent fall in the local league tables. This led to rejection of Ofsted's recommendations for the school's approach to teaching and teachers continued to use the teaching styles that had been criticised by Ofsted. This implies that once Ofsted's gaze is removed its influence is short-lived and this raises questions about the idea that Ofsted claim that it is the main agent of school improvement.

9.7 Implications for current inspection practice. This author takes the view that the underlying approach to school inspection has remained unchanged during the life of Ofsted. The agency repeats support for the technical/rational approach to "school improvement" in a consultative document entitled "*Improving inspection, improving schools*" (Ofsted, 2001c). This indicates that Ofsted takes the view where the system operates successfully, where solutions and problems are logically attached to each other through a rational decision-making process, change and "improvement" is only a matter of time.

While the underlying approach remains unchanged the agency has made changes to the inspection procedures (Ofsted, 2000c; 2002c). For example, schools can select one issue for inspection based on an assessment of schools' strengths and weaknesses, the particular brief of specialist schools and national priorities. However this issue should be

identified through a process of school-self evaluation based on the Ofsted

Framework. Additionally inspectors will provide teachers with inspection

feedback and to have a dialogue about the "quality of teaching observed",

where time permits. Ofsted is also using more sophisticated models that

measure progress, assess relative performance and enable comparisons to

made between schools with similar socio-economic context. "Full" inspections

will take place on a six-year cycle and will focus on particular weaknesses.

Ofsted (2001c) assumes that teachers are proactively engaged with

Ofsted's inspection discourse. However the research paints a different picture.

Etzioni's (1961) perspective on reactions to power and influence can facilitate

the discussion about teachers' reactions towards Ofsted's inspection

discourse. Etzioni (1961) claims that positive responses are consistent with

the intentions of those exercising influence and may be regarded as degrees

of compliance. However compliance is qualified by degrees of cognitive

involvement – the extent to which an individual feels positive about behaving

compliantly. At one end of the continuum from positive to negative is

"commitment" – behaviour associated with feelings of acceptance and self-

identification. At the other end is "alienative compliance"- behaviour that is

consistent with the intention of those exercising influence but where the

individual neither believes or feels positively about their behaviour and thus

makes no investment in self. In between is "calculation" – where those

subject to influence weigh up the costs and benefits of compliance. The

research showed that while teachers accepted the value of an external and

objective perspective, albeit Ofsted's perspective, this did not represent

unqualified acceptance or active engagement with Ofsted's inspection

discourse. The nature of the headteachers' engagements with the inspection discourse ranged from "alienative compliance" to the more pragmatic and calculating - weighing the costs and benefits of compliance. Middle managers tended to calculate the benefits of compliance in responding to inspection recommendations. In contrast newly qualified teachers who entered the schools without the baggage that the more long-serving members carried with them proactively engaged with Ofsted's inspection. However this group disengaged with Ofsted where inspection failed to confirm their view of the school.

What does the nature of teachers' engagement with Ofsted inspection say about school improvement? Certain writers claim that school reform has set in train a fundamental change in the nature of school improvement. For example, Ball (1997: 259) describes the process of school reform as the "ethical retooling" of the world of teaching (see Chapter 3). The implication being that the public dialogue about Ofsted's own practice and the increasing number of quality assurance strategies, such as "performance management", alongside Ofsted, contribute to the increasing credibility of Ofsted's discourse of "improvement through inspection"? Is the process of reform changing the lexicon of "school improvement" so that teachers proactively engage with Ofsted inspection? The research indicated that Ofsted's managerial preferences curbed the teacher's capacity to determine what was appropriate and this led to teachers dismissing the notion of "improvement through inspection". Will the recent changes in Ofsted's inspection procedures (Ofsted, 2001c) generate support for Ofsted's view of "school improvement" through inspection"? These procedures appear to smooth out some of the

methodological wrinkles identified within this investigation (see Chapter 7), but the idea of "procedural objectivity" alone (see Chapter 2) is insufficient to guarantee active engagement. The discussion returns to the issue of teachers' engagement with "improvement through inspection" in section 9.10

9.8 Issues and themes for further research. A number issues relating to Ofsted technical/rational perspective on school "improvement" are suggested by this research: schools' choice of inspection issues; the focus on the school's weaknesses; the link between inspection findings, inspection recommendations and school action plans; and the link between inspection and "real" change. These issues are concerned with the need to test efficacy of Ofsted's inspection method and particularly whether the implementation of inspection recommendations leads to "school improvement".

