Collegiality in secondary school senior management teams: substance or rhetoric?

Thesis

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‘Collegiality in Secondary School Senior Management Teams: Substance or Rhetoric?’

Doctor of Education (EdD)

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Statement on Redactions

The possibility of personal identification of participants has led to the redaction of references to Appendices.
Redacted
Abstract

This is an account and evaluation of qualitative research exploring issues surrounding collegial practice in senior management teams (SMTs) of secondary schools.

In questioning whether effective SMTs nurture school improvement, the study focuses primarily on the inter-play between the concepts of leadership, collegiality and management styles in a single-site case study set in Larchdale School, a large, mixed 11-19 urban secondary school, during a period of change and re-structuring of the SMT, principally due to a change of head.

Reflection on researcher perceptions from the Larchdale case study has been supported by an investigation of SMT collegiality in a wider context based on data collected from a sample of 37 secondary schools and also through perceptions from experienced professionals in focus group discussion and use of a mapping exercise.

The research is underpinned by consideration of the effects of institutional context and the historical background of the school effectiveness and improvement debate. Three fundamental research questions are asked which seek to identify the nature of collegial practice in the single-site SMT, in a wider context of schools reported by change agents and through document analysis, and finally on the impact of collegial practice within SMTs on school effectiveness and improvement.

A comprehensive literature review discusses the functionality of teams, school effectiveness, collegiality and the crucial importance of leadership.
Methodological literature most relevant and influential to the research design is discussed, justifying the grounded theory approach to the single-site qualitative case study and the other methods of data collection and analysis utilised to investigate the wider context.

Data collection, analysis and findings identify key issues of leadership, coherence, collegiality, intentionality and dissent at Larchdale and, through focus group discussion and a conceptual mapping exercise with external agents, within a number of secondary school SMTs.

The conclusions suggest that, although there is a relationship between school effectiveness and discernible levels of visionary leadership, coherence and intentionality in the strategic management practice of secondary school heads and their senior management teams, there exists a reality gap between the rhetoric and the reality in the way that heads and their SMTs run secondary schools.

A model of headship, *contingency based headship*, is tentatively suggested as effective, pragmatic and visionary, incorporating and balancing differing leadership qualities but also embracing substantive elements of collegial practice. Contrived collegiality relating to secondary school SMTs is discussed within a theoretical framework clearly identifying elements of substance and rhetoric.

The outcomes of the research are claimed to extend the boundaries of theory and knowledge surrounding strategic management practice in secondary schools, and have relevance to a wide audience of practitioners and advisors.
Acknowledgements

The assistance of the former and succeeding heads, deputies and SMT members at schools and of the key participants is gratefully acknowledged, as is the use of the Library at Brunel University, Twickenham Campus, Isleworth, Middlesex and the Open University Library, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. Special thanks is given to the IT team at the OU Library for their assistance with online services and, most importantly, very special thanks is extended to Mark Brundrett for his help, guidance and advice as tutor-supervisor during the whole course of this project. Many thanks are extended to Mike, for his incisiveness in discussion and to Karen, without whose support this work would not have been possible.

Note on Abbreviations

The field of educational management utilises many abbreviations. The convention adopted in this study is that the first use of an accepted abbreviation is in parentheses preceded by the full form. For example, LEA is first introduced as Local Education Authority (LEA).
Chapter 1

Introduction

Introductory Remarks

This introduction begins with the research rationale and continues with the historical perspective in which this study is set. The context of Larchdale School is described and links to the research questions are outlined. The final section poses the three research questions and defines the most important key terms employed in the study.

The Research Rationale

The underlying research focus for this project is the investigation of the importance of collegial practice in SMTs to the operational and strategic effectiveness of large secondary schools. The research has been conducted during the process of restructuring SMTs into Leadership Groups. The research questions posed on page 23 identify the three major dimensions of enquiry in this study and focus investigation on teamwork and collaborative practice first within the changing SMT at Larchdale School, then within the SMTs of secondary schools more generally and, finally, on the impact of SMT collegiality on secondary school effectiveness.

There are complex mechanisms underlying SMT practice and this project evolved from smaller scale research on the comparative practice of three effective deputy heads in three different schools described in the author’s MA Dissertation (Worger, 1996).

This doctoral investigation focuses on collegiality and how it affects the strategic management of large secondary schools. These include
(i) effective leadership of the head
(ii) strategic coherence within the school
(iii) collegial and collaborative practice
(iv) clarity of purpose and roles.

Fidler (1997) identifies two types of organisational structures inherent in school management and administration that may co-exist, oppose and counter-balance each other:

(i) bureaucratic hierarchies, where direction is based on authority derived from position with formal rules of operation which favour the practices and purposes of significant individuals, in particular, task-centred heads and deputies, corresponding to (ii) and (iv) above
(ii) collegial structures, where decision-making is shared amongst equals with significant and essential individual input into practices facilitated by people-centred managers, as in (iii) above.

The organisational structures of secondary schools differ markedly between schools and may depend on a number of contextual factors including socio-economic profile, school typology and base-line pupil performance.

The conclusions of the author’s MA Dissertation (Worger, 1996) assert that collegial senior management practice is key to school effectiveness. There was objective evidence that collegial practice within the SMT and in line management has some positive effects on staff morale and empowered staff to move schools forward.

The Initial Study at the outset of this research, an enthusiastic attempt to justify positivist hypotheses concerning collegial practice in secondary school SMTs,
was flawed since it suggested that:

‘bureaucratic = autocratic = bad’ and ‘collegial = democratic = good’.

This dissertation describes research incorporating a number of qualitative techniques including grounded theory and describes the deeper complexities of the reality of collegial practice within SMTs.

Large secondary schools have many of the characteristics of a ‘machine bureaucracy’ as termed by Mintzberg (1983), with diverse technical cores, strong systems, clarity of purpose and clear delineation of roles. Management can be impersonal, with little dissent tolerated either within the senior management team, between senior and middle managers, and often little emphasis placed on teams.

Since the structure and effectiveness of all secondary schools depends on the functionality and cohesiveness of different types of teams, this identifies a serious problem for heads. The structures and practices of senior management teams have been challenged further recently by the introduction of ‘Leadership Groups’ (LGs). The Leadership Group in a secondary school in England and Wales consists of the head, one or more deputy heads and assistant heads, extending to more than ten members, with perhaps other managers invited to make their contribution to whole school decision-making. Further discussion of LGs and findings of a recent large scale research project on their effectiveness conducted by the Secondary Heads Association (SHA) follows in the Literature Review on page 66 below. These extended SMTs may include members outside the LG who feel valued, but others may feel disenfranchised or ineligible when making their contribution.

How effective are such teams?
All SMTs have differing elements of collegiality at play, but this investigation focuses initially on collegiality in the SMT at Larchdale School, the site of the case study, and secondarily on elements of collegiality within the SMT practice in a wider sample of 37 secondary schools and the perceptions of an external group of seven key participants (KPs) who have had wide and extensive experience of secondary school senior management.

Bush (1995) asserts that collegiality has become enshrined in the folklore of management as the most appropriate way to run schools and colleges, hinting in ‘folklore’ the possibility of the rhetoric of collegial school management. This rhetoric could be seen pluralistically: perhaps as truly promoting the empowerment of the extended SMT or the technical core, seeming to promote it whilst exercising autocratic authority amongst an inner-sanctum of SMT, or, even more cynically, preaching collegiality whilst being iconoclastic. The rhetoric encompasses what Hargreaves (1994) has termed contrived collegiality.

An early experiment where the collegial paradigm dominated the bureaucratic was at Countesthorpe College in Leicestershire, in the mid-1970s. The former principal, John Watts, may have implied an inherently strong philosophical adherence to collegial practice, but there is another interpretation that could be made – that Watts was conducting a personal experiment or crusade. Watts’ ideal is discussed on page 40. This collegial model is described by Southworth (1988) in an idealised collegial primary school where small working groups of teachers fed back collectively to the whole school forum for decision-making. Southworth argues that this reduces the predominance of the head and also in the primary sector, the collegial paradigm has been
seen by Campbell (1985) as supporting school effectiveness, but in secondary schools heads may feel threatened by strong collegial structures, affirming the argument for a duality in leadership practice, where there is a balance of the instructional, bureaucratic and vision-promoting behaviours and traits in combination with those that are transactional, collegial and vision-sharing – a model of headship that is encompassed in the concept of effective headship based on contingency theory as discussed on page 51 below. Bureaucratic and collegial styles of leadership and management are at work in schools, so it is necessary to turn to the issue of how collegial styles of management impact on school effectiveness, the basis for the third and final research question. The small scale nature of this study presents a difficult problem of generalisation and this is discussed in depth on page 76.

The deterministic causal hypothesis:

*If the head and SMT promote a collegial culture in their school management practice then there will be a greater degree of school effectiveness*

must be tested in a variety of school environments. The complex functional, socio-economic and micro-political contexts could be critical factors affecting secondary school effectiveness. In testing this it is necessary to conceptualise the social settings of school external environments within a theoretical framework. The school context typology of uncertainty and clustering developed by Emery and Trist (1965) is used in the Larchdale case study and in describing the wider sample of schools.

There are many current challenges for headteachers and their senior colleagues in secondary schools. These have increased due to Government initiatives including:
(i) performance related pay on a restricted budgetary framework
(ii) social inclusion policies that have led to major problems of student behaviour
(iii) recruitment, retention and motivation of suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff and reducing workload
(iv) major changes in the qualifications structure for 14-19 year-olds
(v) bidding for specialist school status

Although these initiatives may be seen as positive and desirable in the current culture of rapid change for improvement, they are presenting problems that have had to be dealt with in a wholly pragmatic way by heads, governors and SMTs in a political climate associated with naming and shaming, a pejorative term commonly applied to publicly condemned institutions and pressure from LEAs for improvement. In this atmosphere of the quest for the ‘holy grail’ of school improvement, the zeitgeist, or ‘spirit of the age’ driving both academic educational management theory and education policy in the 1990s, it is necessary to place these more recent challenges in a more holistic context by presenting a historical perspective of the school effectiveness and improvement movement, beginning on page 35.

The final part of this rationale concerns issues of validity, reflexivity and relevance surrounding this research project. During the final period of analysis and writing the interesting and crucially important debate concerning the methodological implications for research validity re-focused the original high expectations for the relevance, influence, audience and applicability of the findings of this research. This debate and its impact on the generalisation of the findings of this research are discussed in
Chapter 5 on Conclusions (page 166). This research will interest:

(i) headteachers and their SMTs

(ii) fellow researchers in educational management

(iii) management trainers

(iv) Local Education Authority (LEA) inspectors, advisors and officers

The Historical Perspective

Since the mid-1980s there has been an all-embracing quest to claim, report and demonstrate, using externally imposed criteria, measurable levels of school improvement and effectiveness in all schools in England and Wales.

The school effectiveness and improvement movement has grown up in a number of different international academic centres, for example in Canada at the University of Toronto under the seminal leadership of Professor Michael Fullan. It has focused on change in schools and its reliance on school leaders. Researchers in North America, for example Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) and Louis and Miles (1990), focused on the inter-relationships of pro-active school management and the support and empowerment of core staff in striving for school improvement.

In England and Wales the movement for school improvement has been driven both externally and internally, the former being essentially political at local and national level. Conservative national governments ushered in a variety of measures in the 1980s which, although ostensibly creating a dynamic of change for school improvement, had a polemical agenda. In a persuasive critique, Glatter (1999) questioned the growing power and influence of the state in British education and the policy hysteria characterizing it. Glatter also questioned the wisdom of basing policy
on performance management and other rational approaches, since, he stated emphatically, recent research suggests that staff commitment and satisfaction are key factors in producing results. The debate questioning rational approaches continues. The Education Reform Act of 1988 sought to centralise the control of education, in particular, curriculum and finance at Westminster, thereby restricting the perceived autonomy of local government through bypassing it. The outcomes of this policy included the prescriptive National Curriculum, extension of Local Management of Schools, creation of Grant Maintained and later the foundation schools, the publication of school’s performance data in the form of ‘league tables’ and Ofsted inspection. This agenda was adopted by the current Labour Government.

Since 1988 educational management researchers have criticised this agenda. Hammersley and Scarth (1993) eloquently dismembered the Report (Department of Education and Science, 1992) of Alexander, Rose and Woodhead on teaching methods in primary schools, and re-affirmed the importance of teachers as reflective practitioners and ‘extended professionals’ after Stenhouse (1975) and Schon (1987). Woodhead was later Ofsted’s Chief Inspector of Schools, ushering in an era of damning school and LEA inspections. Although Woodhead resigned as HM Chief Inspector at the end of 2000, the negativity at the spectre of imminent Ofsted Inspection, seen as a critical incident in this study, continues to have an undue influence where it can set an agenda for reactive rather than pro-active change.

Fidler, et.al. (1998) investigated Ofsted inspection data for observation and grading of teaching performance, the results at that time being reported to headteachers. That research discovered substantial, widespread discrepancies between inspectors
grading of poor teachers and schools’ own judgments, and identified a problem between heads, their SMTs and their core staff by reducing the spirit of teamwork.

Internally driven change in England and Wales has two main forms:

(i) responses by heads to the advocacy of change as expressed by academic educationalists in accommodating government policy

(ii) continuing, historically rich, curriculum development undertaken by teachers and educationalists that is designed to improve teaching and learning.

Both have utilised management by objectives and strategic development planning and earlier influenced by, for example, Hargreaves, D. and Hopkins (1991), and Mortimore (1998). More recently the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) has been highly influential, employing a competence-based approach opposed to the reflective practitioner-as-researcher paradigm, a dichotomy identified clearly by Brundrett (1999). Bush (1999) referred to this competence-based approach to the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) as a ‘crisis’ in the discipline of educational management in the late 1990s. Ironically, the NPQH Access Unit on Teams, by Trethowan (1998) has excellent discussion of SMT structures and practice and has aided concept development here. This management by objectives approach emphasises effective bureaucracy with the focus on task completion than on the reflective development of teams.

In the late 1990s there was a further drive on raising student achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. These influences have been emphasised by Mortimore (1998), and are discussed in the Literature Review on School Effectiveness below (page 35).
Some secondary schools seen as more successful by measurable improvement based on their performance indicators and Ofsted reports have been identified as ‘Beacon schools’, or latterly ‘Advanced’ schools and their perceived expertise is now being shared with other schools. These schemes were designed to raise standards in neighbouring schools through the sharing and spreading of good practice, building on partnerships between professionals through what can be termed ‘external collegiality’.

As discussed by Burton and Brundrett (2000), during the summer of 1998, the Department for Education and Employment recognized 74 schools as model ‘beacons of excellence’. They found from survey data that these schools had made a contribution to school improvement since their effective communication, coupled with a clear sense of purpose and vision, had enabled these schools to maintain their own educational excellence while facilitating other schools' development.

Crucial to measuring schools performance is the data contained in the ‘Autumn Package of Pupil Performance Information’ and the ‘Performance and Assessment Report’ (PANDA) in the Spring term which provide analyses of national and individual school's performance data. Alongside the Beacon Schools initiative lies that of specialist schools, where heads and governors can bid, for example, for language, arts or sports status, sharing their resources and expertise with other schools and their wider community.

Schools which have more serious weaknesses may have been, during the course of this project (2000-2003), part of a City Academy, Educational Action Zone (EAZ), ‘Fresh Start’ or ‘Excellence in Cities’ initiative. These initiatives are important to the Larchdale case study, as at least four of thirteen local and rival
schools have either applied for, or been granted, specialist status, providing extra funding, whilst the SMT at Larchdale has not utilised these opportunities.

As discussed by Anderson and Bush (1999), successive UK governments of either political persuasions have not clarified educational standards. The Conservative governments from 1979 to 1997 brought in local management of schools and autonomous grant-maintained schools and now, they said, the Labour government planned to ‘reinvent’ this sector via foundation and voluntary schools with reduced powers.

The Labour government's policy agenda since 1997 was seen by Simkins (1999) to embody both continuities and discontinuities with its Conservative predecessor. New initiatives implied certain assumptions about values underpinning school Management, and Simkins seems supportive of how this new managerialism contributed to educational leader’s and manager’s understanding of the new policy environment and charts possible future directions, many of which have been questionable, as identified by Wright (2001). Contradictory statements of policy on failing schools, the Standards Agenda and the structure of qualifications for 14-19 have confused secondary heads and their SMTs in raising standards. For example, in February, 2000, David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, indicated that those secondary schools which were badly failing ie. which did not achieve the minimal performance of at least 5% of 16-year-olds gaining 5 or more good GCSEs may be closed. In January, 2001, the Secretary of State asserted that these schools would receive extra funding and special recruitment and retention incentives for staff willing to commit themselves to continuing service in
such challenging schools. In February, 2002, Estelle Morris, then Secretary of State published a Green Paper in which some students at 14 years could bypass GCSEs in some subjects, immediately invalidating the 5+ A*-C GCSE performance indicator for all schools at the end of Key Stage 4. In August 2003, the Qualifications and Assessment Authority (QCA) recommended that secondary school heads can choose to opt pupils out of GCSE examinations altogether.

The constantly changing political, contextual, cultural and developmental background to this research project has created a dynamic of turbulence which generates opportunities but also crises and generated new pressures for heads and their SMTs. Although collegiality and collegial structures in schools still exist, outcomes from this research suggest that bureaucratic and rational approaches to systems, leadership and management have dominance in schools to the detriment of collegial structures, contradicting much senior management rhetoric.

**Context and Links to Research Questions**

The investigation of the balance of bureaucratic and task-centred processes to collegial and people-centred ones has required three dimensions:

(i) the Larchdale single-site case study
(ii) researching the wider context through school documentation from 37 different secondary schools and the responses of Key Participants
(iii) gauging the impact of SMT collegiality from the findings of the Larchdale case study and the wider context investigation
The Larchdale Context

To address the on-the-ground realities with a crucial element of participant observation as an original member of the extended senior management team in a large, mixed secondary comprehensive school, qualitative research methods followed the pattern of single-site case study with medium term ethnographic fieldwork utilising a number of qualitative techniques including grounded theory.

For the purposes of this study, given the school’s high profile in the ethnography and taking into account professional and ethical considerations, the school has been given the fictitious name of Larchdale. A check on all school names in England and Wales has shown that there are no schools with this name and no associations between the fictitious name either within the school itself or its neighbours.

The Larchdale case study addresses the first research question which queries the evidence of substantive or rhetorical practice in the balance of bureaucratic and collegial styles exercised by the head and senior managers within a single SMT. Larchdale is a mixed comprehensive school of approximately 1300 students from a primarily white working class cultural background. Gender is balanced overall. The school has moved to Foundation status during the course of the case study. It is located about three miles from the centre of a city, and over two-thirds of students come from adjacent wards, many of which are deprived, and have substantial socio-economic variations. Approximately 20% are eligible for free school meals, around 30% of students on the register of special educational needs and about 40 (3%) have statements. Students who transfer at age 11 from primary schools have a wide range of prior attainment. A high proportion of students have
low attainment, but for just over 30% in each cohort prior attainment is above average. About 30% of students achieve high levels of success in the end of Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations, and almost two thirds of students stay in education at age 16, including almost one half who enters the sixth form at Larchdale. Overall, attainment by age 18 is slightly below the national average.

Both the former head, the newly appointed head and the school governors have set challenging targets at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 including increasing the number of students gaining an average of Level 5 in National Curriculum Key Stage 3 tests to 65% from the lowest level of 60% and the 5+ A-C GCSE pass rate to 40% from the lowest level of 28%. Larchdale’s only Ofsted inspection was in February 1998 and many changes to the personnel and structure of the Larchdale SMT have since taken place, in particular the appointment of a new head, as well as high turnover in the core staff. Staff turnover is high at around 15% per year on average, a major concern for the governors, both heads and the SMT. Typically, pupils entering in Year Seven and are placed in mixed-ability tutor groups and pastoral responsibility focuses on Heads of Year. Oversight of the 11-16 pastoral structure is provided by two Assistant Headteachers, each responsible for a Key Stage, and a deputy head. The sixth form has its own pastoral team, a Head of Sixth Form with a Deputy. Great emphasis is placed on the value of the tutor group and on the role of the form tutor. There is good liaison with outside agencies such as social services, the educational welfare officers and educational psychologists. The school has a good reputation for musical and sporting success. Relations with the Local Education Authority are generally amicable, and there is local consortium for sixth form
provision but this has recently reduced the Larchdale sixth form curriculum offer.

In general, students demonstrate good attitudes but attendance, at around 90%, is a cause for concern. Although behaviour management issues are very high on the school agenda for senior managers, middle managers (particularly year heads) and classroom teachers alike, the behaviour policies have not proved effective and there are few processes and corrective procedures for students whose behaviour is poor. At Larchdale evidence from both the 1998 Ofsted inspection and the more recent 2002 LEA mini-inspection has suggested that support and guidance for students are good as are relationships with parents, who are kept well informed through personal letters, a regular newsletter and student diaries. Larchdale has positive links with the local business community, which in turn offers work-experience placements for Year 10 students, and with local feeder primary schools, validating the school’s stated ethos in creating a community where all are valued equally.

The Wider Context

Although the Larchdale case study is the major focus of research in this project it has been important to set the project in a wider context and also to compare the findings of the Larchdale investigation with those from a wider group of schools. Research in the wider context incorporated document collection and analysis from a wider sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools similar in size and structure to Larchdale and also recording and analysing the perceptions of Key Participants (KPs), seven experienced and effective present or former secondary school managers or advisers, gained from focus group discussion and a mapping exercise investigating the KP’s professional perceptions of the relative importance of specific
behaviours and traits of effective heads, and, in particular, their views on the importance of collegial practice within secondary school SMTs to school effectiveness. Full details and discussion of the choice and methods of collection of data are given in Chapter 3, Methodology, beginning on page 71.

Research Questions

Having discussed the rationale for this research, described the historical perspective and the Larchdale context, the three research questions can now be posed:

(i) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the senior management team (SMT) in the single-site case study secondary school, Larchdale?