The dual perspective taken by this research suggests a major theme for research: how teachers' interests in school improvement are expressed – whether such interests are synonymous with Ofsted. This involves identifying teachers' meanings towards Ofsted and its discourse of "improvement through inspection". However this researcher is not claiming that teachers employ the dual – technical/rational and cultural/political - perspective. He believes that it is necessary to question the supremacy of Ofsted technical/rational perspective by drawing on teachers' perspectives of the inspection process.

9.9 Review of research procedures and processes. The discussion in Chapter 5 describes the research method, methodology and procedures. The use of the dual method approach raised several questions about "participation" and "interpretation". Did the research method accommodate

the positivist and interpretative approaches to the issue of "participation" and "interpretation"? The issue of participation was problematic - during the initial stages of the investigation this researcher exercised control over the research through a series of pre-determined interview questions. However he sought to maximise participant involvement by the use of open-ended questions – this allowed the interviewee to raise new issues and matters of immediate concern. Thus the investigation began in "consulting" mode and gradually adopted a more "cooperative" mode (Tripp, 1985). This generated a greater commitment for the necessity of such research, mutual concern, a sense of sharing within the research process and that the outcomes were of equal value to all participants in professional terms. However the key to building participation as an emerging and flexible process was the researcher's decision to monitor his actions and the responses to them. It was clear that the participants did not respond in unison - some participants took a passive and others a more active stance towards participation. However the great majority became fully involved, contributing and receiving ideas. The key indicator of reflexivity was whether teachers were prepared to reveal their "real" motives and intentions towards the implementation of inspection recommendations. This longitudinal study provided the length and depth of fieldwork that enabled the researcher to build up relationship with key actors and collect data on objective and non-objective claims for inspection. However, the time allocated to the investigation was insufficient for activities and events that occur over years. As consequence the study was able to identify that teachers' interests were expressed as the beliefs and values embodied within the school's existing culture. However it was unable to

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determine whether the school's culture was changing in response to Ofsted inspection or whether the discourse of "improvement through inspection" was progressively colonising the schools' "lifeworlds".

The issue of "participation" also posed questions for the research method. The study had to focus on pre-determined issues relating to Ofsted's technical/rational perspective and at the same time set a tone that allowed matter of more immediate matters of concern to emerge. This researcher believes that this was achieved in spite of the tensions created by the tight interview programme. Some of the participants felt that they had to return to their classes after thirty minutes. Clearly the headteachers had the advantage of being in charge and thus determining their own commitments. The researcher was aware that this could distort the picture of implementation that emerged from the fieldwork.

The dual technical/rational and cultural political approach also posed questions for the interpretation of data – whether the research integrated the two different kinds of data or whether data was analysed separately. This researcher took the view that the different kinds of data should be analysed separately – sequential analysis. Nevertheless the different descriptions of Ofsted inspection that emerged were complementary and provided the researcher with a unique perspective on inspection induced "school improvement". That is not saying that sequential interpretation produced an all-embracing theory of inspection and "school improvement" – this study presented only two facets of a complex process.

Longitudinal studies present particular problems for the researcher (see Chapter 5). The previous discussion highlights the issue of research relations

within a longitudinal study. Such a study also presents certain problems for the collection of data. For example, teachers' partial understandings and memories of the "key issues for action" were an issue for the research method. It became apparent participants had not read inspection reports and depended on the oral feedback given by headteachers, senior managers and heads of subject for understandings of the key issues. As a consequence it was unsafe to assume that the participants knew Ofsted's intentions towards the school. Furthermore it was unsafe to assume that teachers had a full knowledge of the school's inspection report. Nevertheless the research focused on pre-determined issues relating to Ofsted's perspective on the inspection process. As a consequence the research interviews began with the researcher outlining the "key issues for action" before encouraging the interviewees to speculate on the school's implementation of inspection recommendations. While this maintained a focus on issues arising from Ofsted's view of the inspection process it also raised the question whether the research influenced the schools' responses to inspection. Arguably this research may have directed the participants' attention towards Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement". However this led to the participants highlighting their own positions on Ofsted's agenda for "school improvement" and this encouraged speculation on the more immediate matters of concern.