(ii) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in a wider sample of secondary schools?

(iii) what is the impact of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on school effectiveness?

The three research questions, although simple and direct, are rooted in both deep and interesting relationships between collegiality and school effectiveness. The tri-partite structure of the chapters on Methodology, Chapter 3, Data Analysis and Findings, Chapter 4 and Conclusions, Chapter 5 respectively, is founded in relating to each research question in turn.

Definitions of Key Terms

This set of definitions is presented in the order of importance of each concept in this dissertation. It is not exhaustive as other terms are introduced in later chapters.
**Collegiality**

Bush (1995) characterises these features of collegial structures seen in secondary schools that are used in this study to define *collegiality*:

(i) **strong normative orientation**, where decision-making is ideally based on democratic principles

(ii) **the prominence in decision-making of the professional technical core**

(iii) **commonality of philosophy, values and practices**

(iv) **decision-making by consensus rather than by division or dissent.**

A highly important concept in this study relating to collegiality is that of *contrived* collegiality, as described by Hargreaves (1994), in a critique of collegiality as being an ideal contrived paradigm for management to secure the implementation of desired reform and change in teacher’s practice.

**School Effectiveness**

Mortimore (1991) defines an effective school as one in which student progress is greater than might be expected from a consideration of its intake. Stoll and Fink (1996) define an effective school differently as one that enhances all its students achievement and development and has year on year incremental improvement.

On combining these, a single definition of school effectiveness can be put forward: an effective school has overall student attainment that is greater than expected from considering its intake (the *value-added* measure), that caters for, and enhances, the development of all its students and has measurable year-on-year incremental improvement, as explained in the definition that follows.
**School Improvement**

School improvement needs careful definition and clarification. Hopkins (1994) provides an elegant, yet pragmatic, definition: a strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes as measured by value-added and strengthens the school’s capacity for managing change.

**Paradigm**

In this study there is extensive use of the term *paradigm*. This term is used in the sense outlined by Meyerson and Martin (1987)

> “as alternative points of view that members [of a culture] and researchers bring to their experience of culture… Paradigms determine the criteria and content of what we attend to, and as such, they determine what we notice and enact as cultural change.”


In these senses management paradigms are key foundations to cultural change for school improvement. A concept, such as collegiality, becomes a paradigm when it is accepted by members and researchers of the culture as one of these key foundations.

**Rhetoric**

*Rhetoric*, in modern usage, is often an implicit suggestion of *empty* rhetoric, based on a definition of rhetoric as expression that is ‘false, showy, artificial, or declamatory’ (The Chambers Dictionary, 1993, page 1475). Classical Aristotelian rhetoric was

> “…initially conceived by the ancient Greeks as an art of persuasion by which ordinary citizens could exercise their responsibility in civic affairs...”

(Simons, 1990, page 7)
Rhetoric in this study implies persuasive expression advocating or describing ideas or actions that are held to be true although they may be in reality false or open to doubt.

**Behaviours and Traits**

Collegiality within secondary school SMTs depends critically on the leadership and management philosophy and practice of the head. Leadership has no clear and accepted definition, as outlined by Richmon and Allison (2002), who assert that there is considerable conceptual incoherence pervading leadership inquiry, and also by Ribbins (1999) who emphasised the need to map the field of educational leadership in light of the conceptual challenges it faces, and its complex and unclear relationship with educational administration and management. Although behavioural and trait theories for leadership have become unpopular, again as outlined by Richmon and Allison (2002), for the purposes of this study behaviours and traits are important artifices for conceptualising collegial practice within secondary school SMTs.

In this dissertation a *behaviour* is characterised by actions, for example, exercise of different styles of leadership: instructional, moral, participative, transformational or contingent.

The term *trait* is used here as being an innate attribute of a person, for example physical presence, personal charisma, social skills and intelligence.

Leadership behaviours and traits are discussed at length in the review of literature surrounding leadership in Chapter 2 starting on page 50.
**Impact**

*Impact*, in the sense that it is used throughout this dissertation, implies the influence or impulse dynamic of theories or ideas on changes in structures and practice.

**Normative**

The use of the term *normative* in this study implies following an authoritative or universally accepted standard or paradigm, and *strongly normative* implies a prescriptive standard or paradigm.

**Concluding Remarks**

This chapter started by discussing the rationale, historical perspectives and dimensions of research this study. It continued by describing the Larchdale context and related it to the investigation and concluded by stating the three research questions and defining key terms.

The next chapter consists of a review of the substantive literature underpinning this study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The three research questions for this project are:

(i) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single-site case study secondary school, Larchdale?

(ii) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more generally?

(iii) what is the impact of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on school effectiveness?

In addressing these research questions it is essential to clearly identify, explain and embed the importance of collegial practice to the operational and strategic effectiveness of large secondary school senior management teams within concepts found in the substantive educational management literature written in the last thirty years. This literature review is a narrative review, in which different literature is outlined and discussed with a view to presenting a clear description and critique of the current state of knowledge in a field, following the processes outlined by Hart (1998), and has five sections, discussing substantive literature surrounding:

(i) Educational Management Models

(ii) Teams in Business Management

(iii) School Effectiveness

(iv) Collegiality

(v) Leadership
Each section provides linkage to the research questions, describes the pre-eminent concepts relating to theoretical frameworks developed within the field and discusses the effect and impact of educational management research and writing on leadership and management of secondary schools such as Larchdale.

The literature at the core of educational management in secondary schools and in particular that which concerns the nature of secondary school leadership, leadership teams and school improvement and effectiveness consist of two distinct types. The first includes the highly academic research papers and articles including the seminal educational management papers which, in particular, Fullan (1992) drew upon whilst incorporating the work of Belbin (1981), Mintzberg (1983), Drucker (1985) and Peters (1987) on generic management principles. Fullan (1992) utilised a wide variety of American research, for example, Hall and Hord (1987) (1987) in facilitating change in schools, Louis and Miles (1990) which outlined successful leadership and management strategies for school improvement, and Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), analysing the skills of school leaders in promoting the culture of change agency that promotes school improvement. Research on school effectiveness and improvement has primarily involved large scale quantitative studies which focus on the use of performance indicators to assess when schools are effective. This literature is discussed from page 35 onwards. There are many research papers, reviews and articles from key academic journals that are not broadly accessible to practicing SMT members due to their conceptual depth and the pressure of time required for access, which necessitates the second type of literature in that it is more popular in schools, since many of the influential ideas are disseminated to schools through popular journals, eg. Managing Schools Today, or through compilations
issued by, amongst others, the Secondary Heads Association. It is this literature that responds more to the everyday needs of practitioners as it relates more to the practical, day-to-day strategic management of schools, disseminating theory but suggesting pragmatic working strategies that can successfully develop the inter-play of visionary leadership and effective teamwork. It includes seminal generic texts such as that of Fullan (1992), the School Improvement Series, for example, that on Development Planning by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991), the all-embracing and inclusive text of Mortimore (1998) and Open University course materials, for example, Harris, et. al. (1997). This literature can be seen to form a basic, competence-orientated set of manuals for heads and their SMTs. Clarity in roles and responsibilities, coherence in planning and recognition of pro-active collaboration and teamwork are seen here as essential for school improvement. These authors were familiar to the key participants in this study.

The most informative and conceptually developmental literature for this research study was found in periodical journals focusing on educational management and administration, including Educational Management and Administration, Educational Leadership, Education Administration Quarterly and School Leadership and Management. Research papers and articles of possible relevance were identified via the Internet using, for example, the BIDS database, and the original papers and other sources were sought out in various university libraries and reviewed. Both types of literature are utilised in this project since it is not only within the highly academic level that the meaningful, pragmatic sources of concepts and data are found.
This review focuses on identifying key elements of the relationships between collegial practice and school effectiveness, in particular, management typologies that assist in theoretically grounding inferences relating the normative paradigm of visionary, transformational and inspirational leadership that encompasses collegial practice to school effectiveness and improvement.

**Educational Management Models**

There are six models of educational management identified by Bush (1995): bureaucratic, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural.

The *bureaucratic* model can be ascribed to Weber (1947), who saw this structure as having clarity in divisions of labour, strong hierarchies and rules. Sackney, et. al. (1999) explore influences of postmodern notions of power on organisational structures with regard to their leadership, change, conflict and culture. Because, they state, postmodernists reject the Weberian association of power with authority, power is in reality a strategy or cluster of relations, rather than a property of institutional position. The implications of this for heads and SMTs are profound.

The *collegial* model is utilised in the definition of collegiality on page 24 and discussed in greater detail on page 39 below, but it is useful and necessary to comment briefly on the other four models described by Bush.

Baldrige (1971) describes the *political* model in terms of conflict and the power-coercive nature of interest groups in their exerting of community power. This model has its influences in this study particularly in the area of dissent and its management, and micro-political features are introduced in the discussions on collegiality and
leadership below. Ball (1987) describes micro-politics as:

“…the nexus where the formal structure of roles interpenetrates with the informal pattern of influence…”

(Ball, 1987, page 246)

The *subjective* model is advocated by Greenfield (1973) who questions the common notion that an organisation is a structure with functions and goals independent from the individuals who inhabit it. An important feature of this research questions to what extent staff in the technical cores of schools have a common view of collegial practice within their own school, investigated by semi-structured interviews.

The *ambiguity* model of Cohen, et. al. (1972), exemplified by the title of their paper as ‘a garbage can model of educational choice’, where institutions are perceived as organised anarchies and management proceeds effectively by problem resolution, not only in spite of goal ambiguity and conflict, but utilising them.

The *cultural* perspective is discussed by Wallace (1999) who contrasts it with the political perspective by asserting that the cultural frame leads to an interpretation of what holds people or organisations together in contra distinction to the political frame to what pulls them apart.

It is argued below in Chapter 5 (page 166) that the six models can be seen as two distinct and antithetical perspectives – the bureaucratic and the collegial – with four elements operating within each: micro-politics, subjectivity, ambiguity and culture, following Wallace (1999) and Bolman and Deal (1991). The notion of combining perspectives, termed *conceptual pluralism*, follows Bolman and Deal (1984).
Political mechanisms underlying SMT practice were identified by Lortie (1964):

“... the several strands of hierarchical control, collegial control and autonomy become tangled and complex.”

Lortie (1964, page 273)

Conceptual pluralism has underpinned many analytical processes of this study.

**Teams in Business Management Literature**

This section discusses the substantive business and educational management literature that focuses on teams, since collegial practice depends on teamwork. Business authors emphasise inspirational and motivational leadership, sharing a coherent vision for organic change and cohesive teamwork to promote more effectiveness in corporate systems. The utilisation of teams features strongly.

For example, on the importance of teams, Tom Peters (1987) states:

"... there is no limit to what the average person can accomplish if thoroughly involved ... this can most effectively be tapped when people are gathered in human-scale groupings - that is, teams, or more precisely, self-managing teams."

(Peters, 1987, page 282)

This encapsulates the idea of team building amongst instructional and transactional leaders as first-order change agents in educational management in the late 1980s. The rhetoric here still emphasises the role of the super-leader as a motivator of teams. However, the tone changes in the business field in the early 1990s, where economic constraints were highly influential in corporate ‘down-sizing’.

Visibility, responsibility, results orientation, tolerance of diversity of views and
driving forward change based on shared values are seen as crucial by Drucker (1991). Inherent here is a denial, and an iconoclastic prophecy of the demise, of ‘super-leadership’, of the leader as heroic, of the paradigm of the ‘causal magic-bullet’, of rhetorical, image-focused practice and the recognition that dissenting views need to be recognised and considered. The emphasis here is on transformational leadership combined with collective team wisdom.

The ‘super-teams’ constructed by ‘super-leaders’ are composed of individuals with differing but exceptional personal qualities, experience and skills. Belbin (1981) defines what has become a paradigmatic model of management teams. The notions of chair, plant, company worker, shaper, challenger, etc., may represent an idealistic team model that is difficult to construct, but it does identify a need to promote the philosophy of empowering individuals with different skills, intellect, knowledge bases and experience within the team. This team will have far greater summative and legimiting power within an institution, for example a secondary school than the singleton, dominant, heroic, charismatic leader represented by the head.

The development of teams through kaizen techniques, has been highly influential. Imai (1986) defines kaizen in terms of the pursuit of improving quality within a framework where these improvements can be measured objectively by quantitative methods. TQM (Total Quality Management) methodologies fit in directly with workplace kaizen and reflect kaizen philosophy, but in purely educational contexts, however, kaizen and TQM have been received with ambivalence although there is some evidence from this study to suggest that TQM approaches can generate trust and collegiality in schools. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992) support TQM
but concede that the TQM principle of devolved power and decision-making has yet to replace top-down control. The contribution of TQM techniques to strategic development planning has been very influential, as in the work of Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991).

A simple but effective definition of a management team is offered by Katzenbach and Smith (1998) as a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approaches for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Flattening of management structures and inclusion in team-building are also seen as essential to the success of teams but flattening management structures in the technical, professional managerial cores of schools has produced, according to Evans (1995) a ‘crisis rhetoric’ underlying this re-structuring, since there is evidence as identified by Mitchell and Tucker (1992) and Hoerr (1996), that it increases the hegemony and power of an autocratic headteacher.

**School Effectiveness Literature**

Deciding whether a school is effective, or improving, is complex, being the focus of a significant amount of widely based quantitative research. Multi-level analysis measuring the relative performance of schools in six LEAs was used by Gray, Jesson and Sime (1990), and the Research and Statistics Branch (R & S B) of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) produced studies on value-added analysis of examination results that they used to measure school effectiveness. Nuttall (1992) was able to claim by similar methods that both raw and value-added results were necessary to provide data to judge the effectiveness of a school. These processes of *differential analysis*, take into account the prior attainment and baseline ability of
cohorts within schools and across schools. The R & S B and published many similar papers, for example Sammons et al., (1994). In order to understand and discuss which factors predict effective school leadership, Chrispeels, et.al. (2000) conducted wide scale research analysing survey data from 71 elementary and secondary schools. They found that the strongest predictor of school effectiveness and improvement was the ability of school leaders to focus on the prime factor of teaching and learning and their use of school contextual and assessment data to identify needs and guide decisions. Fullan (1992) and Mortimore (1998) are among many authors who have stressed the ‘improve teaching and learning to move the school forward’ paradigm. These include Chrispeels and Martin (2002), who describe four school leadership teams concentrating their roles in improving student learning, and Lambert (2002) who asserts that principals can improve student learning by sharing the leadership of instruction with teachers and parents, also Fullan (2002) who advocates that principals serving as change agents transform the teaching and learning culture of the school and DuFour (2002), who, as a former principal, tells how he transformed his high school by departing from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on learning by functioning as a learning leader rather than an instructional leader, asserting that all principals should become learning leaders that promote student and teacher learning within a collegial framework.

Two problems arise with the ‘improving teaching and learning implying school improvement’ paradigm:

(i) integral instability, where one or more core faculties are weak with poor results due to problems of staffing or faculty leadership

(ii) contextual effects ie. gender, socio-economic and ethnicity factors.
Willms and Raudenbush (1989) advocated their use of longitudinal and technically hierarchical models for a thoroughly valid and objective method of measuring school effectiveness and its stability, by removing specific subject and cohort effects and lagging factors. This model, theoretically capable of separating true changes from sampling and measurement error, examines statistically the effects of factors exogenous to the school system. The model is illustrated and supported by data from large cohorts of students in Scotland. Later, Willms (1992) identifies the significance of contextual effects, for example, single gender rather than mixed environments, socio-economic deprivation and ethnic minority elements to the outcomes of objective measurement and in analysing these factors found that students of all ability levels and multi-cultural backgrounds tend to benefit from attending academically successful, high socio-economic status schools. This finding accentuates the importance of school contextual data as well as value added data.

Goldstein and Thomas (1996) assert that judgements about school performance and effectiveness relative to one another need caution and that a blunt ‘league table’ approach has little justification. In addition to the introduction of contextual factors to the school improvement debate, there is also the need to consider the individual school’s environment. Richmond (1996) uses school performance criteria established by the Education Reform Act (1988) to examine school effectiveness in fifty British secondary schools in a large metropolitan area. His findings suggest that the objective criteria are highly sensitive to contextual and socio-economic factors.

A robust challenge to the central orthodoxy of school-effectiveness work, that schools should strive to become more consistent learning environments, has been offered by Jamieson and Wikeley (2000). They are insistent that educators must
first address rampant socio-economic disparities. Larchdale School is a prime example, having clear elements of social disadvantage and many students who have no educational or career aspirations. These factors, although fundamentally important, have been neglected in school improvement and effectiveness literature, and it is important to set out in detail a theoretical framework by which these environmental characteristics can be analysed. Emery and Trist (1965) developed a classic typology of organisational environments using *uncertainty* and *clustering*. Hoy and Miskel (1987) extended this typology to the organisational contexts of schools, with four environments:

(a) *placid, randomised* where the school is least affected by its external environment for example, in a small stable rural community with a consistent intake

(b) *placid, clustered* where the school is more affected by its external environment for example, one in a growing rural community with at least one other established, competing school in the community but again having a consistent intake

(c) *disturbed, reactive* where the school is greatly affected by its external environment, for example, one in a large, urban community with a large number of competing schools, an unstable population and inconsistent intake

(d) *turbulent field* where the school is extremely endangered by its external environment, for example, the least effective school with a falling roll in a large, but contracting urban community with a large number of competitor schools.

This typology is used here to characterise Larchdale and the other schools featuring in this study. Larchdale is within the turbulent field type but has elements corresponding to the disturbed reactive environment. The nature of an individual school’s context
has marked effects on school leadership. Schon (1984) goes as far as asserting that leadership of effective teams is largely determined by the contextual situation.

In questioning what constitutes an effective school, Mortimore (1998) concludes that judgement of school performance depends on

“…the need to ask three key questions:

- Effectiveness for which outcomes?
- Effectiveness over which period of time?
- Effectiveness for whom?” (Mortimore, 1998, page 320)

Measuring school improvement year-on-year and then setting targets on this data is problematic since school contexts can change radically within a small time frame.

Local demographic changes, for example, the changes to a school’s catchment area imposed by the LEA, or the pressure placed upon a school by its closest neighbour acquiring specialist or Beacon status can lead, over time, to staffing problems and weaker student cohorts that deflate headline performance.

These are key factors that are often neglected in the debate about whether an individual school is improving or declining. ‘Good’ examination results this year may have their roots in actions taken five or even seven years ago and mistakes in admissions policy now may lead to ‘poor’ results in five and seven years time. In this sense it can be claimed that secondary schools are subject to a five (11-16) or seven (11-19) year effectiveness cycle. School effectiveness has been defined on page 24.

**The Substantive Literature on Collegiality**

The substantive literature in educational management theory and practice that refers to and reflects on the nature of collegiality is broad, but for this research study it is essential to categorise it by its interrelationships with the most important
concepts of *legitimation, dissent* and *leadership* for the purposes of further discussion.

Collegiality in the SMT context is highly complex, and essentially different from the concept at work in the practice of other teams. As observed on page 24, Bush (1995) characterises four features of collegial structures that can be applied to the description of a variety of management practices in secondary comprehensive schools. These include:

(i) strong normative orientation, where decision-making is ideally based on democratic principles

(ii) the prominence in decision-making of the professional technical core

(iii) commonality of philosophy, values and practices

(iv) decision-making by consensus rather than by division or dissent.

The classic early example of a secondary comprehensive school where the collegial paradigm dominated the bureaucratic was at Countesthorpe College in Leicestershire. The former principal, John Watts, described the management ethos in essentially normative terms:

“…major policy decisions...have been made by the consensus of the staff. Increasingly, students have contributed to this consensus…I found the policies and the means of determining them attractive.” (Watts, 1976, page 130-131).

The use of the word ‘attractive’ is suggestive of the normative perception of collegiality, but this ideal was relatively short-lived and few secondary school heads have adopted this model. Fink (1999), for example, in presenting a historical case
study of a once-innovative, collegial Canadian high school that, 25 years later, had
"evolved" into a conventional secondary school. Fink asserts that there is an
identifiable and predictable historical pattern that this and other innovative, initially
successful schools generally follow. Fink goes further by implying that early
indications of management stress in response to attrition may prevent further
erosion of a school's vision. Stress tolerance is a concept in the theoretical
framework for investigating collegiality in this study.

Collegiality in the context of the SMT is essentially different to that in other teams
within schools, and within the SMT is difficult to define effectively. Bush (1995)
perhaps provides the closest definition that encompasses collegiality within SMT
practice in asserting that collegiality assumes that organisations construct policy
and make decisions through consultation and discussion leading to consensus and
also asserts that power is shared among those who have a mutual understanding of
common objectives. However, this has its difficulties. Many secondary school teams
are quite autonomous, having the characteristics of what Hackman (1986) described
as self-managing work groups. Hackman sees these as collections of people who take
personal responsibility for the outcomes of their work, monitor their own
performance, manage their own performance and seek ways to improve it, seek
resources from the organization and take the initiative to help others.

Brundrett (1998) sows some astute seeds of doubt here by questioning the reality of
equity in the decision-making processes in terms of control and what he views as
‘contrived legitimation’. Brundrett’s understated but implied sense of inequity in the
supposed collegial process runs alongside the Hargreaves (1994) critique of
collegiality as being an ideal contrived paradigm for management to secure the implementation of desired reform and change.

This *contrived collegiality*, Hargreaves argues, has contradictory features, especially that the implementation of externally imposed agendas and policies reduces the scope for practitioners to question their own practice. Weiss, et. al. (1992) also identify conflict between teachers themselves in shared decision-making. Authority, autocracy, intentionality and accountability of the heads in decision-making can diminish the more democratic aspects of collegial practice. These are seen as essential to effective headship by Brown (1983) who, although writing within the context of primary schools, suggests that

“...the headteacher who perceives his role as being that of a democrat...ensures that school organisation facilitates frequent staff discussion and coordination in order that decisions are made as a collective art.”