The previous discussion (see Chapter 5) indicates that staff turnover can be an issue for longitudinal studies. However the arrangements for replacing teachers leaving with teachers with a similar professional profile who had participated in the school's inspection worked well - only one participant was "lost" to the study. The rate of turnover among the headteachers – two of

headteachers resigned their posts and two acting headteachers were succeeded by permanent replacements – was an issue within the research.

The researcher underestimated the volume of data generated by such a large sample of teachers (see Appendix 1) and as a consequence he spent a high proportion of the available time on transcribing and cataloguing interview data. Clearly he failed to achieve a balance between the volume of data and the time required to examine and analyse. While this did not affect the quality of interpretation it delayed the writing of the thesis. Arguably the research might have focused on fewer cases.

While this study yielded rich descriptions of the Ofsted inspection process it also raised the question whether the findings were relevant to Ofsted's current programme of school inspection. Notwithstanding changes in inspection procedures, cycle of school inspection and the more recent focus on a school's weaknesses the underlying technical/rational approach has remained the same throughout the life of Ofsted. Accordingly this investigation focuses on Ofsted's approach to inspection rather than the procedures that underpin the approach. This researcher is confident that this study is relevant.

9.10 Conclusion. This thesis offers a unique dual insight into the Ofsted inspection process. The author argues that teachers have a much broader than Ofsted's technical/rational perspective and as result Ofsted's inspection discourse does not represent a complete understanding of the link between inspection and school improvement. The research indicates that teachers do not abandon their existing beliefs, values and agendas simply because Ofsted maintains that the inspection describes schools "as they really are". Teachers

take the view that inspection knowledge is unreal – the product of non-negotiable audit (see Chapter 3) and intense special performances by many prior to and during Ofsted's visits, which creates distorted pictures of "normal" practice.

Through engagement with this investigation the researcher has developed three propositions that attempt to integrate Ofsted inspection with school improvement. The first proposition is that much school improvement is unpredictable, evolutionary and non-linear in character and this implies that the methodical approach may be ineffective. Writers, such as Louis et al (1994: 1999), make a similar point about school change. It may be more productive if Ofsted were to identify "triggers" for school improvement instead of focusing on laudable but non-specific goals such as "raise standards of attainment" or "give the students more responsibility for their own learning" and detailed prescriptions based on managerial preferences. Where Ofsted draws on the teachers' own experience in formulating strategies, so that the required change is established in the minds of those expected to bring them about, change is more likely. The research showed that advice, such as "identify and disseminate the good practice that already exists that allowed teachers to focus on the framework for student learning, focuses attention on teaching and learning. Such advice can create the "conditions" that encourage teachers to enquire and reflect on the needs of the students. This author believes that a major goal for school improvement is to help teachers to become professionally flexible so that they can select from a repertoire of possibilities the teaching approaches that are most suited to the particular environments. This generates a discourse about, and language for, teaching

and learning. In this researcher's experience this is achieved where priorities for teaching and learning are based on the best advice around. Such advice begins with the practice of teachers and their perceptions of the world of the classroom. By engaging in the sharing of experiences and searching for shared meanings teachers can establish specifications or guidelines for chosen teaching strategies; standards to assess student progress and mutual classroom observation and partnership teaching in the classroom. Yet Ofsted seeks to micro-manage teaching and learning by laying down the fundaments of teaching and learning in "key issues for action".