(Brown, 1983, page 224)

However, the headteacher who surrenders the authenticity and intentionality of purpose and role may well fail even if there is a real consensus on vision and goals amongst the head and SMT. This could well happen even if the head and SMT are certain where they want it to go, since any uncertainty or ambiguity amongst the SMT about the ability or judgement of the head in the sense of mission in achieving goals will render school improvement problematic.

Peterson and Deal (1998) explore a metaphor for styles of leadership that craft school culture by acting as models, potters, poets, actors and healers. Individuals
within SMTs are ‘prime movers’ in school improvement and they emphasise the need for the creation of a truly ‘collegial ambience’. This view of leadership echoes that of Joyce (1991) who reflects that restructuring, seen as a key factor for school improvement, usually referred to technical, politico-social or occupational orientations and asserted that school improvement research disclosed five approaches opening different passageways to school culture:

*collegiality, research, site-specific information, curriculum initiatives*, and *instructional initiatives*. Joyce contends that, as here, no single approach is best, but interconnections, eg. the contingency based model, are essential for success and so SMTs can be most efficient and effective when simply collaborative, that is, they communicate progress on the tasks that they are delegated rather than the exercise of collective decision-making. If the head cannot convince the SMT of the means to find a way forward, then there will be an implementation gap and very little chance of improvement.

This scenario is described by Bell (1989) investigating the re-construction of the SMT at Oakfields, the secondary school at the focus of his case study, a school formed from the amalgamation of three others. The new head clearly failed to engender a culture of authenticity, intentionality or collegial ambience and collaborative practice within her SMT, and although there is considerable evidence reported by Bell that she had a clear vision for school improvement, the SMT was so dysfunctional that it contributed greatly to the lack of confidence amongst the core staff in her ability to move the school forward.

Guzman (1997) describes a case study of six successful school principals who utilised
collegial practice: establishing open communication systems, actively involved in
developing individualised educational plans, personally conversing with parents of
all students, collaborating with staff on inclusion and discipline policies and
promoting professional development, all factors identified with strong collegiality.

Clear vision, although a necessary condition, is not in itself sufficient to ensure that
organisational goals are attained. Institutional contexts, in particular those with
turbulent field characteristics, throw up crises that fundamentally affect intent.
Duke (1998) reinforces this with a model representing a normative perspective on
leadership where this cannot be understood apart from the organisational context in
which it is exercised and this is further emphasised by Fullan (1998) who clearly
rejects the ‘culture of dependency’ where leaders have an over-reliance on external
consultants and their ‘silver-bullet’ solutions. Brown et. al. (1999) in their
examination of the issues arising from the participation of faculty and department
heads in whole-school decision-making processes, question as to whether such
participation represents true empowerment. The results of their investigation suggest
that whilst, in principle, collegiality offers many persuasive benefits, it is difficult
to truly attain. Its relationship to hierarchical and flattened, horizontal structures
and overall effectiveness was, they perceived, unclear and needs further study.
This contradicts Fullan (1992a), who emphasises the importance of empowerment of
both individuals and teams, asserting that heads can learn much from those that are
led.

Macroft (1989) cites key empowerment components for teachers to be increased
status, highly developed knowledge base, and autonomy in decision making.
For the purposes of this study, empowerment is defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individuals believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it. Empowered schools are organizations that create opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed.

Bush (1995) stresses the importance of the influence of the core educational philosophy of leaders in promoting school values that become increasingly closer to their own beliefs, and their quest to win over the support of their subordinates. This introduces the notion of managed, constructive dissent. Fullan (2000) argues that schools need ‘collaborative diversity’ which, although it may lead to some conflict, it is a preferable alternative to the bland smoothness where difficult issues and problems are avoided only to erupt as crises later. Pascale (1991), writing from a business management perspective, holds that there are dichotomous views of certainty and unanimity, and suggests that rather than disagreements over fundamental issues being resolved once and for all they should be regarded as being in a state of dynamic tension. Fidler (1998) takes this further by asserting that the productive exploration of issues requires that each side of debate has a champion and dissenters look out for signals that support their view. In promoting a culture of persuasive vision-sharing, a head may encounter these champions of dissent. Harling (1984) remarks that charismatic or affective legitimation rests on a profession of faith in the correctness of a course of action, but if the affective legitimation is faulty then the champion of dissent may win the day. A major caveat for visionary, heroic heads is: if the majority of core staff dissent from leadership philosophy and or culture then school
management may become dysfunctional.

The problem of flawed affective legimation is also outlined by Glatter (1997) where inharmonious value sets are imposed: it is essential for heads and their SMTs to reflect on the importance of their school’s contextual factors that affect the school’s development. Glatter asserts that due to the externally driven imperatives, mainstream educational management has become too preoccupied with institutional leadership whilst de-emphasising contextual factors and values. The issue of dissent arising in the context of strategic management practice is highly problematic, since it has micro-political features that may have posed ethical constraints in this ethnography. A classic statement of the influences of micro-politics in schools is made by Hoyle (1986):

“Collegiality is not inherent in the system but is a function of leadership style whereby teachers are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process by benevolent heads rather than as of right.”

(Hoyle, 1986, page 91)

Manz and Angle (1987) studied the introduction of self-managing work groups into an organization that had traditionally relied on individual self-management. In the context of a purely business-orientated environment, an independent property and casualty insurance firm, self-management work groups were found to threaten the personal control and autonomy of employees and to result in reduced services to customers. Self-managed work groups were introduced in this firm without worker participation or approval and were used as a means of increasing management control. Some leadership within educational management contexts can be seen as
similar to this and very different to the Manz and Sims (1984) description the leader in an organization with self-managing work groups as an unleader, "one who leads others to lead themselves" (page 411). This reinforces the distributed leadership paradigm espoused by Gronn (1999) and Robinson (2000), who assert that leadership is embedded in task performance and is required to be distributed because team members are required to take their share of delegated tasks in the organisation. Delegation then becomes an art of problem recognition and structuring. The leader who presents ill-structured problems for individuals or the team as a whole in delegation risks failure even if their vision is sound, accentuating the need for coherence in the definition of tasks by the head.

Distributed leadership requires what Drach-Zahary and Somech (2002) term as high functional heterogeneity in team dynamics that encompasses diversity of roles. In this functional sense an SMT ought to be highly effective as an expert group. ‘Unleadership’ in organisations can propagate a culture of self-management with working groups operating with a bottom-up perspective.

“The leader's job is to teach and encourage subordinates to lead themselves effectively.”

(Manz & Sims, 1987, p.121)

Skills that leaders working with self-managing groups must develop have been listed by Hackman (1986), and Lawler (1986). Here human relations skills are emphasized over technical skills, including the abilities to build trust, understand group dynamics, develop group members' capacities for autonomy, and empower others.

Vann (1999) researched a particular principal’s leadership challenges and describes
her experiences under the changes implemented recently in England and Wales, and
explains her strategies to solve problems utilising micro-politics to effect positive
outcomes. She had successfully employed tension and confrontation as steps toward
change but had encouraged participation in decision-making. West (1999) explores
similar micro-political factors in school organization and management, suggesting
how micro-political analyses of school cultures and teacher behaviour can be used to
increase school leaders' understanding.

Dissent and conflict management feature in Henkin and Cistone’s (2000) work
on the conflict-management behaviours and strategies used by a sample of principals
in a large urban school district, where differences are resolved through collaborative
problem solving. Their findings show that where heads can be confident in
utilising collegial practice in conflict resolution, it can be highly successful.
Wallace (2000) argues that there are deep issues regarding cultural and political
perspectives within SMTs. Where interaction is harmonious, there is evidence of
shared values and beliefs within a culture of teamwork; where there is conflict there
are incompatible values and beliefs and other SMT members have to accept and
conform to the headteacher’s model. In this way dissent can be seen as essentially two
opposing forces: destructive dissent, that is driven by frustration or dissatisfaction,
and aimed purely at criticism without posing possible alternatives, and constructive
dissent where one or more alternative views or strategies is offered in order to develop
the debate, or offer alternatives.

West (2000) asserts that heads and other managers need to know more about
the link between dissatisfaction of staff and their response to change.
This suggests that forward-thinking and transformational heads will manage and utilise constructive dissent whether or not it is intrinsic or extrinsic. Useful ideas are often seeded by junior staff, untainted by normative thinking. Ball (1987) has argued that the harmonious team paradigm in schools is not supported by research evidence, and sees them as arenas of struggle and intrinsically conflictual. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992) are also critical of the harmonious paradigm, citing the perils of ‘group-think’, the line of least-resistance response yielding incomplete surveys of alternatives.

*Trust* is an important element of SMT practice. With the mounting pressures on senior managers and increasingly militant responses from core staff there is an imperative for SMTs to be very closely bonded and mutually responsive to stresses of practice endured by other team members. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) outline their empirical analysis involving 2741 middle-school teachers and demonstrate that faculty trust is a crucial aspect of an open, healthy school climate. But school climate and leadership behaviour predicting staff trust in the head is seen to differ from predictions of the head’s trust in colleagues.

In a later paper, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), list five faces of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. Here when teachers trust their principals, they usually trust one other and their clients and Henkin and Dee (2001) reinforce this view. They assert that trust is a significant factor in collective action and illustrate the value of trust as a critical factor in effective teamwork in a self-managed school context. Their results suggest that trust depends on individuals' predilections, team composition and emotional bonding within the team.
Although the SMT in any secondary school is important the pre-eminent role of the secondary head in the process of transformation and improvement leads to the following discussion of leadership and its relationship to collegial practice.

The Literature of Leadership

This research has at its core the investigation of how collegial SMT practice impacts on secondary school effectiveness. The important factors under-pinning the strategic management of large secondary schools were outlined in Chapter 1 above, namely:

(i) effective leadership of the head
(ii) strategic coherence within the school
(iii) collaborative and collegial practice
(iv) clarity of purpose and roles.

Analysis of educational leadership features strongly in educational literature suggesting that the effective leadership of the head is an important factor of school effectiveness.

Strong motivational leadership and sharing the corporate vision in a changing culture of pro-active, initiatory and innovative management may be substantially and significantly associated with high levels of school effectiveness, but equally high levels can also be associated with ‘post-heroic’ non-charismatic leadership behaviours and traits where emphasis on setting achievable goals is allied to careful team development utilising collaborative problem solving with shared ownership of decisions. Although the strategic importance of the head is generally accepted in the literature, there have been some antithetical views. Van der Grift (1990)
claimed that the principal has little impact on the school, but this is perhaps too simplistic: Fullan (1992a) presaged transformational leadership by arguing that strong leadership alone is not sufficient to guarantee school effectiveness and there must be empowerment of other colleagues to assume leadership roles in the school, but however, there is a problem in this view that echoes the contrived legitimation described by Brundrett (1998). The values associated with management behaviours of seven school administrators who foster and sustain collegial and democratic practices in schools engaged in restructuring are described by Rusch (1998) who contends that they reject the centrality of role and display values supporting equity, inclusion, mutual influence, empowerment and candour. Rusch develops the argument further by suggesting that these administrators display behaviours and traits that suggest that the ‘principal as expert’ role is irrelevant in democratic institutions. This argument is persuasive and forms the core of the conceptualisation in this dissertation of contingency based headship.

The Concept of Effective Leadership through Contingency Theory

As outlined in the discussion on behaviours and traits on page 26 above, Richmon and Allison (2002) assert that although there has been an increasing focus on the nature and importance of leadership, there is considerable conceptual incoherence pervading leadership inquiry and cite Burns:

“Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomenon on earth”

(Burns, 1978, page 2).

which is also evident in the observation of Leithwood and Duke (1999) that there
is no clear, coherent or universally agreed definition of leadership itself. This is a deep problem in the theory of management as a whole.

The conceptualisation of contingency based headship depends on a mix of *behavioural* and *trait* theories of leadership, and includes strong elements of distributed leadership. According to Richmon and Allison (2002), trait theories identify a variety of human attributes: physical presence, charisma, highly developed social and communication skills, self-confidence and intelligence that have been seen to have had a consistently high correlation with leadership. A problem with such theories is the methodology employed in research to measure the traits of individuals and the effect of these traits on their leadership.

Behavioural theories of leadership attempt to identify those leadership behaviours that have been identified and accepted by both researchers and subordinates of leaders as key influences in improving organisational effectiveness, and are characterised by actions, for example, exercise of different styles of leadership: instructional, moral, participative, transactional, transformational or contingent.

Contingency based leadership adopts a pragmatic approach to organisational context as outlined by Fred E. Fiedler.

"According to Fiedler, the effectiveness of a leader is determined by the degree of match between a dominant trait of the leader and the favorableness of the situation for the leader.... The dominant trait is a personality factor causing the leader to either relationship-oriented or task-orientated."

(Dunham, 1984, page 365).
This flexible approach using the interaction of leader personality and institutional opportunity to promote greater effectiveness is a mix of the traits and behaviours outlined above, including contingent behaviours. It embodies a humanistic element as identified by Argyris (1964), where the leader offers the maximum opportunity for subordinates to develop the effectiveness of organisations by realising their individual leadership and management potentials. It also encompasses three styles of leadership identified by Leithwood and Duke (1999):

- **transformational** leadership, that
  “…focuses on the commitments and capacities of organizational members”

- **participative** leadership, which
  “…stresses the decision-making processes of the group…”

- **managerial** leadership which emphasises
  “…the functions, task, or behaviours of the leader…”

(Leithwood and Duke, 1999, page 48, pages 51 and page 53 respectively),

The participative style of leadership is key to contingency based leadership and its relationship to establishing enhanced teamwork and effectiveness within secondary school senior management teams. Participative leadership may involve collective decision-making or the sharing of power. However, Noguera (2004) warns that contextual disadvantages, such as poor student aspiration, can diminish the capacity for transformational leadership.

Hayes (1995) has asserted that participative leadership has become popular in practice and described a two approaches: *distributed* leadership stressing delegation, and *managerial* leadership tasks, both contributing to organizational effectiveness.
Hallinger (1992) promotes the view that effective functionality in management is dependent on effective leadership, particularly in times of organizational change. Contingency based headship incorporates elements of the styles of leadership identified from *emotional intelligence* by Goleman (2000, pages 78-90):

*Coercive*, using force and power to influence individuals in realising goals,

*Authoritative*, utilising knowledge, personality and charisma as a leader

*Affiliative*, developing a critical friendship network amongst colleagues

*Democratic*, allowing consensus to influence decision-making

*Pace-setting*, leading pro-actively from the front

*Coaching*, educating others in the skills of leadership.

Allied to these traits are four capabilities:

self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills.

Allix (2000) warns that although transformational leadership stresses the cultural, moral and educative nature of the leader-follower relationship, it may be abused and practiced for devious purposes, for example, more for domination than democratic engagement and collective decision-making.

In this context Nir (2000) has investigated the extent that principals' managerial behaviour is related to their beliefs about control, and argues that there is a negative relation between an extreme locus of control and those perspectives used by individuals for strategic and long-term plans, stating that 'extreme control’ can produce strategic plans with shorter perspectives. An interesting attempt at reconciling the theoretically opposing concepts of bureaucracy and collegiality is
offered by Hoy and Sweetland (2000) who view bureaucracy as either alienating or facilitative by creating a new construct called ‘enabling bureaucracy’. Heads can formalise procedures and hierarchical structures but they should support and empower core staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. These conceptualisations of relationships between power, bureaucracy and collegiality impact on the visionary leadership of heads and points further to the dichotomous nature of power in the processes of leading. The limits of SMTs not being able to handle the pressures of whole school management within a primary sector setting are clearly identified by Evans (1998), who cites time pressure as an important problem contributing to lack of effective communication within SMTs, and within the secondary sector by Ribbins (1997) whose study of thirty-four heads found that deputy headship was an unpleasant and inadequate preparation for headship.

**Authenticity and Followership**

The concept of *authenticity* developed by Duignan and Bhindi (1997), which embodies *authoritative* leadership identified by Goleman (2000), highlights the centrality of self to effective leadership. They also outline concerns about lack of leadership integrity and the artifice and deception characterizing many contemporary organizations, reinforcing the rhetoric of strategic management practice. To avoid it Gronn (1996) asserts that school leaders should motivate *followership*, and later Harris and Willower (1998) present an interesting study of follower perception testing theoretical hypotheses concerning principals' own optimism, their own teachers’ perceptions of that optimism, and school effectiveness. A warning here is sounded by Leonard (1999), when investigating notions of what is shared and contested at one urban Canadian elementary school. There was very strong
evidence that some value orientations manifested by teachers were compatible with the school culture but that others were clearly in conflict with it. Her findings provide grounded insights into that particular school’s cultural dynamics and complexities. This dichotomy between heads and SMTs perceptions of optimism of their school’s effectiveness on one hand and that of sub-groups of core teaching staff on the other will be discussed further in Chapter 4, which discusses the Analysis and Findings from the Larchdale Case Study (page 107).

Although popular, the Goleman concepts of emotional intelligence need to be applied with care. Cobb and Mayer (2000) warn that educational practice involving emotional intelligence should be based on solid research, not sensationalist claims. But they do view the acquiring and teaching of emotional reasoning as highly influential, but emotional intelligence, in itself, cannot provide the head with methods to handle dissent, promote collegial ambience or nurture followership amongst the SMT. But it can provide a reflective mode of analysis for collegiality in SMTs, and can be built into the model of contingency based leadership, as the ability of the head to foster the core set of individuals within the leadership hierarchy to work collaboratively on decision-making but ensuring that the head promotes authenticity of vision and mission, manages dissent and cultivates this followership within the team.

The centrality, complexity and typology of school leadership is distinguished from that of non-school leaders by Greenfield (1995) where leaders need to be highly authentic to enable them to influence all colleagues through a complex negotiation of moral, instructional, political, interpersonal and transformational role demands. This again echoes Fiedler’s concept of a contingency theory of leadership.
**Transactional and Transformational Leadership Behaviours**

Interactions between leaders and followers may take several forms, according to Burns (1978), and these represent fundamental processes in the collegial practice of SMTs. Transactional leadership can be defined as representing exchange relationships in which

"one person takes the initiative in making contact with others
for the purpose of an exchange of valued things."

(Burns, 1978, page 19)

What is valued in the exchange tends to represent the immediate self-interest of those involved. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, represents a relationship in which leaders and followers transcend, to some extent, their immediate self-interest. The parties engage with each other

"in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another
to higher levels of motivation and morality"

(Burns, 1978, p. 20).

Schein (1985), in an important discourse on vision and organisational cultures, cautions against equating organizational culture with concepts like values, philosophy, or climate. Contextual culture underpins and determines these.

Schein (1985) goes further: when new organizations form, the founders or initial leaders play a key role in shaping culture. Their intentions and values come to be

"a shared, consensually validated set of definitions that are
passed on to new members as 'the correct way to define
the situation’…"

(Schein, 1985, page 50)
As the organization matures, however, its innate cultural forces begin to exert greater influence over leaders, eventually affecting everything they do, think and feel. Leaders are urged not to assume that culture can be easily manipulated:

"Culture controls the manager more than the manager controls culture, through the automatic filters that bias the manager's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings…" (Schein, 1985, page 314)

This suggests that the sweeping, radical changes expected through the implied isomorphism that is applied to the arrival of a new head with the forming of a new organisation, cannot proceed at once since the organisational cultures are so set. Authenticity and legitimacy are extremely important in the leadership of heads. Chell (1985) notes that senior colleagues perceptions of legitimacy became a crucial basis for differentiating between successful and unsuccessful leaders, reinforcing the concepts of authoritative leadership propounded by Goleman and that of authentic leadership defined by Bhindi and Duignan (1997).

Cognitive analysis of leadership is highly interesting. Howard Gardner (1985) described his interest in the connections of leadership and mind and how cerebral thinking amongst leaders can contribute to the development of ideas and how these ideas can influence thinking. Gardiner considers background narratives and anecdotes that true leaders create and that, over the longer span of time, create them as icons of leadership; yet he identifies the relationship between the leader and the led – the coming together of the minds of leaders and followers and how they interact. These ideas again reflect the holistic nature of contingency based leadership.
Leaders as Problem Solvers

Leithwood (1995) conceptualises leaders as "problem-finders and problem-solvers with varying levels of expertise"

(Leithwood, 1995, page 118)

In further development of the cognitive approach to leadership and management, Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) review their efforts to analyse and understand more fully how expert educational leaders address problem solving. Admitting that Leithwood's (1995) original studies ignored values, they add, "It was not until we began frequently tripping over them in our data that we began to realize their central importance…"


Effective leadership entails taking heed of what followers are thinking and feeling. O'Toole (1995) rejects notions of leadership that treat followers solely as the means by which leaders’ ends are achieved, a kind of cannon fodder for leaders actions. Being responsive to followers, of course, is no simple matter. Recognizing that followers have differing and conflicting needs and a natural resistance to change O'Toole (1995) stipulates that the purpose of leadership is to create "…a values-based umbrella large enough to accommodate the various interests of followers, but focused enough to direct all their energies in pursuit of a common goal…"

(O'Toole, 1995, page 11)

O'Toole acknowledges his debt to Burns (1978) and his argument that moral leadership, by definition, is leadership based on the wants, needs, aspirations and
values of followers. Like Burns, O'Toole expresses an abiding faith that goals can be identified that embrace the interests of leaders and most followers.

**Moral Leadership**

The critical nature of the concept of the moral authority of leaders is discussed by Sergiovanni (1992), who noted that many educators have lost implicit faith in traditional notions of leadership. He attributes this problem to two factors: (a) failure to recognize the relationship between leadership and ideas, and (b) overemphasis on technical-rational authority to the exclusion of moral authority (Sergiovanni, 1992, page 3). Sergiovanni's prescription for schools is a concept of leadership focused on outcomes rather than compliance with regulations. The implication is that outcome-based leadership necessitates a moral orientation but this is counter to the current value-set for secondary heads in their necessity to comply with externally imposed rules.

**The Distinction between Leadership and Management**

The distinction between leadership and management is an important one, since it defines an essential difference in the roles of a head and other members of SMT. Kouzes and Posner (1987) argue change agency distinguishes leaders from managers:

"When we think of leaders, we recall times of turbulence, conflict, innovation, and change. When we think of managers, we recall times of stability, harmony, maintenance and constancy."

(Kouzes and Posner, 1987, page 32)

The perception amongst subordinates of the means of how leaders succeed in realising
their goals in attaining their mission and vision may be almost as important as the ends of the mission itself. Although most studies of transformational leadership have focused on outcomes that are assumed to be meaningful to followers, Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) point out that much leadership research, and particularly that research that focuses on heroic or charismatic leadership has concentrated on perceived leader behaviour. They go further by associating the strength and effectiveness of a leader not only with the observed and validated competence and proficiency of leadership, but also with its ethical quality. They state this eloquently:

"The leader's efforts and strategies in the areas of planning, controlling, and coordinating are justified and assume meaning and significance only to the extent that these are intended to serve the interests of the organization and its members…"

(Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996, page 34).

Clarity of purpose can be seen as an underlying driving force that the headteacher, in exercising visionary leadership, can exert within the SMT, and the wider management of the school, to promote coherence. The concept of clarity of purpose can be subsumed within the concept of intentionality described by Bhindi and Duignan (1997). Intentionality is that combination of robust, pro-active and clear thinking in leaders that is essential to cultural transformation. A critique of robust, authentic and intentional leadership that goes a long way to defining the essence of what might be termed the ‘post-heroic’ style is offered by Gronn (2000), arguing for radically
re-conceptualising leadership. Gronn describes a form of leadership which is a ‘distributed’, rather than a focused, phenomenon. Evolving divisions of labour in organizations are the prime mover for emerging patterns of distributed leadership. Harris (2004) rightly questions, however, the efficacy and clarity of distributed leadership and asserts that the concept requires further research. Odden and Wohlstetter (1995), propose a model identifying four testable features of strategic school management that influence organisational coherence and clarity of purpose: power dispersal, information dissemination, professional development and accomplishment reward. These concepts are central to the theoretical frameworks for analysing collegial practice in SMTs in this study.

Heads own perceptions of what constitutes most effective strategies and leadership and management behaviours and traits are also important. Caldwell (1998) examines school reform's effects on principals' professional leadership culture and, drawing on Australian research findings, shows that principals felt that leadership was more about empowering than being heroic and that this made them more effective as leaders, again a denial of the rhetoric of the ‘superhead’ or ‘superleader’ described by Manz and Sims (1991) as having

“the strength and wisdom of many persons”

(Manz and Sims, 1991, page 22)

Reflection on the literature of school improvement and on research outcomes suggests that well managed schools with effective systems and workable policies may, provided that the conditions for school effectiveness are satisfied, be judged to be improving even if there is an absence of a conscious or clearly identifiable
dynamic of cultural change. In these schools there may well be coherence, consistency and clarity of purpose but also a strong level of ambiguity amongst different interest sets. In other schools, there may be an over-zealous approach to engendering change which has created turbulence and dislocation, even though in recent history the school can be identified as effective.

There is a danger that the rhetoric of contrived collegiality can promote a reductive, normative pre-determined paradigm that collegial practice is always a pre-requisite, and a sufficient condition, for ensuring school effectiveness and improvement. This is clearly exposed as false both in the literature and in the findings of this study. This points to the need for a new typology for collegial practice in the senior management teams of secondary schools.

Two further important strands of strategic management have been identified by Glover, et al. (1996) in their study of resource management and school efficiency in four very effective schools. One strand focuses on rational, task-orientated functionality and in the research is associated with more bureaucratic, hierarchical and autocratic leadership traits. The other is more people-centred, collegial, collaborative and transformational. In later work, Levacic, et.al. (1999) assert that the strengths of the head should be complemented by the combined strengths of the SMT. Inherent in this argument is the notion that there is at least one member of SMT who is required to be essentially rational, (eg. the financial or timetabling guru) and at least one other who is ‘insightful’. Levacic suggests that the rational operator should be the head. Yet, is it not possible that insightful in this particular context be a metaphor for contingency based leadership?
There are a number of serious questions that now arise related to this rationalist analysis of functionality. Suppose there is no cerebral nor insightful member of SMT? Is the cerebral operator omniscient, either the head or another all-powerful operator?

Busher and Saran (1994) explore these issues within a much deeper theoretical framework for exploring leadership models (structural-functional, open-systems, cultural-pluralism and political), reflecting those of Duignan and Macpherson (1993) for educational leadership consisting of three types: conducted in an essentially material world, exercised as a cultural agency in a social world and, crucially, as reflective practice in an abstract world of holistically grounded rules. The latter concept is interesting and lies at the core of this study. It is reinforced by 360-degree feedback as a reflective tool for heads, particularly if this process is facilitated by a critical friend but this process can be self-defeating. Dyer (2001) promotes this tool as it provides educational leaders with data to help them perceive, reflect, articulate, and analyse their own behaviour from a full circle of constituents, including themselves. This technique enhances decision making as a crucial skill for school leaders and Tarker and Hoy (1998) contend that there is no single best decision-making approach, but a whole set of approaches, including administrative, garbage-can and micro-political, suggesting that school leaders apply contingent, or, from the tentative suggestion from this dissertation, contingency based methods which allow rational decision making.

**Leadership and School Context**

The on-the-ground, everyday management of student behaviour can wear down senior managers to an extent where reflective practice seems to be in a different
world-picture, as noted by Ribbins (1997). However, leadership can be fun, sometimes. Azzara (2001), in a case study of one US school principal, felt that personal contact is the key to success and that effective heads make their school community a family and expand on their administrative style for dealing with people. In that research examples of people-centred characteristics were viewed to be developing a community theme, returning phone calls from colleagues and parents efficiently, saving bad news for Monday, and having fun!!!

Draper and McMichael (2000) interviewed 10 British secondary headteachers to examine headship approaches among those appointed during the past 3 years. Numerous contextual factors impinge on new principals: current events, devolved management, catchment area, management courses, staff attitudes and commitment and the rate and style of managed change. Collegiality is a key factor in many school leadership traits from the survey by Evans (2001), but sinister evidence of contrived collegiality is discussed by Somech (2002), who identifies positive motivation rather than expertise as a criterion for heads when including colleagues into collaboration. Blase and Blase (2002) paint an even darker picture in their description of ways that teaching staff can be mistreated by their principal. Rooney (2000) discusses hurdles to new principals' success and suggests that all principals respect existing contexts of school culture, including ghosts and heroes, realise that working relationships will change and anticipate isolation and overwork. Meeting individual teachers, forging a locus of power, keeping central administrators informed, listening and learning, finding mentors and picking battles are useful strategies. In the past five years new school management structures have been implemented: Leadership Groups.
These were ushered in through the Department of Education and Employment Teaching Reform Proposals (DfEE, 1998), and data analysed in this research suggests that at Larchdale and in the wider sample of 37 schools the LGs work micro-politically within the core and extension model SMT, for example, the assistant heads meeting together informally, unscheduled, with no printed agenda or minutes.

The SHA published a survey (SHA, 2003) that collected data from a wide range of secondary senior managers on the nature of the leadership group in their schools. The most significant finding from the survey relating to this study is that:

“In spite of the trend towards flatter management structures generally, most schools appear to retain a fairly hierarchical structure with the head firmly at the top of the pyramid.”

(Cox, 2003, page 9)

These findings, from a very large sample, are a serious challenge to the collaborative paradigm and embodies the rhetoric of collegiality within secondary school SMTs. Since the structure and effectiveness of all secondary schools depends on the functionality and cohesiveness of a number of different teams, this identifies a serious problem for heads. Senior management teams, now deemed ‘Leadership Groups’ (LGs), curriculum (faculty/department) teams and pastoral (house/year) teams, are all essential to the effective organisation of a secondary school and will all have differing elements of collegial structure at play.

Higher levels of collegiality, especially in predominantly self-managing teams, has been seen to be likely to constitute a threat to the authority of the head. Southworth (1988), for example, described an idealised collegial school in which
small working groups of teachers fed back collectively to the whole school forum for
decision-making and that an outcome of this approach would be to reduce the pre-
dominance of the head. In the primary sector, the collegial paradigm, applied with
different levels of emphasis, has had a significant effect. Collegial structures have
been important features in the management of primary schools in England and Wales
during the past twenty years. Campbell (1985) declares that

“…teachers committed to collegiality…derive strong personal and
professional satisfactions from their involvement in, and contribution
to its [the school’s] continuance. ..[ ].. Collegiality can survive the
departure of the head…”

(Campbell, 1985, page 44).

The final phrase reinforces the view that the dominant position of the head can be
threatened by strong collegial structures. Given that both bureaucratic and collegial
structures are at work in schools, it is then necessary to return to the issue of how
dependent school improvement is on the mix of the two fundamental but opposed
conceptual models of bureaucratic and collegial structures in styles of management.
An essential aspect of this research is the possible identification and elucidation of
elements of the collegial paradigm within secondary school leadership and
management cultures that promote and achieve both perceived and objectively
measurable levels of school effectiveness.

Setting school external environments within the conceptual framework of
uncertainty and clustering developed by Emery and Trist (1965), there is at least one
scenario that works against internal cultural change. The turbulent field
characteristic, where a school is extremely dislocated by its external environment, for
example, when it is seen as the least effective in a contracting, zero aspiration urban community, has far greater implications for its improvement than promoting collegiality within management practice. Larchdale, the focus of this study, is firmly within this category.

Quicke (2000) identifies a crucial failing of the normative, positivist heurism of the school improvement and effectiveness paradigm in its inadequate appreciation of the cultural diversity and cultural politics of individual schools. Quicke redefines professionalism in the contemporary context and suggests ways to enhance the learning capability of the leaders of educational institutions. This new professionalism stresses the use of democratic collaboration to confront bureaucratic constraints and disciplinary power in an uncertain age with new professionals creating and recreating collaborative cultures and reflexive practice. Moore, et.al. (2002) reinforce this by highlighting pragmatism and constancy of ideology during mandated change.

**Critical incidents** are also very important to the effectiveness of school management. They may be a highly positive, such as a successful school production worthy of celebration, as outlined by Woods (1993), but can be extremely traumatic. Kibble (1999) describes a number of critical incident scenarios, citing an investigation into guidance and support offered schools by 17 English LEAs, which found considerable variations. Kibble prescribes that every school should have a senior manager responsible for critical incident planning. Scholzman (2001) proposes counselling strategies after critical incidents such as the 9/11 outrages. Angelides and West (2000) explore the nature of school cultures and how they affect daily classroom encounters, and illustrate how critical incidents can be analysed to understand influences shaping
practice. The serious critical incident at Larchdale involving the death of a student whilst truanting, discussed on page 131, had important repercussions for the head and SMT.

**The Paradigmatic Control Debate**

Finally, it is important to briefly outline the ongoing debate concerning the political control of leadership paradigms. The government agenda for educational reform has introduced externally-driven and politically controlled features of the education and professional development of school leaders and managers.

School leadership education in England has developed in part as an academic discipline but also as a response by the academic educational management establishment to accommodate government policy whilst incorporating features from the school improvement movement. Glatter and Kydd (2003) warn that the NCSL “…celebrates and promotes genuine debate and pluralism…”

(Glatter and Kydd, 2003, page 240)

Gunter and Ribbins (2003) echo this view by questioning what is this leadership and management knowledge and who are its holders. Fielding (1997) criticises the instrumental perspective as the preoccupation of too much school effectiveness research that explores with increasing sophistication areas in school life with merely transitory or politically expedient results. It is possible to argue against this, since pragmatic tools enable headteachers and their SMTs engender change for improvement. Some of these tools have more recently become part of the core curriculum for national school leadership development initiatives including the
NPQH. The dichotomous nature of the competence-based approach to that of the reflective practitioner-as-researcher paradigm of educational management research has arisen in the need for high levels of expertise among heads and SMTs in coherent strategic development planning and the management of change for improvement. In this can be seen a greater emphasis on effective machine bureaucracy with less on the development of teams incorporating the ideal of effective collaborative practice, ie. collegial structures, in their mission for school improvement.
Chapter 3

Methodology

This Chapter, on Methodology, is structured in two parts. The first part, Methodological Foundations, discusses the methodological basis for this research as a review of the relevant methodological literature underpinning the research design and describes the development of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks utilised in this study. The second part, Choice of Methods, describes the methods employed in each of the two dimensions of the project in turn: the single site Larchdale Case Study and the Wider Context Investigation, with their conceptual basis identified within the literature.

Methodological Foundations

The methodological processes for this project have been carefully chosen to effectively address the three research questions for the study.

These three research questions are:

(i) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single –site case study secondary school, Larchdale?

(ii) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more generally?

(iii) what is the impact of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on their effectiveness?

This discussion of the methodological basis for the research project incorporates a review of the methodological foundations underpinning the research design for this study and a description of methods employed.
The methodology for this research project is based on a variety of qualitative methods and drawing upon elements of *Grounded Theory* (GT). The research methods employed to address the three research questions are, in order:

(i) research based on ethnographic fieldwork focusing on a qualitative single-site case study with the researcher as participant observer deriving data from a variety of individuals and documents and analysing this data utilising elements of grounded theory, termed the Larchdale Case Study

(ii) content analysis of a wide variety of documentation from a wider sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools, content analysis of two focus group response transcripts and of data from a mapping exercise on behaviours and traits conducted with the group of experienced senior managers or advisers termed *Key Participants* (KPs), with the researcher as both interested researcher and consultant, termed the Wider Context Investigation

(iii) inferences from the analysis of data from both the Larchdale Case study and the Wider Context Investigation are utilised to address the final research question investigating the impact of SMT collegiality on school effectiveness.

**Grounded Theory**

In this research use is made of *grounded theory* (GT). This was developed initially by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In GT the imperative for research is the generation of theory both ‘in situ’ and by ‘comparative method’, where similar processes are observed and recorded in different settings and developed. Theoretical constructs follow. GT is a post-positivist methodology, and although there have been major
criticisms of grounded theory, for example Ball (1990), from the positivist standpoint, it has proved the best pragmatic basis on which to proceed in the Larchdale enquiry. This investigation has also proceeded from a hermeneutical standpoint, which contends that social life must be understood from within by the individuals perceiving it; clarifying meanings and conceptual connections leading to trustworthy inferences and ultimate understanding differing from the positivist approach utilising empirical methods and emphasising the prescience of causal laws.

Grounded theory, allied with the hermeneutical view, allows a qualitative approach which can be termed an interpretative naturalistic model, and this allows analysis of phenomena based on assumptions that accommodate a small number of subjects.

In *Doing Grounded Theory*, Glaser (1999) sees conceptualization as the core category of Grounded Theory. The researcher can generate emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns, which are denoted by categories and their properties. There is an essential continuing comparison process, which is designed to generate concepts from all data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) view the two most important properties of conceptualization for generating Grounded Theory are that concepts are independent of specific time, place, and people, and that concepts have enduring appeal.

*Collegiality* is a concept in this construction, since it is independent of time, place or people and, as identified in the literature from page 39 above, has enduring appeal. Strauss and Corbin (1998) are rightly critical of pure GT as descriptive research as it cannot be related to any hypotheses underlying its subject because of the denial of any conceptual handle. Utilisation of grounded theory must, therefore, address the criticism of Strauss and Corbin (1998), where the application of undisciplined abstraction leads to concepts which bear little relation to the social world to which
they refer. Concepts must be securely grounded and the Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory methodology is used in this study to the extent that categories are derived out of data and, as they emphasise, in grounded theory, a researcher does not need to have a pre-conceived theory in mind except if the aim is not to elaborate or extend existing theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, page 12). However, as this research was focused on experienced school manager’s and adviser’s beliefs and practices the research required pre-determined research questions and an adaptation of the Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory methodology with content analysis was followed. The conceptions, value orientations, and understandings of those being studied have been discovered through personal observation and shared communication.

Information has been acquired from individuals at separate times to establish patterns of behaviour, attitudes, and motivations. Qualitative inquiry has operated in real situations and contexts at Larchdale utilising researcher-subject interaction to uncover information not otherwise easily accessible. The research has also utilised several sources of documentary data from Larchdale and 37 other secondary schools, including historical and current documents, transcripts of focus group and interview responses and field notes from observations. The researcher as SMT member at Larchdale created many rich opportunities for reflection on current practice.

**Philosophical Perspectives**

It is necessary to set out the philosophical agenda for ethnographic qualitative research in order to embed this study in firm methodological principles. Gronn and Ribbins (1996) criticise traditional research methodologies, in particular questionnaire surveys, which they contend ignore the role of institutional contexts in
defining and structuring human agency. The case study approach of biography and ethnography acknowledges the importance of context in investigating leadership systems. Greater clarity and reflexivity has developed in strands of thinking in these areas of concept formation during the course of the study and, following Schon (1987) there has needed to be a conscious, deliberate step from ‘knowing-in-action’ to ‘reflection-in-action’ in the use of ethnographic field work in research. For example, Ball (1990) warns that:

“One of the failings of much ethnography that is based on interactionist theory is the non-application of theory reflexively to the process of research.”

(Ball, 1990, page 45)

Although Ball is writing from a positivist perspective, and this study is embedded in the post-positivist, hermeneutical tradition, it has been important during the course of the inquiry to address this issue by greater reflexive analysis, moving away from an acceptance of the collegial paradigm to a more critical stance.

The objectivity and validity of the analytical methods utilised in this study had to be questioned in an effort to move away from what Eisner (1992) calls ‘naïve realism’ in trying to explain direct causal links between collegial practice in SMTs, effective leadership, management coherence and school effectiveness and improvement. Objectivity is problematic in the researcher-as-practitioner model but as discussed by Heikkinen, et.al., (2001) truth theories in the context of research support objectivity and validity by focusing on truth as correspondence, truth as good practice, truth as coherence and paradigmatic truth. They assert the validity of small scale research by describing how these elements of truth can be uncovered and be
supported by substantive literature.

In this study there has been a conscious effort to address the problem of the double hermeneutic as described by Giddens (1984), where we can retrospectively account for, or explain, observed actions or inter-actions within our theoretical frameworks, but we should not use our explanations causally. Giddens suggests that there must be an intentional departure from establishing a deterministic, set world-picture towards a continuously reflexive interpretation of data. This has been carefully utilised in this study. Ball (1990) asserts that ethnography should be accompanied by a ‘research biography’, that is, a reflexive account of the conduct of the research by a continuous drawing on field notes. This is used extensively and is the basis for the account of the findings in this study. The processes involved are described in detail on page 85 below. Tricoglus (2001) describes further principles followed in this research drawing on ideas on critical enquiry set out by Lather (1986) accentuating data trustworthiness, but rejecting set, pre-determined canonical theoretical frameworks in favour of continual re-conceptualisation during the research process.

**The Problem of Generalisation**

Large scale quantitative research studies, eg. Sammons, et. al. (1994) have high levels of validity and generalisability of findings that can be justified, according to Bassey (1999) by the large scale sampling leading to statistically objective generalisation from multiple case analysis. This research project has been more problematic in terms of generalisability and although this was originally supported by ‘fuzzy generalisation’ after Bassey (1999), analysis has been carried out adopting criteria from Hammersley (1992), Evers and Lakomski (1991) and Guba and Lincoln (1989).
Hammersley (1992) includes plausibility and credibility (whether claims are plausible or credible), coherence (whether evidence and argument are coherent), intentionality (whether a study is credible in terms of its stated intentions); and relevance (whether the research findings are relevant to issues of legitimate public concern).

Evers and Lakomski (1991), arguing from a position of coherentist realism, suggest that research should be judged by whether it observes the virtues of simplicity, consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, conservativeness and fecundity. Guba and Lincoln (1989) substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of trustworthiness, containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Data trustworthiness is a key methodological concept in this study, because although the research is small scale and conjectural, by use of audit trails for inferences made from evidence gathered and careful checking when coding and categorizing transcribed field-notes it can be argued that there is acceptable data trustworthiness of inferences.

The above sets of criteria suggested by Hammersley (1992), Evers and Lakomski (1991) and Guba and Lincoln (1981) overlap with and support each other in determining whether research is representative, corresponds with some external reality, is validated by respondents from the research setting, is grounded in the data, is consistent, coherent and relevant to the field and so researcher interaction has followed the pattern outlined by Hutchinson (1988): the researcher studies the social milieu in order to

“…describe the social structure, observe patterns of behaviour
and begin to understand the environment…”

(Hutchinson, 1988, page 130)

**Theoretical Framework Development**

This section examines the theoretical frameworks developed during the course of the research. The first theoretical framework arose from the processes of grounded theory exemplified by Strauss and Corbin (1998), as described in detail above on page 73. A series of developing categories arose initially from reading and re-reading elements of the substantive educational management literature described in Chapter 2 above and also management documentation from the wider sample of 37 secondary schools.

These categories were modified by considering:

(i) content analysis of Larchdale SMT role maps and SDPs
(ii) content analysis of transcripts of two focus group discussions
(iii) content analysis of personal diary logs
(iv) analysis of results from the mapping exercise on four key participants
(v) participant observation of SMT and other meetings at Larchdale.

**Category Development and Inferential Audit Trails**

Through the processes of research identified above and incorporating ideas that emerged during the initial study, literature review and focus group discussion, categories emerged with additional categories being added during the process of analysis. Coding of instances of categories within individual’s response data and also within school documentation was undertaken using two-character codes and
all the final categories identified together with their codes are tabulated in the table below:

**Table 3.1 Identifiable Categories of Concepts with Coding for Data Annotation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Category</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political re-structuring through re-defining LGs</td>
<td>PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict characterised by destructive dissent</td>
<td>DD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict characterised by constructive dissent</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluidity-turbulence from SMT changes</td>
<td>FT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT stress-tolerance</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision shared amongst SMT</td>
<td>VS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative decision-making amongst SMT</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical incident</td>
<td>CI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The categories in Table 3.1 form the essential and key theoretical framework for this study. Data collected for both the Larchdale Case Study and the Wider Context Study has been analysed utilising this theoretical framework. Inferences have been made on the basis of identifying an example of a recorded instance of a behaviour, trait or style and then embedding this evidence within a category of Table 3.1.