The second proposition is that "improvement through inspection" will remain a marginal activity unless it impacts across all levels of the school: the senior management team, the subject department and the teacher in the classroom. The indications are that it operates mainly within the management domain as an expression of the senior management team's interest in fulfilling the school's statutory obligations, effective use of resources and planning. This investigation showed that headteachers and senior managers promoted managerial preferences, for example controlling the quality of teaching and learning, through Ofsted's discourse. As a result middle managers and teachers took steps to defend their own interests and this widened the gap between management and teaching. The issue here is the focus on "*the needs of the school*" rather than teachers' interest in teaching and learning, which ensures that the locus of power resides with senior managers and the inspection discourse (Ofsted, 2001c: 1). Writers, such as McBeath and his colleagues (2002), claim that a strong culture of self-evaluation is required for evaluation to be effective. Evaluation has to be valid and reliable,

comprehensive and reflecting *"the things that matter to people"*. It must be developmental and empowering, helping teachers to monitor progress in a climate of mutual accountability. It should be an on-going activity rather than a single, intense event imposed by an external agency – this resonates with this author's experience. He supports MacBeath's (1996) stance that schools need the challenge of Ofsted's perspective but there is a need to develop rigorous and realistic framework for external and internal evaluation where all stakeholders have a place in the process. This is not inconsistent with the idea that much school improvement is non-linear, evolutionary and unpredictable since it is based on the premise that teachers drive school improvement. That is not saying that Ofsted should cease monitoring the schools' national test and external examination results to progress to identify those schools that have serious weaknesses or discontinue providing schools with guidance on self-evaluation of subjects (Ofsted, 2002d).

The third proposition gives the school's performance a major part in school improvement. The research indicated that the school's performance gave momentum for change – this was particularly true where there was widespread staff involvement in considering the reasons for the school's "poor" performance. It was much easier to focus efforts around the school's priorities when every member of staff saw himself or herself in playing a role in the evaluation of the related school policies and practices. Arguably it is only teachers who possess knowledge about classroom outcomes and so Ofsted's perceptions are at best partial. On the other hand Ofsted is better placed to provide the framework for the systematic collection, interpretation, analysis and use of school-generated data. However the research indicated

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that teachers viewed the issue of the school's performance in terms of the

need to control teaching and learning in examinations groups that were

under performing. The focus being the students' progress rather than the

issue of teacher accountability. This generated discussion about classroom

practice and teaching styles that related to specific contexts and issues rather

than the principles of pedagogy "embodied in key issues for action".

This research indicated that most change failed to progress beyond

implementation. Hopkins et al's (1998) claim:

*"most change fails to progress beyond early implementation when it hits the
'wall' of individual learning or institutional resistance, turbulence begins to
occur and development work begins to stall"* (Hopkins et al, 1998: 269)

The case study descriptions revealed that resistance to changes that affected

teachers' interest in controlling teaching and learning was a significant

characteristic of the inspection process.

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Appendix 1   PARTICIPANTS

Individual participants were given a personal identifier that includes the individual's status or role, subject and length of service. For example, "AB, ST ENG" = initials; subject teacher, English, more than ten years service in the school

Key:

Role or status: HT=headteacher; DH=deputy headteacher; AH=assistant headteacher; HOS=head of subject; HOY=head of year; ST=subject teacher; 2ic=second in command; ic=in charge of; SIX-sixth form; DIRST=director of studies.

Subject: Geog=Geography; HIST=History; RE=Religious Education; ICT=Information technology; ECON=Economics; MFL=Modern Foreign Language; Tech= Technology; Language; SC= Science; Coor= School Coordinator; EXPARTS= Expressive Arts; HUM= Humanities; SEN= Special Educational Needs; ADT= Art/Design/Technology.

Length of service in school -<5 = less than 5 years; <> between 5 and 10 years; > more than 10 years.

Border School:

LM, HT, <>

JT, AH, <

PB, Coord OFSTED, >

DC, HOS, GEOG, <>

JS, HOS, RE, <

RJ, HOH/ST, PE, <.

JH, 2ic Maths, <>.

PM, HOS, ART, <.

JG, ST, MFL, <.

CW, HOY/ST, ICT, >

Boundary School.

JR, HT, <>

RR, DHT, >

JM, HOS, ENG, <

KS, HOS MATHS, <>

TC, HOS, TECH, <>

CH, ic Lower School, SC, >

LH, ic EXPARTS, >

CB, ST, GEOG, <

Brimtown School.

WM, HT, <

DG, AH, >

WC, Coord, HUM, >

SG, ST, TECH, <

DC, 2ic, MATHS, <

PC, 2ic TECH, >

HM, HOS, ENG, <

JH, HOS, ART, >

PJ, ST, HIS/ECON, <

JS, HOY, SIX, >

AH, ST, HIST/RE, >

Edgetown School.

ML, HT, <>

KM, AHT, >

JE, ST, HIST, >

PL, 2ic, ENG, >

HR, ST, ENG, >

SC, ST, SCI, <

BS, HOS, ADT, >

JA, ST, HIST, >

DMS, HOS, GNVQ, <>

Liptown School.

CL, HT, >

BH, HT, <

BLJ, Acting HT, HIS, >

DH, AHT, ENG, >

SM, ST, SC, >

BR, HOS, ENG, >

MS, ST, SCI, >

DS, ST, ENG, <>

Rimtown School,

PE, HT, <

GW, Dir, STUD, >

DA, HOS, ENG, <>

SC, ic SEN, <

Appendix 2   CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOLS

Border School.

Border School is situated near to a northern industrial town in South Yorkshire. Approximately three quarters of its pupils come from its immediate catchment area comprising eight villages. It also draws pupils from outside its traditional catchment area covering a wide geographical area. The 1996 intake came from a total of 19 feeder schools.

The population of the school has risen by almost 28% over the previous four years to 1,425. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic home backgrounds. Pupils from ethnic minority groups make up less than 1% of the pupil population. 12% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. This below the local average figure but is near the national average. There are 37 pupils currently at stages 3 to 5 of the Code of Practice, as recorded in the Special Educational Needs register. Of these, 22 have statements of special educational need. Modifications have been made to the school's buildings to improve access for pupils with physical disabilities. In the September of the inspection, almost 30% of the Year 7 intake had a reading age two or more below their chronological age. The number of pupils staying on the sixth from has risen by three quarters over the past five years and currently 66% of Year 11 stays on. A further 15% go into further education and training. In 1995 41.8% of Year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE A*-C grades. The average A/AS points per candidate was 16.8.

Boundary School.

The school serves three large villages in the former South Yorkshire coalfield. It was formed in 1992 by the amalgamation of two schools and operates on two sites about three miles apart. The area has suffered socially and economically as a consequence of the collapse of the coal mining industry. There is much unemployment in the area and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is much higher than the national average. Traditionally the take up of higher education has been low and the school is trying to give the community a new sense of direction. Almost one fifth of parents living in the area choose to send their children to a long established school with a good academic reputation. This is a large school with 1,425 pupils of whom 689 are boys and 556 girls. The average attainments in literacy and numeracy of pupils entering the school are low and a significant number are particularly poor in speaking and reading. Almost all pupils are white and come from homes where the first language is English. 34 pupils are subject to statements of Special Educational Need. The proportion who stay in education post-16 is mush lower than national averages and in the year before inspection one third of pupils left without destinations in employment, education or training. 17.9% of year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE A*-C grades.

Brimtown School.

Brimtown School is situated in a town in the North East Midlands and is near to major centres of pupil in South Yorkshire. Around 90% of pupils come from six contributory primary schools. The school worked in partnership with two

other local schools and a college of further education in providing A-level and GNVQ courses for sixth form students from all three schools.

There are 1,447 pupils on roll, including 139 students in the sixth form and just under 1% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Its intake represents the full range of attainment and socio economic background. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average, but a below average proportion come from socially advantaged backgrounds. Just over 11% of pupils are on the Special Needs register. Of these, 11 pupils have statements of Special Educational Need. 43% of Year 11 achieved 5 GCSE A*-C grades. Average A/AS points score was 14.2.

Edgetown School.