In Chapter 4 outlining data analysis and findings, further analysis has proceeded by developing the *audit trail* of inferences, from the recorded outcomes of the research strategies, for example, analysis of school documents and responses from observation of meetings and focus group discussions, and then embedding these examples within an extended tabular form of the theoretical framework of Table 3.1, as in Table 4.1 on page 107 below, where the source of evidence and the month of occurrence have been incorporated into the theoretical framework. In Chapter 4 on Analysis and Findings this has been done for each dimension of the research design and analysis addressing the three research questions ie. the Larchdale Case Study, the Wider Context investigation and finally Gauging the Impact of SMT Collegiality.
**Saturation of Categories**

An important principle in the application of grounded theory, as advocated by Glaser (1999), is that although further possible examples of categories, behaviours and traits might be generated by continually re-reading documents and transcripts it is likely that there will be a final and ultimate ‘saturated state’ where no new categories or examples of a particular category emerge. This cannot be claimed for his study due to the constraints of completion of this dissertation, but a tentative claim can be made that most of the key conceptualisation into categories has been considered and accomplished, through re-visiting and re-analysing transcribed field notes.

**The Contingency based Head Concept**

The analysis of data using the categories of Table 3.1 led to the development of a conceptual typology for the authoritative and authentic contingency based head. Table 3.2 below lists the twenty one leadership and management behaviours, traits and indicators identified and utilised in the mapping exercise described in detail below on page 97. These behaviours and traits were gradually conceptualised through reading and re-reading Larchdale observation data and transcribed field-notes and school documentation from the sample of 37 secondary schools and underpinned by the literature focusing on leadership (page 50 above). These behaviours and traits provide a structure and conceptual framework for the identification and analysis of the bureaucratic, collegial and micro-political elements of senior management practice at Larchdale and in the wider sample of secondary schools.
Table 3.2  Key Management and Leadership Behaviours and Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour/Trait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  SMT is effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Good SMT working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Decision-making is collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Collegial practice is seen as preferable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Head has strong sense of vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Vision is shared effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Consultative systems are effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  The head is committed to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  SMT is stress-tolerant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The SDP is coherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. SDP subject to effective monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. SMT communication is effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The head displays transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The head displays instructional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The head displays transactional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The head displays effective leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The school has measurable effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The school has measurable improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The school is subjectively effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The school is subjectively improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The SMT is responsive to core staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These behaviours and traits are related to the categories in Table 3.1 by examining data, for example an SMT meeting log as in Redacted L, establishing which categories of Table 3.1 can be applied to the topics under discussion, for example, re-structuring the SMT may be categorised as CD and FT, and within these categories the data can be re-read for evidence of the individual behaviours and traits from Table 3.2, for example, a deputy head may argue against an aspect of re-structuring using a rational and wise approach and the head accepts the argument, there is evidence of behaviours and traits 1, 2, 3, and 8 from Table 3.2.

The *contingency based head* transfers skills and adopts various management styles in different school contexts and exercises leadership and management incorporating the
ten key traits characterised in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.3 Theoretical Framework for the Contingency based Head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Effective Contingency based Head displays…..</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>decision-making that is often <em>but not exclusively</em> collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a preference for but not an insistence on collegial practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a very strong and missionary sense of vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an instructional intention that vision is shared effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective use of consultative systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transformational leadership <em>always</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instructional leadership <em>sometimes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective leadership <em>always</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transactional leadership <em>sometimes</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full discussion of the implications of this contingency based model of effective headship is included in the chapter on Conclusions (Chapter 5, page 166 below).

**Theoretical Device for Analysing Collegial versus Autocratic Practice**

In addition to using the model of the *contingency based* head, a theoretical framework for analysing collegial vs. autocratic practice is utilised. This identifies key words that can be identified as synonyms for everyday terms used by senior managers in their everyday practice that can establish their behaviours and traits and identify their management philosophy. The keywords are bound into the rhetoric of collegiality and collaboration, and assisted in concept and category formation. Use of the words by SMT participants in meetings and conversations at Larchdale was logged to ascertain the rhetoric of their approach to teamwork and shared decision-making.

The words are set out in Table 3.4 below:
Table 3.4  Collegial and Antithetical Keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collegial Keyword</th>
<th>Antithetical Keyword</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collaborative</td>
<td>individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collegial</td>
<td>bureaucratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consensual</td>
<td>disparate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informative</td>
<td>clandestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supportive</td>
<td>neglectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discursive</td>
<td>dismissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democratic</td>
<td>autocratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultative</td>
<td>dictatorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanist</td>
<td>managerial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transactional</td>
<td>instructional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As outlined in discussing the contingency based model above, the exercise of some antithetical traits are necessary for the effective management of schools. The rhetoric can be identified as operating in observed practice or recorded key participant discussion when the participant asserts one philosophy or paradigm and clearly emphasises its importance, but whose observed actions and practices run counter to these assertions.

Theoretical Framework for Dissent

Collegial practice and its characteristics for opening behaviours offers the opportunity for dissenting voices, and dissent is discussed in detail in the Literature Review section on Collegiality (Chapter 2, page 39 above). Dissent can be positive for policy construction and decision making processes, is generally accepted in well managed, harmonious schools and in this study is termed constructive dissent.
The conflictual, antithetical type of dissent that occurs in school meetings is termed *destructive dissent*. Destructive dissent management is extremely important to the core analysis of this research project because it will be demonstrated later that it is in this area that the argument of rhetoric over substance in the supposed collegial practice of heads and their SMTs becomes so persuasive.

**Constructive Dissent**

Constructive dissent is a more difficult concept to identify in practice than destructive dissent since few senior managers voice it themselves or believe that any dissent towards or within the SMT can be anything but destructive. A number of interesting perspectives have emerged here that echoes Hardacre (2000): when working collectively as a team, the SMT must possess unanimity of purpose and thought:

> “Private disagreement is inevitable, indeed essential, but the concept of collective responsibility must be pre-eminent.”

(Hardacre, 2000, page 77)

Constructive dissent is characterised by the collegial concept of trust. Trust as a concept is discussed in the Literature Review section on Collegiality in Chapter 2, page 49 above, and constructive dissenting managers might utilise trust within the SMT in being effective. This underpins the concept of intrinsic constructive dissent. The incidence of extrinsic-constructive dissent and how it is managed, particularly in public meetings, might be seen to be an important indicator of the collective view of the staff on the strength and style of the head’s leadership and of the head’s collegial stance.

In the next section the choice of research methods adopted to address the three
research questions in this study are described and justified with reference to the appropriate methodological literature.

**Description of Methods**

**The Larchdale Case Study**

The single-site case study method was adopted in order to address the first research question concerning collegial SMT practice at Larchdale. In the following discussion H1 is used to denote the former head and H2 the succeeding head.

**The Use of Grounded Theory**

Extensive use is made of *grounded theory* as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), as discussed above on pages 72-73. This uses *hermeneutic*, ie. interpretational, method where theory is grounded in data from observations and documents leading to an understanding of the interplay of concepts, rather than the positivist approach which starts by stating hypotheses and utilises data collection and analysis to accept or reject them. In the grounded theory approach conceptualisation is a continuous process where concepts are developed as a series of categories which are refined, extended or discarded during the processes of re-reading and re-conceptualising. The imperative for the researcher is to generate theory by ‘comparative method’, where the researcher identifies further instances of similar processes from observed and recorded interactions, responses and documentary evidence from a number of different settings. At Larchdale these settings included formal SMT meetings and line management meetings, two semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with individual SMT members. Larchdale documentation included the differing SMT role maps and School Development Plans (SDPs) indicating the processes of change under the new head
during the course of the investigation, SMT meeting agendas and minutes and Ofsted Action Plans. Responses from the formal settings were recorded on data logging sheets and those from the more informal settings were recorded in the research diary. These settings, documents and methods of data collection are described and justified below. Examples of transcribed field-notes are given in related Appendices.

**Negotiation of Access at Larchdale**

As a participant researcher within the original Larchdale SMT at the outset of the case study investigation in January 2001 there have been rich opportunities for observation and data collection. However, as an ‘insider’ (see the following section on Researcher Role), important micro-political factors such as esteem, conformity and reputation as discussed by Hoyle (1982) can have a marked effect on individual SMT members’ attitude to being observed and recorded with a resulting influence on the outcome of interviews and observations. It was very important at the outset of the investigation to negotiate access appropriately with both H1 and H2 and the chair of governors.

The research strategy was accepted by H1 (who was extremely helpful) and agreed to as long as participant professional confidentiality was not compromised. This was mutually agreed. Later, H2 also agreed to the principles of access at Larchdale. The chair of governors was always supportive throughout the course of the research.

During January 2001 each member of the SMT was informed in conversation about the investigation and questioned concerning their concerns especially with respect to confidentiality. All of these eight SMT members found the research plan acceptable and there were no objections. By developing a relationship of mutual respect with fellow members of SMT and with other colleagues throughout the school, it was possible to address and discuss the issues of collegiality, school effectiveness and
the micro-political elements dissent and its management openly and explicitly.

**The Researcher Role**

The researcher role of participant observer within the single-site school is that of ‘insider’ as described by Bird (1992), who identifies both the advantages and disadvantages of being actively involved as part of the team under investigation.

Initially the researcher as ‘insider’ as a newly appointed member of the Larchdale SMT was seen as a very difficult and possibly problematic role, in terms of the raising significant issues of professional integrity, judgement and ethical care, but during the course of the case study no real problems arose in spite of these initial concerns.

**Justification of the Single Site Case Study**

The single site case study at Larchdale addresses the first of the three research questions for this study: what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single –site case study secondary school, Larchdale? The case study investigation began in January 2001 with the appointment of the researcher as a new member of the Larchdale SMT. Preparation and planning having already started on three of the research tasks before arriving at Larchdale, including the collection and analysis of documentation from the 37 secondary schools, choosing the seven KPs and conducting the two focus group discussions with KPs, the new opportunities offered by conducting the single-site case study at Larchdale as a participant researcher within the SMT were rich and fruitful. It was highly fortuitous that during the course of the investigation, which was completed in the summer of 2003, Larchdale had a change of head and the re-structuring of the SMT by the new head provided further opportunities to collect
Yin (1989) describes the validity of the single-site embedded case study with the rationale as revelatory case, and suggests three criteria for judging the quality of qualitative research design, following Kidder (1981):

(i) construct validity: establishing correct operational measures for concepts
(ii) external validity: establishing the domain of generalisation of findings
(iii) reliability: demonstrating that operations can be repeated with essentially similar results.

The first criterion of construct validity was satisfied by adopting a valid, effective and theoretically guided methodology, accomplished by the explanation and justification of the conceptual frameworks described in Tables 3.1 to 3.4 above. In this research study the second and third criteria posed problems. The problem of external validity and generalisation has been discussed above, page 77, and there is no claim in this study for the generalisation of findings taken from the single-site case study at Larchdale to a wider set of cases, ie. a wider set of secondary schools. However, it can be tentatively argued, through the principle of data trustworthiness as also identified above on page 77, that the grounded theory approach to the Larchdale case study advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Yin (1999), has yielded interesting insights to SMT practice generally.

The third Yin criterion is impossible to satisfy. Another researcher, particularly an ‘outsider’ may have found different results than those found in this investigation using similar research methods. However, the Larchdale case study has relied on the
researcher’s personal interpretation of data with inferences and reflections leading to interesting insights.

**Recording Verbal Interactions**

Interactions and responses in formal meetings, the two semi-structured interviews and two focus group discussions were recorded as field notes on a data logging sheet. Two examples of completed data logging sheets, for one SMT meeting and one of the semi-structured interviews are included as Appendices B and D respectively.

Interactions and responses arising from 54 separate informal conversations were recorded in the research diary, which is discussed below on page 100.

Data recording followed the guidelines given by Hope (1992) on information gathering techniques, in particular on funnelling and summarising, which was accomplished by transcribing the field notes collected during a given period, normally a week, into a word-processing package. Some coding of field notes was done by hand annotation of the physical notes but more on transcription. On re-reading and funnelling, researcher reflections and insights were then added and responses within interactions italicised and labelled with the two-character codes from the conceptual framework for categories in Table 3.1 for future retrieval and analysis.

**Observation of Meetings**

At Larchdale, a number of different types of meetings, including those of SMT, whole school working groups, whole staff, faculty and year team were observed. The number and type of each meeting observed are indicated chronologically by school term in Table 3.5 below:
Table 3.5 Details of Meetings Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Type of Meeting</th>
<th>Number Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2001</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2001</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2001</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2002</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2002</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2002</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMT+ Task Group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMT+ KS Group</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2003</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School MG (SMG)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>Full SMT</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMT+ Task Group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SMT+ KS Group</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full Staff</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working Group</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The changes to the nature of the SMT meetings from September 2002 onwards and the re-structuring of the Larchdale SMT into separate Leadership Team (LT) and School Management Group (SMG) meetings in the Summer Term of 2003 were made by the new head, H2, first as Acting Head in the Autumn Term of 2002 and as substantiated Head from January 2003. These changes are discussed on page 105.
Observation and data logging of meetings followed the guidelines and theoretical principles put forward by Williams (1994), in particular the differentiation of different types of meetings being command, selling, advisory, negotiating or problem-solving. A sample of a completed SMT meeting log is included as Redacted B.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted at Larchdale in order to investigate, formally, middle-management and junior staff perceptions of the effectiveness and collegial practice of the Larchdale SMT. The interviews were conducted in line with the guidelines and protocols outlined by Wragg (1994), which include advice on eliminating interviewer and respondent bias, on venue and on carefully chosen initial questioning with probing follow-ups. The two respondents, were chosen because they had been interested in the research project, were coherent in conversations surrounding the school and, on the basis of these conversations, were judged to have neutral views on the personnel within the Larchdale SMT so that their views of collegiality as practised by the SMT were as objective as possible. The middle manager was a male head of department with ten years teaching experience, eight years of which had been spent in two previous schools. The other participant was a female deputy head of year with three years experience, all at Larchdale.

Each of the two interviews were conducted in October 2001, took place on a neutral site and ran for 60 minutes. The five interview questions and follow up probes are included in Redacted C. Interview responses were not audio-taped due to the wishes of the respondents, but were recorded using a pro-forma developed from the model
suggested by Wragg (1994), an example of which is included as Redacted D. The
interviews were an insightful investigation of the perceptions of the two respondents
of the SMT at Larchdale, particularly the views of the head of department when
comparing his experiences of collegiality within the Larchdale SMT compared to
SMT practice in his previous two schools. The interview response transcripts are
reproduced in Redacted M.

**Document Analysis**

Content analysis was used to analyse and categorise the Larchdale management
documentation collected during the course of the single-site case study.
As this method was also used in the analysis of documents in the Wider Context
Investigation, it is discussed separately below, on page 100.

**Choice of Methods for The Wider Context Investigation**

Choice of methods for the Wider Context Investigation, where the researcher role was
external to the single site and encompasses that of interested researcher and consultant
have been:

(i) the development of a network of experienced current and former senior
    managers to provide critical friendship and different perspectives in
    identifying and interpreting relationships, the KPs
(ii) the collection, both physically and by on-line access, of an extensive range of
    documents from a sample of 37 different large mixed secondary schools of
    similar size to Larchdale
(iii) conducting two extended focus group discussions with two subsets of KPs
(iv) carrying out a mapping exercise which sought to identify four KPs views on
the importance of leadership and management behaviours and traits identified in the conceptual framework in Table 3.1 above, on page 79.

Sampling in both the single-site and multi-site contexts were deemed to satisfy the criteria laid down by Hammersley (1984) that it should be:

"intentional, systematic and theoretically guided".

(Hammersley 1984, page 53)

The four methods utilised in the wider context investigation listed above on the previous page are now discussed in detail below.

**Development of the KP Network**

The seven Key Participants (KPs) were chosen as they each satisfied the following four criteria:

(i) wide experience of secondary school leadership and management either as current or former secondary school senior managers or LEA secondary school advisers or inspectors for at least three years

(ii) agreement to participate in the project as both critical friends and consultants for the researcher and to be accessible for telephone conversations and emails

(iii) commitment to provide valid data and judgements on secondary school leadership, management and effectiveness with candour and objectivity

(iv) agreement to join one or two focus groups for discussion and to complete research exercises within the prescribed time-scale.

The choice of KPs could be justifiably criticised as being an arbitrary and subjective choice of the researcher but, conversely, the KPs could be seen as an extremely rich source of knowledge and experience that could be tapped informally at any time.
The details of the KPs are outlined in Table 3.6 below:

### Table 3.6 Details of Key Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Current Role</th>
<th>Details of Experience</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KP1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>LEA Adviser</td>
<td>Secondary Link adviser for 3 years</td>
<td>Mapping exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LEA Adviser</td>
<td>Secondary Link adviser for 5 years</td>
<td>Focus Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Educational Consultant</td>
<td>Former secondary deputy head for 12 years</td>
<td>Mapping Exercise and Focus Group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Secondary Assistant Headteacher</td>
<td>Assistant Headteacher for 3 years</td>
<td>Mapping Exercise and Focus Groups 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>LEA Adviser</td>
<td>Secondary Link adviser for 2 years</td>
<td>Focus Group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Secondary Deputy Headteacher</td>
<td>Deputy Headteacher for 11 years</td>
<td>Mapping Exercise and Focus Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Secondary Assistant Headteacher</td>
<td>Secondary Assistant Headteacher for 1 year</td>
<td>Focus Group 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sampling Documentation from a Wider Group of Schools**

At the outset of the research it was useful to collect, read and reflect on a large set of documentation and data within the public domain from a wider sample of large, mixed, all-ability secondary comprehensive schools relating to their context, leadership, management and effectiveness. This process continued during the period from February, 1999 to July, 2003. To maximise consistency, validity and widen the sampling frame to the widest set of schools the following strategy was adopted:
(i) continually update a list of large (roll at least 1200), mixed, comprehensive secondary schools for which there was researcher knowledge, due to personal contacts, proximity within a locale and visits in the researcher’s professional capacity, for which data could be freely obtained; this list amounted to 53 schools over the period from February 1999 until January 2002; other data within the public domain was downloaded from the DfES website, in particular, performance data

(ii) collect the five types of documentation or data outlined in Table 3.7 below and, if any element from Table 3.7 proved to be unobtainable, remove the school from the sample; this reduced the list to 37 schools by February, 2002.

**Table 3.7 Data Collection for the Sample of 37 Secondary Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Documentation</th>
<th>Purpose within the Research</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Recent Ofsted Report</td>
<td>Ofsted assessment of effectiveness of leadership, management and teamwork of Head and SMT</td>
<td>Ofsted Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Data for 1998-2002</td>
<td>Measure of school effectiveness through GCSE examination results %A*-C over the medium term</td>
<td>DfES Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Admissions Brochure</td>
<td>Quality of school ethos, the sense of mission, the existence, efficiency and effectiveness of policies</td>
<td>Direct from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT Role Map</td>
<td>Evidence of type of structure of SMT</td>
<td>From each school via staff contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Development Plan</td>
<td>Evidence of sense of vision, of targets for improvement and consistency with other documentation</td>
<td>From each school via staff contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The documentation in Table 3.7 was then collated and analysed according to the principles set out below in the section on the Methods of Document Analysis.
**Drawing Perceptions from the Key Participants**

As described in the previous section, the set of seven critical friends and consultants, with a wide experience of senior management in secondary schools, was recruited and termed Key Participants. Participation of the KPs in the research tasks is outlined in the last column of Table 3.6. All seven KPs were invited to take part in the Mapping Exercise, but only 4 KPs provided responses, the other three apologising for non-completion due to time pressure. KP4 was invited to both focus groups to record responses in addition to the researcher and the other 6 KPs were invited to one of the two focus group discussions, as outlined in Table 3.6. KP1 apologised for not being able to attend FG 1. Sampling for focus groups attempted to balance experience and expertise with a mix of advisory and senior managerial experience in each focus group. KP4 provided critical friendship in assuring that the balance of timings and researcher questioning was consistent between both groups.

**Focus Group Discussion**

Two focus group discussions were held in November and December 2000 following Goldman and Macdonald (1987) who set down principles of focus group discussion, and define the role of the participant researcher as ‘moderator’, whose management of the group involves subtle use of the techniques of rapport building, exploration, probing and closing. KP4 was briefed to assist in the moderation process during discussion in which the researcher had high involvement, and was also provided with a printed outline of the topics for discussion. Although the discussions proved to be very relaxed and informal, they proved extremely candid. These techniques were used effectively with both groups.
**Focus Group 1 November 2000**

The first focus group (FG1) consisted of:

(i) KP2, a current LEA adviser with wide experience as a secondary school senior management link adviser for four large secondary schools

(ii) KP4, a current assistant in a large, mixed secondary school

(iii) KP6, a current deputy head in a large, mixed secondary school

(iv) the researcher as participant observer.

The discussion was semi-structured and focused on three themes: bureaucracy, collegiality and effectiveness in secondary schools.

**Focus Group 2 December 2000**

The second focus group (FG2) consisted of:

(i) KP3, a current educational consultant and former deputy headteacher in a large, mixed secondary school

(ii) KP4, a current assistant head in a large, mixed secondary school

(iii) KP5, a current LEA adviser with wide experience as a secondary school senior management link adviser for three large secondary schools

(iv) KP7, a current assistant head in a large, mixed secondary school

(v) the researcher as participant observer.

FG2 focused on the same themes as FG1.

**The Mapping Exercise**

The design of this process borrows one of the mapping techniques advocated and utilised by Fielding (1997) and originally set out by Ainscow, *et.al*, (1994).

This technique operates on the basis of the ordering or ranking of concepts or attributes. In the Fielding (1997) research, each concept or attribute was recorded on
an index card and the whole pack of index cards issued to a group of teachers who collectively discussed and ranked the concepts based on shared ideas and so in this study, the process was adapted by requesting that each KP should carry out a similar exercise individually and independently, due to time and place constraints. The purpose of the mapping exercise was to gain further perceptions from the KPs on the relative importance of the behaviours, traits and styles of leadership and management at the core of this study. These behaviours, traits and styles are listed in Table 3.2 above, page 81. With the exception of KP1, the other KPs involved in the mapping exercise were also involved in the focus group discussion.

The mapping exercise consisted of three linked elements:

(i) discussion and explanation of the exercise with each KP
(ii) KPs carry out the Professional Perceptions exercise
(iii) KPs report back results.

The mapping exercise was explained to each KP in advance, verbally by telephone, Each of the twenty one traits cards had one of the behaviours, traits or styles from the list in Table 3.2 above, page 81. The cards, recording sheets for each of the two exercises and printed instructions were issued in July 2001. Copies of the instructions and completed recording sheets are included as Appendices H and I. A time scale of completion by the end of August, 2001 was also agreed, although this proved to be impossibly tight and slippage occurred. The process was, however, completed by four KPs by the end of February 2002. There was some valid criticism from two KPs about the number and description of the traits, but they agreed to perform the exercise using the cards and recording sheets provided.
**The Professional Perceptions Exercise**

In the Professional Perceptions exercise, KPs were asked to scatter the 21 traits cards on a horizontal surface and then categorise SMT behaviours and traits in three categories:

A: essential, B: desirable, C: not relatively important to school effectiveness.

The data collected and the analysis for each KP reporting on the Professional Perceptions Exercise are discussed in the next chapter on Analysis and Findings on page 148. Four responses were received by the end of February, 2002. These were from KP1, KP3, KP4 and KP6. The other KPs apologised for not completing the exercise due the pressure of individual time constraints.

**Methods Utilised in both the Single Site Case Study and the Wider Context Investigation**

**Diary Logging**

Holly (1984) criticises diary writing because it is interpretive and descriptive and therefore difficult to analyse. Burgess (1994) identifies three elements of diary keeping that overcome this problem:

(i) logging activities, interactions and reflections
(ii) prose accounts of activities and interactions written up later
(iii) recording events in detailed prose in real-time

The diary in this research utilises all three elements and has been subjected to content analysis by reading and re-reading. Sample pages from the research diary are included as Redacted A.
Methods of Document Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse and map concepts from a wide variety of school management and contextual documentation both from Larchdale and from the wider sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools’ management documentation collected following the scheme defined by Robson (1993) which is a cyclical process utilised a number of times in the course of re-reading and re-classifying data so that categories in the analysis are saturated as far as possible:

(i) re-visit the research questions

(iv) decide on a sampling strategy

(v) define the recording unit, usually a word or phrase

(vi) construct categories for analysis

(vii) test the coding on samples and assess reliability

(viii) carry out analysis

Content analysis was implemented using the coding system of the conceptual framework described above in Table 3.1, page 79. An example of coded document analysis is that of the Larchdale SMT role maps included as Redacted E.

Content analysis during a series of re-readings developing and utilising the theoretical frameworks described above (page 79) enabled the grounding of theory.

The five types of common school documentation collected for the wider sample of 37 secondary schools are listed in Table 3.7 above on page 95. These five types of documentation were collected from Larchdale, but further materials were available from Larchdale that have aided the study including letters sent home to parents, newsletter and newspaper articles, school mission-statements, examination reports and the staff handbook. The data was collected, stored and analysed by reading,
annotating and recording both the objective data and subjective inferences, for example, quality of the prospectus or coherence of the SDP, and inferences written up using a word processing package.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

Data analysis has consisted of the coding of all the categories of behaviours and traits described from page 79 above, and then mapping recorded instances of these categories in leadership and management practice at Larchdale, in particular the interplay of both H1 and H2 with their SMTs, and the responses of KPs.

The methodological techniques from GT as described above were used to carefully investigate the intricate mechanisms of collegiality and micro-politics at senior management level in the Larchdale case study. Evidence to support or contradict the collegial practice of the Larchdale SMT was carefully gleaned by applying the theoretical frameworks described in Tables 3.1 to 3.4 above, from page 79, to the reading, re-reading and annotating of field notes recording the observations of meetings, interview transcripts, and school documents such as memos, faculty team, year team and SMT meeting agendas and minutes.

The data collected for the sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools as described in Table 3.7 was carefully analysed and tabulated in the format of Table 3.8 below. There is extensive use of researcher judgement in the allocation of grades to schools, but assistance was given by KP2 and KP4 during the analysis, utilising their knowledge of the schools.
Table 3.8 Contextual and Performance Data for the 37 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locale/Envnt</th>
<th>%5+A*C GCSE Mean 99-02</th>
<th>Ofsted School Rating</th>
<th>Ofsted Head/SMT Rating</th>
<th>SMT Type (at 07/02)</th>
<th>SDP Coherent/Costed</th>
<th>Quality Of Brochure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sx</td>
<td>R, U, I/PR,PC,DR,TF</td>
<td>2digit integer mean</td>
<td>A,B,C</td>
<td>A,B,C</td>
<td>Core Cor+Ext</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A,B,C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coding utilised for data in Table 3.8 is:

**School:** x denotes the number designating a particular school

**Environment:**

- R – rural, U – urban, I – inner city
- PR – placid, randomised, PC – placid, clustered,
- DR – disturbed, reactive, TF – turbulent field

**Ofsted Ratings:**

- A – excellent or very good,
- B – good or satisfactory,
- C – poor or very poor

A, B, C used in the Quality of Brochure column have similar ratings. Objective data in this table are GCSE Performance Data, Ofsted Ratings and SMT type, the latter being either a core team comprising the LG or this core team with the senior staff (the extension) co-opted into the wider team. The subjective data, based on researcher judgement, consists of: School Locale and Environment (based on knowledge of the
individual schools), and the Quality of the SDPs and Brochures (based on researcher judgement aided by KP4).

Content analysis was utilised to itemise, funnel and then map perceptions to concepts. Procedures followed those prescribed by Holsti (1968), who defines content analysis as a technique for objectively and systematically identifying those characteristics of messages that have relevance to some theoretical construct. This technique analyses communication content by consistently applying selected criteria to textual and verbal messages and categorizing responses according to those criteria. This process has been used extensively throughout the course of this study for theory building and is known as analytic deduction, where data are collected and categorized through two interconnected processes: 

- **Enumerative deduction** as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1984). The former process collects and records data by number and type of response. The latter process probes for alternative or rival explanations which might affect the emerging category, eliminating the threat of an analysis in which only information supporting the researcher's original notions is examined after Holsti (1968). The two processes systematically manifest both similar and dissimilar patterns which help in pointing out relationships and help specify appropriate organization of categories.

After preliminary coding and display, all data was reviewed for parallel and dissenting responses and for pattern recognition. Frequently occurring concepts within themes and other phenomena that could be similarly categorised when analysing interactions were identified. Concepts were coded within the categories which then illuminated patterns of response. Observational data was coded and analysed within
categories and then compared for interrelationships.

These multiple sources of information: observation, documentary analysis, mapping exercises and focus group discussion, were used because, according to Holsti (1968) no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective.
Chapter 4

Analysis and Findings

This chapter discusses analysis and findings for the investigation and is structured in four parts:

(i) Discussion of Data Analysis Addressing the Research Questions
(ii) Analysis and Findings for the Larchdale Case Study
(iii) Analysis and Findings for the Wider Context Investigation
(iv) Analysis and Findings Relating to the Impact of SMT Collegiality on School Effectiveness

Discussion of Data Analysis

The three research questions posed in Chapter 1 above have provided the basis and structure for this investigation into collegiality within large secondary school SMTs.

These three research questions are:

(i) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single-site case study secondary school, Larchdale?
(ii) what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more generally?
(iii) what is the impact of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on their effectiveness?

Data analysis has been conducted by a hermeneutic method, where text, in the form of transcribed responses from individual participants in meetings, semi-structured
interviews, focus group discussion and from documents from Larchdale or from the wider sample of 37 secondary schools, have been read, re-read, annotated and re-annotated using the two- character codes first introduced in Table 3.1 above, page 79.

Data collected for both the Larchdale Case Study and the Wider Context Investigation has been analysed utilising this theoretical framework. Inferences have been made on the basis of identifying an example of a recorded instance of a behaviour, trait or style and then embedding this evidence within a category of Table 3.1. and in this chapter, describing the data analysis and discussing findings, analysis has proceeded by developing *audit trails* of inferences, from the recorded outcomes of the research strategies, for example, analysis of school documents and responses from observation of meetings and focus group discussions, and then embedding these examples within an extended tabular form of theoretical framework of Table 3.1, for example Table 4.1 on the next page, where the source of evidence and the month of occurrence has been incorporated into the theoretical framework. This has been accomplished for each dimension of the research design and the analysis addressing the three research questions ie. the Larchdale Case Study, the Wider Context investigation and finally Gauging the Impact of SMT Collegiality. The extension of Table 3.1 to the tables in this chapter has allowed the audit trail of inferences to be indexed by placing sources of data and their date of observation within categories, as in Table 4.1 below.

Examples of evidence from transcripts of data, with source and date, collected during the course of the Larchdale case study corresponding to each identified category to indicate how observed instances of behaviours, traits and styles of leadership and management practice were incorporated into categories and similar tables are used for the analysis of the Wider Context Investigation.
Table 4.1 Adapted Framework for Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Category</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Example of Evidence</th>
<th>Data Source and Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political re-structuring through re-defining LGs</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict characterised by destructive dissent</td>
<td>DD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict characterised by constructive dissent</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluidity-turbulence from SMT changes</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT stress-tolerance</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision shared amongst SMT</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative decision-making amongst SMT</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical incident</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This conceptual framework into which evidence has now been mapped is central to the structure of this chapter. For Larchdale, each category from the Table is unpicked and discussed in turn after a narrative account of the transition of headship. The analysis and presentation of findings is structured first within the three dimensions corresponding to the research questions and then by order of the research tools within each dimension. Direct quotations from participants are within speech marks and in italics, and all participants are coded in the same way as KPs.

**Analysis and Findings for the Larchdale Case Study**

This section describes the analysis and discusses findings for the single site case study at Larchdale School addressing the first research question: what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single-site case study secondary school, Larchdale? This section is the most substantial of the chapter as it discusses the main focus of the study: the practice of the heads and SMT.
The first section is an account of the structural changes to the Larchdale SMT outlining a comparison of the leadership and management practice of H1 and H2 during the course of research for the case study, combined with an ongoing discussion describing practice within the Larchale SMT as it changed. The next section consists of a discussion of analysis and findings at Larchdale within the categories of the theoretical framework in Table 3.1 and for the two semi-structured interviews with Larchdale teaching staff.

Narrative Account of the Structural Changes to the Larchdale SMT

The background contextual setting for Larchdale School is described in detail in Chapter 1, page 12 above. Due to the chronological nature of much of the discussion of the Larchdale case study, use of past tenses is made for description and discussion of Larchdale under the leadership of H1, ie. up to the end of Summer Term, 2002, and the present tense for all discussion of Larchdale under H2.

This account of structural changes to the SMT at Larchdale School between the arrival of the researcher in January 2001 and the completion of all case study data collection in July 2003 is key to the investigation of collegiality within the Larchdale SMT, since there have been numerous changes, both of structure and personnel to the team during the period. These changes have involved all tiers within the original ‘extended’ SMT framework favoured by H1 and the later core plus extension SMT introduced by H2 as Acting Head. The account has been carefully cross-referenced with these changes and with data collected during the period which is listed below in Table 4.2.
At the outset of the research, in January 2001, the SMT at Larchdale consisted of ten members: the former head H1, two deputy heads, three assistant heads (newly assimilated onto the Leadership spine), two heads of faculty (including the researcher as participant), a Key Stage 4 Coordinator and a Head of Year, the last four having whole school responsibilities, the rationale for membership of the SMT.

Further details of the team at that time are provided in Table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3 Larchdale SMT Members Responsibilities, January 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Major SMT Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Leader of SMT, Vision + Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head</td>
<td>DH1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Curriculum+Key Stage 4 Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head</td>
<td>DH2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student Welfare + Key Stage 3 Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 3 coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cover + Staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Sixth Form + ICT Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>HoF1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>HoF2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 3 Assessment Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 4 Coordinator</td>
<td>KS4C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 4 Assessment Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Year</td>
<td>HoY1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Admissions and Child Protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 4.3 shows that the Larchdale SMT at that point was large with 10 members, hierarchical in the sense that there were four tiers within the structure.

---

1 Codes are fixed for personnel and are used for references to responses and interactions
2 These are the main responsibilities – SMT role maps contain complete details
3 DH2 was appointed as the new Head from January 2003 and is then coded as H2
4 Researcher role
(head, deputies, assistant heads and senior teachers in descending order) and with no defined ‘core’ of the head and deputies, and so different to the SMTs in the 37 schools in the Wider Context Investigation, Table 4.14 on page153 below where 12 schools have ‘core + extension’ SMTs and the remaining 25 purely smaller ‘core’ SMTs. A larger SMT appeared to H1, as stated in an SMT meeting in January, 2001, to allow greater professional and collegial involvement for colleagues in decision making across a wide area of school leadership and management. SMT meetings were seen by H1 and the deputy heads as

“…the main information sharing and collective decision making opportunity we have…”

(H1, speaking in SMT meeting, March 2001)

SMT meetings were held every Monday starting at 4.00pm. The shorter meetings, usually the meetings at the ends of terms, broke up around 5.30pm and the longest meeting, discussing revision of the SDP and Ofsted Action Plan in June 2001, ended at 6.50pm with most usually lasting around two hours. The head at Larchdale has always been responsible for the Agenda for each SMT meeting, but H1 was more open in his requests for agenda items from colleagues than H2 later. An SMT Meeting Agenda is included as (redacted). H2, as DH2 then, was critical of structure in SMT meetings:

“…[H1] needs to get more of a grip on the meeting…
we spend far too much time going off on tangents…”

(DH2, speaking with researcher, May 2001)
After one long SMT meeting in March 2001 that focused almost fully on poor behaviour management and was dominated by the head and deputies, HoF1 said:

“These meetings are a farce…the head has no control over the meeting…the preferred few have their say…we at the chalk face have little say…” (HoF1, speaking to researcher, June 2001)

Under both heads the Minutes of SMT meetings have been taken by members of the team. Up until the end of Summer term 2001, a volunteer was asked to minute meetings, but DH2 insisted that, from the beginning of September 2001, a rota for minute taking should be adopted. DH2 drew up the rota for the whole academic year and it was followed. Under H1 individual’s styles of minute taking were inconsistent and varied between tightly structured and bulleted minutes to more full and descriptive minutes. The latter were more accurate in their record of discussion. H1 did not vet the minutes before issue but under H2 SMT minutes have been vetted and re-styled in a tightly structured and bulleted format. One example of SMT meeting minutes is included as Redacted L. Working at senior management level at Larchdale has been both demanding and rewarding as expressed by all of the SMT members at various times. For example, KS4C, echoing Azzara (2001),

“…it can be tough, but it is good fun most of the time…”

(KS4C, speaking with the researcher, March 2001)

Between January 2001 and July 2002, typically, each deputy and assistant head had team responsibility (either a department, year or cross-curricular group), monitored and supported middle managers, in particular the head of a specific department or year group, and had a number of specific whole-school specific tasks.
At the end of each of the academic years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 H1 allocated a major element of time in one SMT meeting to SMT role review, and under H1 roles were negotiated collaboratively within that meeting. At the end of the academic year 2002-2003, due to whole scale re-structuring of the SMT by H2, as discussed below on page 119, only a subset of roles was discussed collaboratively by the members of the two new management groups. Larchdale SMT role maps are included as Redacted E.

The job specifications for assistant heads and associate members of the SMT at Larchdale are particularly general and allow the head to retain some flexibility in planning at senior level. As a large, mixed urban comprehensive secondary school Larchdale requires a large number of SMT responsibilities and whole-school tasks that any assistant head or associate may take on. However, there are specific roles, particularly the pastoral roles, that lock those senior managers into role. There are a number of generic skills that the head expects from members of SMT, combinations of experience, practical application, strategic planning and integrity. SMT members must be flexible and prepared to work in any one of a number of spheres of influence.

The School Development Plan in operation during Spring Term, 2001 clearly shows that H1 has a clear vision for Larchdale, focused on raising student achievement further. A criticism of this and its successors for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003, however, as expressed in the LEA mini-Ofsted reports, was that they were not focused on actions with objective success criteria and not costed effectively. Although very experienced, with over six years as head at Larchdale and seven years as a head in another large mixed, urban secondary school, an exceptionally good and strong teacher and setting a management pace which was extremely difficult and challenging
for other senior colleagues to match, some major planning exercises were not carried out effectively. Although the inclusive nature of the Larchdale SMT up to the end of July 2002 was judged by the researcher to enhance collegiality and collaborative practice, some decisions taken by H1 did not have the support of the majority of SMT. For example, the plan to take Larchdale into specialist school status focusing on a particular specialism was discussed at length in six SMT meetings in Spring and Summer 2002 and seven of the ten members of SMT expressed dissent either in the strategy itself or the choice of specialism and there is significant further evidence from observations of 41 Larchdale SMT meetings held between January 2001 and July 2002 that supports the view that H1 was both philosophically collegial with respect to strategic and tactical decision making and instructional with respect to his focus on teaching and learning processes such as when SMT was considering the change of status from community to Foundation status in Spring, 2002, H1 put the proposal before the full staff for discussion, asserting within the preceding SMT meeting that:

“...the full staff need to be properly informed and consulted...”

In some respects H1 was misunderstood by some SMT members in terms of intentionality and style. For example, after an SMT meeting in April, 2001, DH1 said:

“[H1] is his own worst enemy...he has great ideas and yet he ruins it all by this gut reaction stuff about student behaviour...”

(DH1, speaking with the researcher, April 2001)

The rhetoric in the collegial practice of H1 in his exercise of leadership at Larchdale is that although it appeared to the researcher to be highly collegial and transactional, it
was perceived as dictatorial by two SMT members, whilst another two, DH2 and
KS4C, felt that the SMT was ineffective as a result of being too democratic. DH2
implied that H1’s control of SMT was weak, casting doubts on overall leadership.

Within observed SMT meetings H1 displayed an interesting range of decision-making
skills, closely related to the decision-making paradigms of Tarker and Hoy (1998). In
Spring Term, 2001, H1 and the Larchdale SMT appeared energetic, able and
committed. It worked cohesively and promoted effective team-work in three whole
school working groups: Policy Forum (composed of the head, SMT and heads of
faculty and year), Curriculum Forum (composed of DH1, SMT with curriculum focus
and heads of faculty and smaller departments) and Pastoral Forum (composed of
DH2, SMT with pastoral focus and heads and deputy heads of year). Some of the
heads of faculty, subject and year were effective in leading their teams to promote
high attainment but there were at that time perceived weaknesses in curriculum
management, not only in its contribution to managing behaviour in the school but also
in its lacking a suitably pro-active stance in innovation.

H1 had financial acumen, as acknowledged by DH2, who said: (June, 2001)

“…as much as I could really shake [H1] at times, he is so good
at managing the budget…”

(DH2, speaking with the researcher, June 2001).

The surplus left on H1’s resignation, 10% of the allocated annual budget, seemed
testament to H1’s financial acumen, affirming DH2’s view that the school budget
was managed prudently. In this respect H1 followed much of the good practice identified by Glover, et. al. (1996) in rational planning of resources. But one SMT member differed:

“...you (H2) need to spend some of this (the surplus) on recruiting staff...”

(HoF1, speaking in SMT meeting, May 2002)

One of the most difficult problems encountered by H2 was the clear financial priority of the provision by H1 of smaller than the national average size of teaching groups. If this had been effective in promoting achievement then results, particularly at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 at Larchdale would have been expected to improve during H1’s headship. At Key Stage 3 results improved marginally but Key Stage 4 results declined over the period of H1’s headship. This is evidence that under H1’s leadership Larchdale was improving and effective at Key Stage 3 since the improvement in results over time satisfied the accepted definition of school effectiveness in this study. Following H1’s departure the first year of H2’s headship saw Key Stage 3 results holding steady but GCSE results improved by 7%, showing ongoing improvement from a very low base, and satisfied through the use of value-added the accepted definition of school effectiveness in this study as discussed earlier.

The detail is shown in Table 4.4 below which indicates the Key Stage 3 Test and Key Stage 4 GCSE performance data measured by percentages of cohorts achieving a mean level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 and 5 or more good passes at GCSE at Key Stage 4 Larchdale for the years 2000 - 2003, three under H1 and the last under H2:
Table 4.4 Larchdale Key Stage 3 Test and Key Stage 4 GCSE Results 2000-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 3 Mean %Level 5+</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 4 GCSE %5+A*-C</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H1 adopted a rational approach to school development planning, and consistently used what he considered to be Ofsted ‘best practice’ criteria to review the SDP. During the course of the Larchdale case study the on-going process of review of the SDP has provided evidence of how collegiality underpins the Larchdale SMT consultative structure. Initially, H1 brought an SDP review paper to an SMT meeting in June, 2001, and discussion surrounded the problems of the two-year planning cycle not being prompted by the expected Ofsted inspection. H1 felt this would:

“…identify the key areas for action in the school and provide the governors and SMT with a blueprint for the revised SDP.”