Edgetown School is a large, oversubscribed 11-18 school, located on two sites two and a half miles apart in a northern city. It draws its pupils from all 29 of the city's wards. It has a diverse intake. Three quarters of the pupils are white and of the ethnic minorities, pupils from the Indian sub-continent are the largest group, representing 7.4% of the school's intake. There are significant numbers of pupils of Chinese, Middle Eastern, Afro-Carribbean and mixed race origin in the school. About one in seven pupils has a first language other than English. The full range of ability is represented and less than 1% of pupils have statements of Special Educational Needs, a figure below local and national averages. Each of the successive intake years displays slightly different characteristics in terms of social composition, prior attainment and ability. Pupils come from a mixture of housing, many are from owner occupied houses and a significant number live in rented council properties. The number

of pupils eligible for free schools meals is broadly average in national terms but below average in local terms. The area immediately surrounding the school is privileged but the many other areas from which pupils come reflect the social and economic polarity of the city. 62% of Year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE A*-C grades. The average A/AS points per candidate was 18.7.

Rimtown School.

Rimtown School serves a small industrial and former mining town in West Yorkshire. It has 820 pupils in the 11-16 age range and draws it intake from six local primary schools. The average attainments in literacy and numeracy are below the national and local averages. The great majority of pupils are white, only 1% is from ethnic minorities. 25% of students are on the register of Special Educational Needs and, in line with the local average, just 2% have statements of Special Educational Needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average, and average for the local educational authority. 19% of Year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE A8-C grades.

Liptown School.

The school is located near the centre of a West Midlands industrial town. It has 1,115 pupils in the 11-16 range. The school is popular and oversubscribed. It draws its pupils from 10 primary schools, although the majority comes from six of them. The data suggests that the pupils have a somewhat above ability on intake. There are 199 pupils on the Special Needs register (19%), of whom 11 (1%) have statements of Special Educational

Needs; the proportion with such statements, although above the norm for the local education authority, is markedly below average. All the statemented pupils are in a unit on the school site from deaf pupils.

The socio-economic profile of the areas surrounding the school is a very varied one; some parts of the catchment area are more advantaged than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 10%, which is well below for schools of this type. Overall, the intake is slightly advantaged by national standards. Some 8% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds; 40 pupils receive Section 11 support and 92 come from homes where English is not the first language. 55% of Year 11 achieved 5 or more GCSE A8-C grades.

Appendix 3   **QUESTION SCHEDULE**

<u>First interview</u>

(Immediately prior to inspection)

Heads of subject and classroom teachers:

What is your personal response to inspection by Ofsted?

What do you expect to come from inspection?

What do you hope to come from inspection?

How was the school prepared for inspection?

How do you feel about a local/externally recruited team?

*Is your LEA adviser a member of the Ofsted team?

What factors should the inspectors take into account in (a) the school (b) subject (c) your case?

What are the main priorities for school and subject?

What changes have been made during preparation for inspection?

To what extent has the inspection affected the speed and direction of development?

Who is involved in leading the implementation of change (a) school-wide (b) in the subject (c) in your classroom?

* in the case of a locally recruited Ofsted team.

Headteacher and Senior Management Team:

What is your personal response to inspection by Ofsted?

What do you expect to come from inspection?

What do you hope to come from inspection?

What is the staff's response to inspection?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a locally/externally recruited Ofsted team?

Describe the factors in the school that you expect to be taken into account?

What changes have been made prior to inspection?

What are the school's main priorities?

Who is involved in school development planning?

Who is mainly responsible for leading the implementation of change (a) school-wide change (b) in the subject (c) in classrooms?

Second interview

(Immediately after the inspection)

Heads of subject and classroom teachers:

How has the inspection affected (a) the school (b) department (c) you?

Has any aspect of the inspection affected you?

What is your response to the rating of teaching quality?

What are the main findings in the case of (a) school (b) department?

What changes will be made as a result of the inspection feedback by (a) the school (b) department (c) you?

Headteacher and Senior Management Team:

Has any aspect of the inspection affect (a) you (b) school?

What are main findings?

What changes do you intend to make as a result of inspection feedback?

Will the inspection findings divert you from implementing the school's development plan?

<u>Third, fourth and fifth Interviews</u>

(At six monthly intervals starting on the deadline for the school's post-inspection plan)

Heads of department and classroom teachers:

To what extent have the schools' inspection recommendations been implemented by (a) school (b) subject (c) you?

Headteacher and Senior Management Team:

To what extent have the school's inspection recommendations been implemented?