(H1, speaking in SMT meeting, June 2001)

In Williams’ (1994) framework, this meeting could be seen as informative and instructional, in that SMT Links to faculties and year teams would have a role in liaising with their subordinates in developing the review. H1 asserted that SMT and middle managers needed to review the School Development Plan that term, allowing a new two-year plan to be drawn up in draft for consultation soon after. In the next SMT meeting the head argued that:

“…it is good practice for schools to use the Ofsted review process to undertake self evaluation.”

(H1, speaking in SMT meeting, June 2001)
The SDP review document was issued to all members of SMT and the other members of the Policy Forum in order to inform and complete the review process with faculty teams and year teams. This document is included as Redacted J. There is an implied rhetoric here: even though H1 espoused a collegial style, the process can be claimed to be essentially top-down, strongly normative and highly controlled. H1 then went to the next full Staff Meeting and explained the review process which, although instructional, provided opportunities for core staff to raise issues. The draft SDP was then taken to the main consultative group, the Policy Forum, where the head was both informative and instructional, perceiving that the members of this group, especially curriculum and pastoral leaders, had an operational role in contributing to the review. H1 emphasised the rational school effectiveness approach in promoting the use of assessment data for faculties and contextual data for year groups in the review process which yielded evidence of one instance of rhetoric.

In the SMT meeting immediately following the Staff Meeting outlining the SDP review, two SMT members with line management responsibility (DH1 and AH2) argued that the time-scale for the review process within faculties was too tight. H1 responded:

“…you’re senior managers and must tell them (heads of faculty and heads of year) to get on with it (the review) …”

(H1, speaking in SMT meeting, June 2001)

This response from H1 was not in character with his normally relaxed style, and points to significant stress building in both H1 and the other members of SMT at that time.
Very early in Spring Term, 2002, H1 announced in an SMT meeting that he had been recruited as an HMI and would be resigning as head with effect from the end of the Summer Term, 2002. Almost simultaneously DH1, a very successful and highly experienced teacher and manager at Larchdale resigned to follow another career. Immediately there was a sense of crisis amongst the technical core staff: they were losing not only their head, H1, but also their ablest Deputy Head, DH1, who was extremely popular and seen by core staff to be very effective. At this moment DH2 accepted the offer of the Acting Headship from the Governors and immediately the senior management emphasis at Larchdale changed radically. DH2 as H2 became a major critic of H1, although before in the majority of formal settings, especially SMT and staff meetings, she would emphatically support his view. Two new deputy heads, DH3 and DH4, and a new Head of Faculty (HoF3) were appointed and took up their posts in September, 2002, to join an SMT that had now changed quite radically in personnel compared to that described in Table 4.3 above, page 109, as in addition KS4C had been promoted to an Assistant Headteacher (AH4) in September, 2001, and AH1 had been promoted to deputy headship in another school being replaced by a new, young Assistant Head, AH5.

As Acting Head, DH2, now H2, made the following two significant changes to the structure of SMT meetings:

(i) the Leadership Group, (LG), consisting of the acting head, 2 deputies and 2 assistant heads would meet as a separate group once every four weeks
(ii) the SMT comprising all eleven members would meet together for the other three weeks, and after an information sharing session of 30 minutes the group would break up into what were termed Task and Key Stage Groups.
Table 4.5 below provides further details of the re-structured Larchdale SMT in September 2002.

**Table 4.5  Larchdale SMT Members Responsibilities, September 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Major SMT Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Leader of SMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head</td>
<td>DH3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head</td>
<td>DH4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 3 coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Staff development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Sixth Form + ICT Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Head</td>
<td>AH4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 4 coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>HoF1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>HoF3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Key Stage 4 Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Faculty</td>
<td>HoF2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Cover+Assessment Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Year</td>
<td>HoY1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Admissions and Child protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of the membership and focus of the Task and Key Stage groups are outlined in Table 4.6 below:

**Table 4.6  New SMT Meeting Structure September 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>H2, DH3, DH4, AH2, AH3, AH4, AH5</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Strategic management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 1,2,3</td>
<td>Variable – subject to current tasks</td>
<td>H2,DH3,DH4, SDP tasks – eg. Ofsted action plan, Specialist status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage3</td>
<td>DH4, AH5, HoF2, HoY1</td>
<td>DH4</td>
<td>Key Stage 3 Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage4</td>
<td>DH3, AH4, AH2, HoF3</td>
<td>DH3</td>
<td>Key Stage 4 Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage5</td>
<td>AH3, HoF1 (and Sixth Form pastoral team)</td>
<td>AH3</td>
<td>New Sixth Form Federation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure described in Table 4.6 was implemented with three new controls:

(i) a guillotine would be imposed on all SMT meetings at 5.45pm

(ii) minutes taking would follow the published rota but be vetted by H2
(iii) minutes word-processed and distributed by H2’s Personal Assistant.

Amongst the members of the SMT not within the LG, there was at least one expression of concern:

“...I’m really concerned about this ...it’s been coming for some time...we’re being taken out of the picture... ...”

(HoF1, speaking with the researcher, October, 2002)

These words proved prophetic as once H2 was appointed as substantive head from January 2003, she immediately indicated in an SMT meeting that she would be:

“...making further changes to the structure of SMT [...]...

it is still too big and unwieldy and isn’t effective [...]...the LG should meet more often together as it is the strategic team…”

(H2, speaking in SMT meeting, February 2003)

Immediately H2 was confirmed as head at interview in October 2002 she introduced a new school development plan, which, radically, proposed that Larchdale become an eLearning school. In May, 2003, H2 abandoned the meeting structure outlined in Table 4.6 and it was replaced by the two-tier structure outlined in Table 4.7 below:

**Table 4.7 New Larchdale Two-Tier Structure May, 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Scheduled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Group</td>
<td>H2, DH3, DH4, AH2, AH4, AH5, HoF3 as link</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Strategic management</td>
<td>Monday 4.00pm onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management Group</td>
<td>HoF3, HoF2, HoY1 + three other middle managers</td>
<td>HoY3</td>
<td>SDP, Ofsted Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Fortnightly 4.00pm-5.00pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This new structure excluded AH3 and HoF1 who were retiring at the end of Summer
Term 2003. H2 stated in the last ‘full’ SMT in May, 2003 that invited the three new members to the SMG, that she would:

“...occasionally convene a joint meeting of LG and SMG if I felt it would be useful and worthwhile…”

(H2, speaking in last full SMT meeting, May 2003)

The next sub-section discusses further analysis and findings from the Larchdale case study within the theoretical framework of Table 4.1 above, on page 107.

**Discussion of Analysis and Findings within Categories at Larchdale**

This sub-section discusses analysis and findings from the Larchdale case study structured by the use of the categories from Table 4.1 above. Table 4.8 below maps evidence of practice from the observation data into the theoretical framework of identifiable categories introduced as Table 3.1 in Chapter 3, page 79, and extended to include evidence from data collected as Table 4.1 above, page 107. Examples of the method of coding within categories during theory development and how categories were identified in the SMT practice at Larchdale during the course of the data collection for the case study is given as an annotated set of SMT minutes as Redacted L.

In the process of identifying evidence from data corresponding to the categories in Table 4.8, the principles of grounded theory as advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) have been employed, as explained in Redacted N, with examples of coding. The evidence cited from the Larchdale case study in each of the above categories is now discussed by category in turn.
Table 4.8 Categories with Evidence in Practice at Larchdale Jan 2001 – July 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Evidence in practice</th>
<th>Data Source and Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Political re-structuring through re-defining LGs       | PR   | 1. KS4C elevated to LG as AH4  
2. new KS3 coordinator recruited then elevated to LG 
3. DH3 & DH4 appointed 
4. SMT re-structuring                                     | Research diary entries  
09/01,05/02, 09/02, ongoing                                    |
| Conflict characterised by destructive dissent          | DD   | 1. Head of subject prevented from negotiating role in SMT meeting 
2. HoF1 criticises behaviour policy                           | SMT minutes 07/02, 03/01                      |
| Conflict characterised by constructive dissent         | CD   | 1. SMT disagreement over lack of success of behaviour policy 
2. SMT argue over type of school specialism                | SMT minutes 04/02, 05/02                      |
| Fluidity-turbulence from SMT changes                   | FT   | 1. Highly regarded long standing DH1 retired and H1 left 
2. H2 appointed as substantive head                          | Research diary entries  
07/02, 11/02, 07/03                                       |
| SMT stress-tolerance                                   | ST   | 1. Pressure of faculty and pastoral support on SMT members 
2. New timings for meetings                                | SMT minutes 07/02, 03/01                      |
| Vision shared amongst SMT                             | VS   | 1. Specialist school initiative discussed collegially by SMT 
2. ‘eLearning school’ initiative discussed collegially by SMT | SMT minutes 07/02, 03/01                      |
| Collaborative decision-making amongst SMT             | DM   | Shared decision making over:  
1. Foundation status                                  
2. Specialist school status                                | SMT minutes 06/02, 04/02                      |
| Critical incident                                      | CI   | 1. Death of year 9 student from solvent abuse 
2. Budget shortfall for 2002-2003                         | Research diary entries  
07/01,06/02                                               |

**Political Restructuring**

Examining role map data and focus group responses, it is possible to detect elements of what in this study may be called ‘political restructuring’, where heads are utilising the process of replacing SMTs with LGs to radically change their SMT personnel.
At Larchdale evidence of political restructuring included the eventual retirement of HoF1 in July, 2003 as a direct example of (i) above, and KS4C being promoted to the LG as AH4 and the new aspiring KS3 coordinator being recruited for September 2001 and promoted to the LG as AH5 in December 2002 as examples of (ii) above. HoF1 often expressed dissent in meetings, as outlined previously. AH4 and AH5 have been very supportive of H1 and H2 during the period of the case study, for example, AH4’s intervention in a full Staff meeting described below, page 125. These examples support the argument of Mitchell and Tucker (1992) and Hoerr (1996) that political re-structuring can increase the power of an autocratic head, but it might also be an effective tool of inspirational leadership to complement school effectiveness and improvement by strengthening the SMT. The appointment of DH3 and DH4 can be seen as political re-structuring which increased the effectiveness of SMT decision making since the new deputies brought new insights and fresh energy.

**Destructive Dissent**

Fullan (2000) has argued that schools and their SMTs need ‘collaborative diversity’ which, although sometimes leading to elements of conflict, can be utilised by a strong head to move their school forward. An ineffective head will not be able to effectively cope with a well-intentioned sub-group of the SMT raising difficult issues and problems which are then avoided only to erupt as crises later. Head H1 at Larchdale had many instances of dissent to manage, and often the most political dissent arose during SMT meetings, where astute and experienced colleagues often expressed arguments counter to H1’s thinking in eloquent and logical fashion. H1 found this increasingly more difficult to manage during the course of 2002. But usually H1
was highly skilled in defusing dissent both in the full staff meetings, where he and the deputies were careful not to increase antithetical thinking amongst core staff, and within SMT where the head sometimes played ‘devil’s advocate’ in testing an argument or point by offering ‘what if…’ scenarios and through such tactics that deflect dissent through exercise of intellect rather than conflict.

Conflict is characterised in school management by antagonistic and rebellious behaviour and is essentially destructive. Dissent, as defined by Pascale (1991), can be destructive or constructive. Destructive dissent was seen in one Larchdale SMT meeting where DH1 said:

“…I’m putting my foot down over this…[...] I’ll not budge…”

(DH1, speaking in SMT meeting, May 2001)

At Larchdale H1 dealt with this confidently and allowing this championing of dissent by being well aware of the strength of DH1’s position and by using speed of mind saying:

“…come on, you have a fair point and I’m sure the others respect it…
...we need consensus at this meeting to move it forward…”

(H1, speaking to DH1 in SMT meeting, May 2001)

In promoting a culture of persuasive vision-sharing, a head may encounter champions of dissent. An effective head, with authentic, intentional, strong leadership as described by by Bhindi and Duignan (1997) and authoritative leadership identified by Goleman (2000), will utilise the dissent so that it is essentially constructive. Without these qualities, there could be ‘drift’, characterised in the focus group data when a head regularly cancelled SMT meetings at short notice, or
deliberately avoided providing any sort of agenda for meetings that took place, or ‘anarchy’, where the dissenting sub-team exercises control. This is the basis for the concept of ‘destructive dissent’.

Harling (1984) remarks that charismatic or affective legitimation rests on a profession of faith in the correctness of a course of action, but if the affective legitimation is faulty then the champion of dissent may win the day.

Substantial intrinsic destructive dissent, ie. within the SMT, challenging the head constantly, makes the SMT dysfunctional. One example of evidence from Larchdale shows that if even a majority of the teaching staff display destructive dissent ie. extrinsic to SMT, but the SMT is unified, the management of the school may well be effective. In a full Staff meeting in March 2002 a maverick voice vociferously and continually argued his view against intended changes to the school day. AH4 and DH1 interjected and publicly supported H1 in disarming the dissenting colleague. Both H1 and H2 have been extremely careful that the views of SMT are always respected, if not always adopted, ensuring that the SMT is unified, showing that dissent management is an interesting element of senior management practice since in order to be done effectively, it must at least preserve the manager’s authenticity and authority if not enhancing it. The badly managed public show of dissent can wreak tremendous damage. H1 at Larchdale managed dissent exceptionally well by choosing to pass on it, deflect it or face up to it depending on context.

One of the major problems encountered by senior managers at Larchdale is the expectation from core staff that they (the SMT) should be “tough”, “strong”, and
“direct” (terms used by core staff in various full Staff meetings during research)
when dealing with problems involving the behaviour of individual or groups
of students, yet these same core staff are often very tough, strong and direct in
opposing the purposes and intentions of the SMT in trying to engender cultural
change at Larchdale. In focus group discussion extrinsic destructive dissent from a
body of core staff was seen as a major problem for senior management in schools,
requiring finely honed skills.

Table 4.9 below shows evidence from observed interactions recorded at Larchdale of
destructive dissent, as outlined in Chapter 3, split into extrinsic destructive dissent
(from outside the SMT) and intrinsic destructive dissent (from within SMT):

**Table 4.9 Evidence of Destructive Dissent in the Larchdale Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Intrinsic (within SMT)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Extrinsic (outside SMT)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sub-group of SMT hijacks and spins-out an agenda item to impose its own view (DH1 at SMT meeting, June, 2001)</td>
<td>maverick voice hijacks a staff meeting in a dispute over intended changes to the school day (Full Staff meeting, May, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub-group of SMT meets independently of the head on a matter of whole school strategy (logged conversation with DH1, June, 2001)</td>
<td>alienated head of year challenges the head in full staff meeting on the school behaviour policy (logged at Full Staff meeting, May, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a deputy head implies a threat to the head in an SMT meeting publicly asserting dissent in the team (DH1 at SMT meeting, June, 2001)</td>
<td>union representative adopts a polemical agenda to prevent members complying with whole school policy (logged at Full Staff meeting, May, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is in the area of managing destructive dissent that the argument of rhetoric over
substance in the working of SMTs becomes so persuasive, because coping with
these challenges questions the commitment of the head and SMT to collegiality.

**Constructive Dissent**

Constructive dissent is discussed above on page 84. Hardacre (2000) has a cabinet responsibility view of constructive dissent: though there may be vociferous exchanges in SMT meetings or in private discussion, in public, and in particular in public meetings of large groups of core staff the imperative is that the SMT must be seen to be as one and working together. At Larchdale constructive dissent is an important means by which developments and internal initiatives are driven. Examples from observation data at Larchdale are given in Table 4.10 below:

**Table 4.10 Evidence of Constructive Dissent in the Larchdale Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic to SMT</th>
<th>Extrinsic to SMT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>valid argument of one member in a paper supporting a new behaviour policy - gradually supported by head and SMT (AH4, Paper at SMT Meeting, February, 2001)</td>
<td>Union representative view expressed after union group meeting on changes to the behaviour policy (Union representative, logged in full Staff Meeting, March, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representative view given by one member reporting back on views expressed at a Faculty meeting opposing curriculum change (HoF1, SMT Meeting, April, 2002)</td>
<td>voice of experience of well-respected Head of Faculty in flagging up problems with changes to behaviour policy in a full staff meeting (HoF, logged in full Staff Meeting, March, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argument on the ‘what if’ scenarios arising out of change to the school day (Discussion in minutes of SMT Meeting, April, 2002)</td>
<td>fast-tracker view expressing support for HoF in previous example (teacher, logged in Staff Meeting, March, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical friendship offered to head by assistant head in formulation of paper for SMT presentation (AH4, Paper at SMT Meeting, February, 2001)</td>
<td>informed voice – SENCO able to contradict head on national policy in senior forum (SENCO, logged in Policy Group Meeting, March, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incidence of extrinsic-constructive dissent, and how H1 and H2 have managed it
in meetings at Larchdale is an important indicator of both the strength and style of both head’s leadership, authenticity and authority.

**Fluidity-Turbulence**

In some schools, the head may have an un-realistic or over-zealous approach to engendering change which can create turbulence and dislocation, even though the school can be identified as effective. At Larchdale new members of the SMT have brought experience and integrity to the team, and have taken on board the sense of structure and vision in the head’s leadership. This has enabled the SMT to continue to be effective and functional in terms of collaborative practice and collective decision making as well as being clearly seen as an effective team in day-to-day operational and task management. Examples of fluidity turbulence at Larchdale have been the retirement of DH1, the resignation of H1 and the appointment of H2 as substantive head. This fluidity-turbulence is discussed further in the section on *Critical Incidents* below, page 131.

**SMT Stress-Tolerance**

Of the Goleman (2000) traits, the affiliative style, where people offer themselves to counsel or just listen in times of stress, is an important trait within SMT. Not all senior managers have the trait. DH2 said:

“…it is a more feminine quality...but it can be a sign of weakness…”

(DH2, speaking with the researcher, October, 2002)

This corresponds to the Feidler conceptualisation of contingency based leadership where personality factors cause the leader to be either relationship or task oriented as
stated by Dunham (1984). Although KPs in the wider study felt that relationship
oriented behaviour was often seen in women senior managers (but not necessarily
women heads), evidence from Larchdale is inconclusive on this point.

Collegiality as a ‘female quality’ in management may be seen in more fluid
responses to school improvement. Joyce and Calhoun (1995) view school
renewal as moving away from innovations intended to solve problems to more
fluid inquiries into improvement possibilities. At Larchdale, collegiality is
evident in female SMT member’s line management of faculties. Two female senior
managers, H2 and AH2, are also more collegial in their creative use of staff
development and emphasis on having a caring professional community, relating to
the androgyneity of senior management roles as debated by Blackmore (1993) and
Collard (2001) and is a rich area of investigation for future research. Another aspect
of SMT stress-tolerance that emerged during the period of H2’s Acting Headship was
the recognition and acceptance of the ‘burden’ of leadership (H2 in conversation with
the researcher, November, 2002), and again this is a possible area for future research.

Vision Sharing

Odden and Wohlstetter (1995) identified clarity of goals as an essential feature of
well-managed schools and Schwann and Spady (1998) clearly view the misalignment
of vision and mission within school organisations as a block to significant change, and
that since values, visions, goals and outcomes have a short shelf-life they must
immediately inform all decisions. This suggests that even if there is a real consensus
on vision and goals amongst the head and SMT and they are certain where they want
to go, but are uncertain of how they can get it there, then school improvement will
be problematic. Leadership of the head is key. West-Burnham (1997) suggests that leadership demands vision, creativity and sensitivity. ‘Vision’ and ‘dream’ are often used synonymously and in the wider context investigation a focus group clearly viewed this as a mistake (see page 161 below). It is clear in the data of Table 4.11 below that vision sharing was not an observed strength at Larchdale under the leadership of H1 but it has improved under H2.

**Collaborative Decision-Making**

Fullan (1992a) argues that the exercise of strong leadership by the head alone is not sufficient to guarantee school effectiveness: there must be an empowerment of other colleagues to assume leadership roles in the school. Choosing the colleagues is in itself fraught with danger: are the chosen reflecting the core values adopted by the SMT for the school, are they merely the ‘baronial politics’ of Hoyle (1982). Peterson and Deal (1998) and Joyce (1991) have been quoted above, page 42, on the need for the creation of a ‘collegial ambience’ and there were numerous examples of H1 encouraging collaborative decision-making within the SMT. One example of evidence shows that he saw this perhaps as a more desirable rather than an essential characteristic of effective SMT practice. In one SMT meeting discussion focused on the Larchdale bid for specialist school status bid. The head of department of the preferred specialism was invited and wished to re-negotiate her role in the process, as coordinator for the bid. She was strongly supported by her line manager, AH4, and AH2, HoF1, HoF2 and HoY1. H1 said:

“…no…I’m not running a debating society…(DH2) needs to run with this…it’s a deputy’s job…”

(H1, speaking in SMT meeting, July 2002)
Several instances of strong collegial ambience have been observed particularly in sub-
teams of SMT and elements of better communication and collaborative teamwork in
SMT meetings have been logged, as in Table 4.11 below.

Commitment to change at Larchdale, as expressed by compliant middle managers’
responses to initiatives logged in whole school group meetings throughout the course
of the study, is particularly high but the feeling of lack of direction and ideas
amongst key members of the team, for example HoF1 and AH3 were even more
emphatic at the final stage of analysis, particularly in addressing the serious problems
with student behaviour encountered by core staff.

**Critical Incidents**

Turbulence also occurs when a school faces a ‘critical incident’. This may be highly
positive, such as a successful school production worthy of celebration, as outlined by
Woods (1993). It can, however, also be essentially negative, where, for example, an
unsuccessful school faces the stress of an Ofsted inspection or the tragic death of a
member of staff or a student.