Appendix 4   KEY ISSUES: CODES AND CATEGORIES

Key to schools: Bor = Border School; Bou = Boundary School; Edge = Edgetown School; Brim = Brimtown School; Rim = Rimtown School; Lip = Liptown School.

Key to category of inspection recommendation: M/A = Management and Administration; MTL = Management of teaching and learning: CU = Curriculum; R = Resources; A/E = Accommodation and Environment; LO = Learning Opportunities; OT= Organisation of teaching; SP = School Planning; AS = Assessment; M = Monitoring pupils' work; H = Homework; AT = Attendance; P = Punctuality.

Key issues by school.

<u>Border School</u>:

Bor 1 (LO)   "Develop information technology provision to broaden the range of learning opportunities, particularly in Key Stage 3"

Bor 2 (MTL) "Develop strategies pre-16 for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, drawing on the good practice post-16"

Bor 3 (MTL) "Establish formal procedures to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom"

Bor 4 (E/A) "Review the school's accommodation and prepare a development plan to deal with some of the problems associated with over crowding in some teaching areas, heating inefficiencies and leaking roofs"

Bor 5 (LO) "Develop the library as a resource in support of learning at Key Stages 3 and 4"

Bor 6 (CU) "Take steps to comply with statutory requirements, namely ensure:

Religious education for all at Key Stage 4; sufficient time for Music at Key Stage 3; Technology courses at Key Stage 4 meet National Curriculum requirements, currently the Food and Nutrition in Year 10 does not"

<u>Boundary School:</u>

Bou 1 (MTL) "Improve basic skills and self confidence through the introductions of a whole school language policy which as its main in Key Stage 3"

Bou 2 (MTL) "Raise aspirations, enthusiasm and commitment of pupils by providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning"

Bou 3 (CU) "Make more provision for spiritual development by fulfilling the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship and giving greater attention to the spiritual dimension across the curriculum"

Bou 4 (AT) "Persevere with the work with parents to improve attendance at school and attitudes towards education"

Bou 5 (P) " In order to improve punctuality and obtain a promptly start to the school day, continue work with the local authority to improve the reliability of the bus service"

Bou 6 (R) "Establish priorities for the allocation of funds for educational resources to meet urgent needs for books and consumable materials"

Bou 7 (E/A) " Improve the cleanliness of the playing fields"

<u>Brimtown School</u>:

Brim 1 (MTL) "Extend pupils' capacity to think for themselves by providing:

- more activities that challenge and stretch pupils by requiring them to investigate, analyse, generate ideas, explain, reason and review and modify their work;

- fewer activities that encourage pupils to depend too much on their teachers and give too little scope for them to take responsibility for their own learning;

- a planned whole school programme to improve pupils' oral skills so that they are mote willing to learn from each other though discussion and reflection and understanding"

Brim 2 (CU) "Raise levels of attainment and the pace of pupils' progress in information technology"

Brim 3 (MTL) "Improve ways in which senior managers plan for development by:

- ensuring that structures for planning and monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum are made explicit to all staff, including the expectations of middle managers;

- making better use of the information gained from monitoring in identifying the key priorities for improvement and in setting clear benchmarks for evaluating the relative success with these priorities;

- establishing clear links between targets for improvement and the priorities in the whole-school and developmental programmes for teachers' professional development."

Brim 4 (AS) "Make better use of assessment information in planning lessons and in setting pupils' subject-specific targets for improvement"

Brim 5 (CU) "Ensure that the statutory requirements are met for the curriculum in IT, in reporting to the parents of Year 9 pupils on progress in information technology, and for the provision of RE for all pupils in Year 12 and for a daily act of collective worship"

<u>Edgetown School</u>

Edge 1 (MTL) "Disseminate the best teaching practice within and between departments by more systematic identification of the much good teaching that exists"

Edge 2 (MTL) "Improve the quality of education for pupils with special educational needs by reconsidering the deployment of support staff and providing individual plans for all pupils who need them"

Edge 3 (R) "When funding permits, address the serious shortages of resources and the other deficiencies listed above"

Edge 4 (E/A) "Create a better working environment by improving the quality and cleanliness of the accommodation"

Edge 5 (SP) "Improve whole school development planning by costing it, including success criteria and presenting more clearly an analysis of what has been achieved."

Edge 6 (CU) "Offer RE to sixth formers and also ensure that the daily acts of collective worship are provided for all pupils"

Rimtown School

Rim 1 (MTL) "Promote a greater sharing of best practice in teaching so that all teachers:

- use a wide range of teaching styles in order to encourage students to think for themselves and organise their work;

- apply greater consistency with regard to marking and day-to-day assessment;

- have high expectations as to the level and volume of work especially homework.

Rim 2 (MTL) "Sharpen and clarify the processes for monitoring the work of departments so as to be more evaluative and to identify more clearly weaknesses and areas for improvement"

Rim 3 (M) "Further develop the role of the form tutor so that there is better monitoring of students' performance"

Rim 4 (R) "Seek to improve quality and quantity of books and equipment in all subjects"

Rim 5 (CU) "Provide more opportunities for students to develop an appreciation of the cultures of Europe and the rest of the world and an acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension of subjects of the curriculum"

Rim 6 (CU) "Provide a daily act of collective worship for all children"

Rim 7 (M/A) "Address the issues concerning staff and students' health and safety in the main body of the report"

Liptown School.

Lip 1 (OT) "Raise attainments in German at KS3 and in German and Urdu at KS4, with particular reference to:

- the amount of time allocated to the study of two languages in Years 8 and 9;

- the present policy of teaching in mixed ability groups at KS3;

- the need to provide work that matches the different abilities of pupils, especially the more able at KS3, and

- integrating Urdu more closely into the work of the department"

Lip 2 (R) "Improve the contribution that the library makes to the wok of subjects, with particular reference to:

- providing sufficient support staffing to enable it to be used throughout the time the school is open;

- improving the range and quality of books and other resources, and

- producing a suitable policy to ensure that the pupils develop appropriate habits of reading for pleasure and in order to gain information"

Lip 3 (OT) "provide more consistently for the needs of pupils at both ends of the ability range, with particular regard to:

planning lessons in a way that provides an appropriate challenge for all of the most able;

seeking to provide more in class support for pupils with special educational needs; the grouping methods employed"

Lip 4 (MTL) "Increase the monitoring of the work of teachers in the classroom in order to:

- identify and disseminate the substantial amount of good practice that exists;

- identify weaknesses and provide appropriate professional support; and

- plan developments based upon reliable information"

Lip 5 (H) "Provide a more structured programme of homework that meets the

needs of pupils of all abilities"

Appendix 5   POLITICAL ISSUES, THREADS AND THEMES

First Matrix

      ISSUES   **THEMES**

	School's culture interacts with pressure from Ofsted	How headteachers deal with Ofsted's pressure	How Headteachers mediate Ofsted's pressure to staff
Vision/ beliefs/ values			
Ofsted's inspection discourse/ method			
Preparing for inspection			
Response to inspection itself			
Inspection findings			
Key issues for action			

Second Matrix

ISSUES   THEMES

	How headteachers mediate Ofsted's pressure to staff	How middle managers and classroom teachers respond to headteacher's pressure for change	School's teaching culture interacts with and is affected by pressure from Ofsted	Ofsted's depiction of the school/ teaching/ real state of affairs
Inspection findings				
Key issues for action				
Intention to make a change/ post-inspection plan				
Headteacher's approach to implementation				
Implementation of key issues				
Headteacher /subject/and individual priorities				
Beliefs about teaching				
Inspection report				
Ofsted's inspection method				

Third matrix

ISSUES   **THEMES**

	Headteacher's use of Ofsted to impose control over teaching	Headteachers' approach to implementation	Persistence of the school's teaching culture	Teachers' responsiveness to pressures in the school's socio-political environment	Teachers assert interest in teaching through strategies of resistanc
Headteacher's priorities for the school					
Subject priorities					
Control over teaching					
The school's approach to teaching					
Extent of implementation					
Teachers' responses to the implementation of key issues					
School's standing in the local community					
Beliefs, values and vision					
Monitoring teachers' work in the classroom					