Fawcett (2000) writes about the effect of the death of a member of staff to the school,
and both scenarios were encountered during the period of observation at Larchdale.
During Summer Term, 2001, four Year 9 students truanted from Larchdale and
inhaled solvents. One of the students died as a result. The following day many
students were distressed and required segregation and counselling. The incident
was publicised nationally and locally and the stress of the incident itself, the
turbulence of the distress on the following day and the planning of coping strategies
for the service of remembrance and funeral dominated SMT focus for two weeks.
Another type of critical incident is not immediately apparent to either the head or other members of SMT. A single error of judgement, for example a mistake in policy, say in admissions, or in the selection of a key senior manager this year, may equally well affect measurable school improvement or effectiveness in five or seven years time. Fluidity turbulence, for example the loss of key staff, can be seen as a series of incremental critical incidents affecting the stability of school management. During the course of the Larchdale case study H1, DH1, AH1, AH3 and HoF1 left Larchdale and at each stage this increased the turbulence by encouraging more staff to seek to move to other schools. The loss of H1 and DH1 seemed, to six Larchdale teachers, in informal conversations logged during May, 2002, to be highly critical for the school. In November, 2002, four of these expressed their approval, in logged conversations, for H2’s “energy”, “commitment” and “clear ideas” in moving the school forward.

The transition of leadership from H1 to H2 is an example of a critical incident where “crisis breeds opportunity.”

(KP3, FG2, December, 2000)

At Larchdale the pressure on the core staff due to poor pupil behaviour exerted a number of minor critical incidents involving staff refusing to teach given pupils. Critical incident methodologies, such as those discussed by Kibble (1999), can supplement external monitoring systems to help schools develop self-review procedures. The major critical incident during the course of the Larchdale case study, the death of the Year 9 student described above, was such a major event.

Other schools experience similar critical incidents, such as a shooting incident described by KP3 in FG2. Critical incidents can have major influences that may
emerge only gradually yet have dislocating effects. It was then announced, in September 2003, that Larchdale School is to close as part of a major reorganisation of secondary education in the urban area. This ultimate critical incident will have major repercussions for all the staff, students and their parents at Larchdale in the interim.

Analysis of Management Practice of H1 and H2 at Larchdale

Utilising the theoretical framework of Table 3.2 above, analysis of word-processed transcripts of observations of 48 SMT meetings, 14 full Staff meetings, 12 task group meetings, 30 whole school working group meetings, two semi-structured interviews with two follow-up conversations, and 87 informal conversations and interactions recorded in the research diary at Larchdale was undertaken.

By funnelling categories, behaviours, traits and the leadership styles of H1 and H2 and their different SMTs as identified by participants in the transcripts, the long process of concept formation began during 2001. Coding these responses both by category and then instances of strongly positive and strongly negative occurrences of behaviours and traits in the manner explained fully in Redacted N.

There has been significant and careful re-reading of field note transcripts to ensure that saturation of categories supported the concepts at the centre of the investigation comprehensively and coherently. This data obtained from the processes described in Redacted N shows the differences in observed strongly positive and strongly negative practice of H1 and H2 within the 21 behaviours and traits identified in this study.

The findings are shown in Table 4.11 below:
Table 4.11. Instances of Positive and Negative Management Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour/Trait</th>
<th>No. of Positive Instances</th>
<th>No. of Negative Instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SMT is effective</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Good SMT working relationships</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Decision-making is collaborative</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collegial practice is seen as preferable</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Head has strong sense of vision</td>
<td>H1 2 H2 9</td>
<td>H1 8 H2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vision is shared effectively</td>
<td>H1 2 H2 6</td>
<td>H1 7 H2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Consultative systems are effective</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The head is committed to change</td>
<td>H1 12 H2 17</td>
<td>H1 11 H2 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. SMT is stress-tolerant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The SDP is coherent</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. SDP subject to effective monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. SMT communication is effective</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The head displays transformational leadership</td>
<td>H1 4 H2 7</td>
<td>H1 9 H2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The head displays instructional leadership</td>
<td>H1 9 H2 6</td>
<td>H1 4 H2 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The head displays transactional leadership</td>
<td>H1 11 H2 4</td>
<td>H1 6 H2 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The head displays effective leadership</td>
<td>H1 12 H2 11</td>
<td>H1 13 H2 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The school has measurable effectiveness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. The school has measurable improvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. The school is subjectively effective</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>20. The school is subjectively improving</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. The SMT is responsive to core staff</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
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</table>
In this table a high degree of evidence of collegial practice can be seen in 3 and 4 and also observed in sub-teams of the Larchdale SMT with strong elements of better communication and collaborative teamwork in SMT meetings. Curriculum and pastoral development show key elements of collegial practice and staff work via subject departments and year teams together with task-specific working parties. Commitment to change within the SMT has been high but although members of SMT are confident of their own good practice as a team, they appear dysfunctional to a number of core staff, confirmed in the two semi-structured interviews. H2 has more strongly positive indicators than H1.

Some heads will lead well in particular types of school, others in different types of school. Their skills are recognised within a contingency theory of effective headship, being a set of behaviours, traits and practices which can be seen in all effective and successful heads. Both H1 and H2 have displayed elements of this type of headship.

Semi-Structured Interviews
As described in detail on page 91 above, two semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of the Larchdale case study in order to investigate middle management and junior staff perceptions of the effectiveness and collegial practice of the Larchdale SMT. The rationale for these two semi-structured interviews was to gain external perceptions of SMT collegiality and to compare these perceptions with those of individual SMT members and were conducted in October, 2001. The five interview questions and responses were recorded in writing using a pro-forma developed from the model suggested by Wragg (1994), and a completed pro-forma is
The semi-structured interview findings were not in accord with the widely held view within the SMT that it is cohesive and effective and exemplifies intentionality of collegial practice. This is evidence of the gulf that exists between some of the core staff and the SMT. The views of the head of department when comparing his experiences of collegial practice of the Larchdale SMT compared to that in his previous school were interesting in that they contradicted the views of the deputy head of year.

Three important outcomes are identified in the semi-structured interview responses:

(i) contradictory views of individual SMT members effectiveness

(ii) strong dissent on the responsiveness of SMT to core staff

(iii) a sense of drift in the school.

In follow-up telephone conversations made in January 2003, both participants felt that H2 had probably increased the responsiveness of SMT to core staff and reversed drift.

**SMTs in the Wider Context**

The wider context investigation involves two elements:

(i) the study of the experiences of a number of experienced and effective practitioners, the KPs in focus group discussion and a mapping exercise

(ii) the collection and analysis of documentation from the wider sample of 37 secondary schools.

These methods were chosen to address the second research question: what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in SMT practice in secondary schools more generally?
KP’s perceptions have not only made a major contribution to the evidence base for this study, but also to category analysis and concept formation. Documentation from the sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools also had a crucial role in framing the set of categories used in the primary conceptual framework, Table 3.1 above, page 79. These two elements are discussed in turn in the following sub-sections.

**Focus Group Discussions and the Mapping Exercise**

**Focus Group Discussions**

Two focus group discussions were held in November and December 2000. Goldman and Macdonald (1987) outline the principles of focus group discussion, and defined the role of the participant researcher as ‘moderator’, whose management of the group involves subtle use of the techniques of rapport building, exploration, probing and closing. The discussion flowed well in both cases and there was a genuine aura of contribution to the project. Both groups were primed beforehand with a set of general questions surrounding this study, together with technical information. These techniques were used effectively with both groups. In the following discussion, reference needs to made to Table 3.6 on page 94 above.

**Focus Group 1 November 2000**

The first group consisted of KP2, KP4, KP6 and the researcher as participant observer. The discussion focused on bureaucracy, collegiality and effectiveness in secondary schools. The first topic of discussion concerned schools with significant weaknesses and how their heads and SMTs could improve and make them effective given the current difficulties with recruiting new staff. If, as most of FG1 conceded,
the existing senior managers and teaching staff in a given school have been unable, over the medium or longer term, to raise standards, or had been in post whilst standards had deteriorated, then can these same individuals be the source or mechanism whereby a new culture of teaching and learning could transform their school, or would they merely continue to struggle under the burden of the extra pressures of change. Hopkins (2001) asserts that this is a central paradox that is at the core of much educational reform. The decision must be made whether to entrust the teachers in situ to improve learning in a challenging school, or reduce them to being merely technicians of reform. KP6 said:

“…the stark reality of underachievement recognised by so many in challenging environments is, in the end, realising ones own weaknesses, whether as a head, a deputy or assistant head…”

(KP6, FG1, November 2000)

KP2 described the micro-politics of an urban school for which he was link inspector. It had a good reputation for collaborative and collegial practice in strategic decision making and curriculum development, but KP2 thought that this resulted in a power-coercive struggle between the wills of senior management on one hand and those of the ‘barons’ of middle management and key core staff. KP2 said:

“…challenge was in the air at all times, and at every turn...
...the SMT were the worst…they stitched the head up…”

(KP2, FG1, November 2000)

This echoes baronial micro-politics described by Hoyle (1982) and the recognition that many schools are, as Ball (1987) asserts, conflictual.
KP2 suggested that there was one case of a head using extrinsic destructive dissent to generate situations for restructuring the staff and promote change, although the group view was that this is now more difficult with the deepening recruitment crisis, and also dangerous if the maverick voice has an underlying power-base amongst a relatively large enough number of equally dissenting voices in the core staff, a situation experienced by KP4 in FG2. There is here evidence of a possible contradiction to the normative paradigm that empowerment of core staff supports change. In an environment of destructive dissent there may be resistance to change and a direct challenge to the hypothesis that collegiality is a central plank in the leadership and management structure for attaining school improvement.

KP4 said:

“…this is, in my experience, much more unlikely to happen in a more placid, successful rural school than in a less successful school in an urban environment and perhaps in challenging circumstances…”

(KP4, FG1, November 2000)

Her experience as a faculty manager in a similar, neighbouring school to Larchdale was more indicative of the paradox, with a more unionised and challenging, although more empowered, core staff. Her previous post, in a new rural school that had only opened a year previous to her arrival was completely different with a new buildings and resources, an innovative and energetic head and SMT and with young, able and committed core staff who were supportive of their managers. This school climate is an example of the open, healthy school climate described by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) in their study of the conceptual foundations of
trust as a multidimensional construct, highlighting the importance of trust-related issues in schools.

Both KP4 and KP6 raised the issue of time management, and the implications for completion of what they felt were KP4 considered as:

“…the more mundane and repetitive tasks in the everyday running of the school.” (KP4, FG1, November, 2000)

The tasks identified by FG1 as being particularly mundane and repetitive include staff absence cover, chairing the lesser consultative meetings, attendance at governors sub-committee meetings and the linking roles for PTA and ex-students associations, but these tasks, alongside the ever increasing amount of bureaucratic paperwork, were not viewed as being as interesting or developmental when set alongside the more proactive, creative and innovative aspects of strategic management. KP6 said that the mundane tasks like staff absence cover were crucial to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and:

“…everyone wants to be strategic…everybody seems to have a view in SMT meetings but few really grasp the nettle with tasks or real jobs in the school…”.

(KP6, FG1, November 2000)

This relates strongly to the negative perceptions of the heads investigated by Ribbins (1997) and their collective view of the essentially task focused roles that they performed as deputies, and how so little of their roles as deputies prepared them for the strategic role of head, also identified as a problem by Daresh and Male (2000). FG1 agreed that the most strategic and innovative work done by senior staff was done in
“…burning the midnight oil often when the creative urge is

dimmed by tiredness…”  (KP2, FG1, November, 2000)

Focus group discussion included examples of ‘fluidity-turbulence’ arising in
schools S17 and S34 cited by KP2 and KP4.

KP2 reported that in school S17:

“… the new head immediately changed the roles of two deputies

who had only recently been appointed by the predecessor... this caused

real problems within the SMT…”

(KP2, FG1, November 2000)

KP2 went on to explain that he ‘real problems’ were those of everyday tasks not
being effectively managed due to the “corrosive” (KP2) nature of the resulting
intrinsic-destructive dissent. Another example was offered by KP4, who described
another school in which two young ‘fast-track’ assistant heads were appointed from
neighbouring schools after the promotion of two members of the SMT to posts in
other schools. KP4 said of the head in school S34:

“…they are really incompetent day to day...they give it all that

in meetings but can’t hack the grind...what’s really annoying is the head

thinks they’re marvellous…”

(KP4, FG1, November 2000)

The discussion from FG1 provides a number of interesting insights into the
functionality of a number of differing schools, their heads and SMTs and their
effectiveness.
Focus Group 2 December 2000

The second focus group consisted of KP3, KP 4, KP5, KP7 and the researcher as participant observer. The discussion focused again on bureaucracy, collegiality and school effectiveness in the secondary schools of which the participating KPs had first hand experience. The discussion in this focus group was more refined and less anecdotal than the first focus group, and there was a considerable contribution to category development and the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 3 by reading through transcribed notes and using content analysis. Key elements of discussion were critical incidents, stability turbulence, professional development of future senior managers and the experience of the KPs of the problems facing various secondary schools and how all of these related to issues of leadership and management.

Discussion started with problems of student behaviour management, in particular Key Stage 3 year groups that caused concern in a number of KP’s schools. This problem of basic student behaviour was seen by most KPs to be a major challenge in the quest for school improvement and they felt that it was being diminished in order of importance because it was so difficult to solve. The group felt that this would jeopardise the national strategy for school improvement and problems of staff retention and recruitment in schools with this problem would make it a major issue for many secondary schools in the longer term. KP3 said:

“…however effective or strong the leadership of any headteacher or SMT was..[in such an environment]..the problems are made worse by teachers not coping with the challenge..[and that this]...is leading heads and their SMTs to paper over the cracks in
KP5 said that the problem was being made worse by the practice of a number of secondary school heads who had unbalanced their SMTs by appointing supposedly strong males, emphasising their role models to “shore up discipline”, particularly with disaffected boys, but in doing so rejecting some of the more talented female applicants for senior posts. KP4 recalled a recent conversation whilst on interview in another secondary school where the head asserted that:

“… there is a ‘critical mass’ of challenging pupils beyond which a school becomes unmanageable in the time required providing senior management support teaching staff in dealing with the problems of the most challenging pupils…”

(KP4, FG2, December 2000)

There were two examples cited by KPs of what has been termed in this study as ‘political re-structuring’ where heads were utilising the concept of the Leadership Group (LG) to restructure their SMTs by:

(i) demoting SMT members who are considered “burnt out, off message” or “unproductive” (KP4 describing former failing senior management colleague, FG1, November 2000)

(ii) promoting often younger colleagues from middle management who are considered “more energetic”, “offering greater potential” or “more dynamic” (KP6 describing new young senior management colleague, FG2, December 2000)

FG2 discussion continued with what was felt to be a real test of collegiality within the
SMT, namely, *communication*. Participants conjectured that schools having effective communication within the SMT were not necessarily being effective in either top-down or bottom-up communication ie. to and from core staff.

KP3 said that his first head had been a visionary and highly reflective manager

“…always very much emphasised the important role of her two deputies as being her ‘eyes and ears’ amongst the body of the staff in the staff room….”

(KP3, FG2, December 2000)

He followed on

“…she said that all the SMT needed to have effective communication to all core staff both verbally and in writing…

...memos are all well and good but often staff needed a verbal jolt as well.”

(KP3, FG2, December 2000)

The focus group members felt strongly that time pressure was often blamed for the lack of consistency in the way that the SMT conducted their line management meetings and communication. Some were very formal and rigorously timed with rigid agendas and minutes being taken almost verbatim. Some line management meetings were seen as far less formal with often little more than a brief conservation about current progress, perhaps prompted by the senior manager simply asking “How is it going?” . This type of meeting reflected well on the confidence and capability of the senior manager and their respect for the ability and professionalism of the junior member of staff that they were managing but not where failing middle managers needed pressure and support.
Best practice of line management as seen by KP5 and confirmed by the group is:

“…through regular, formal meetings with short agendas and with
brief minutes that are a true record agreed by both parties and
copied to the SMT link, the middle manager (concerned) and the
head”

(KP5, FG2, December 2000)

KP4 said that the middle manager should, as a matter of routine, make their team aware of the outcomes of these line management meetings either by the distribution of minutes or by briefing the team verbally at the next faculty or year meeting. In this briefing, matters that were confidential, for example, performance management outcomes for a particular member of the team would not be included. In at least three schools it was practice to code confidential items such as these in minutes by using a coding method to ensure confidentiality. The focus group felt that although this top-down process should happen, it rarely did, and usually due to lack of time due to the problem of excessive bureaucracy. The view was expressed that this was flawed practice when attempting to train middle managers for future senior management.

Another perception from FG2 concerned the overall calibre of younger new recruits to SMT was considered to be diminishing and that this was going to be a continuing issue for heads and SMTs. The group felt that the problem was due to a number of factors but the most prominent was that as the number of high-calibre entrants to the teaching profession had declined, so had the number of exceptional candidates with the ultimate potential for headship. Another perspective in this discussion was that promotion to the LG was the only way for potential heads and deputies to aspire to future promotion. It was the view of the Larchdale SMT
that no one from outside the LG of a secondary school should become a deputy head, reducing markedly the number of candidates for such posts.

FG2 discussed three different types of SMT structure:

(i) a core SMT including the head, deputy heads and assistant heads

(ii) the core plus extension team usually meeting separately but regularly together

(iii) the extended team that includes the core and other senior staff with operational and strategic roles and always meets formally together

During the period of the Larchdale case study the structure of the SMT was extended under H1, initially core plus extension under H2 as acting head and then purely core. According to the KPs in schools with the core SMT, meetings are often during the school day and also called at short notice. In schools with a core plus extended SMT, the whole SMT meets far less frequently, fortnightly or less, and these meetings are almost always scheduled outside the normal school day and in schools with the single extended SMT, this meets formally on a weekly basis again at the end of the school day. KPs described interesting school situations where informal meetings between sub-teams of this team occurred, for example the head and one or more deputies.

In a variation of the extended SMT, KPs reported the constantly changing SMT where temporary or co-opted members join SMT for a limited period. For example, at Larchdale the Head of Business Studies attended three SMT meetings during the course of the school’s specialist school bid investigation contributing her expertise.
KP3 cited the case of examinations officers who are only present in meetings for some specific agenda items and have information providing rather than decision making roles.

FG2 provided evidence of what can be deemed a real crisis in some secondary school’s SMTs: acrimony and destructive dissent. KP7 was adamant her early experience of SMT membership was:

“…an unhappy experience due to the disharmony and dissent within the SMT…” (KP7, FG2, December, 2000)

Although disharmony is evident in KPs responses about other schools, where some acrimonious restructuring is taking place, in the case elicited by KP7 it appeared to FG2 that it represented an ongoing difference in core philosophy between the head and his subgroup of supporters, which here can be termed the ‘cabal’ and the subgroup of SMT dissenting from the cabal’s view. Although this dissent can be positive and represent a way forward for the head and SMT, as in one example given by FG3 where specialist school bid was being prepared and a influential and powerful subgroup of the SMT was decidedly against change of status for the school but gradually ground down by argument, the planning and conduct of which was then used to assuage governor and staff resistance, in all the other cases of this type of disharmony the members of the focus group felt that the SMT was in crisis and close to being dysfunctional.

The importance of critical incidents to the stability of school management was discussed following an anecdotal description of a major critical incident by KP3. Both KP3 and KP4 worked in school S5 in Table 4.14 below, and had first hand
experience of a shooting incident at S5. A student who had presented with severe emotional and behavioural problems brought a firearm into the school and fired it, wounding staff and causing havoc and distress. Many staff and students were traumatised by the experience and some needed segregation and/or counselling. The incident was publicised on local television and in a national newspaper. The collective stress of the incident itself, the turbulence of the distress on the students and staff directly affected and the planning of coping strategies for the school after the event placed many difficulties in the path of members of SMT. The group expressed the view that the majority of these were well-managed.

From consideration of the FG evidence it is clear that both FG1 and FG2 discussed deep issues of SMT collegiality that are at the core of this study. The discussion displayed real insights into the practice of senior management in 17 secondary schools. Although the discussion was anecdotal and may be criticised from a methodological stance as being essentially secondary rather than primary data it may be strongly argued that the KPs in both focus groups provided an important commentary on senior management practice in secondary schools at that juncture and clearly assisted the researcher greatly in concept formation in the early processes of the research and also in being able to draw further inferences from each dimension of the study.

**The Mapping Exercise**

The mapping exercise for KPs consisted of their subjective professional perceptions of the level of importance of each of the twenty one behaviours and traits to school effectiveness, as described above on page 99. The set of combined outcomes of the
exercise for the four KPs, KP1, KP3, KP4 and KP6, are summarised in Table 4.12:

Table 4.12 Professional Perceptions from KPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour/Trait</th>
<th>KP1</th>
<th>KP3</th>
<th>KP4</th>
<th>KP6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. SMT is effective</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Good SMT working relationships</td>
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<td>3. Decision-making is collaborative</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Collegial practice is seen as preferable</td>
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</table>

Discussion of Analysis and Findings from the Mapping Exercise

The first interesting finding from analysis of Table 4.12 is that no behaviour or trait is regarded as not relatively important. Unanimity for essential features was expressed for the SMT being effective, the head has strong sense of vision and that this is shared effectively, is committed to change and displays effective leadership. In these cases the school has measurable and subjective effectiveness and improvement. Unanimity for desirable rather than essential features was expressed for decision-making is collaborative, collegial practice is seen as preferable, SMT is stress-tolerant
and the head displays transactional leadership. The responses from Table 4.12 have been aggregated into Table 4.13 below:

**Table 4.13  Behaviours and Traits: Professional Perceptions from KPs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mostly As - Essential</th>
<th>Mostly Bs - Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMT is effective</td>
<td>Good SMT working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head has a strong sense of vision</td>
<td>Decision-making is collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vision is shared effectively</td>
<td>Collegial practice is seen as preferable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are effective consultative systems</td>
<td>SMT is stress-tolerant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head is committed to change</td>
<td>SDP is coherent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP is effectively monitored and evaluated</td>
<td>Head’s leadership is transformational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT communication is effective</td>
<td>Head’s leadership is instructional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head’s leadership is effective</td>
<td>Head’s leadership is transactional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has measurable effectiveness</td>
<td>Mostly Cs - Not relatively important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has measurable improvement</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school is subjectively effective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school is subjectively improving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT is responsive to core staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first interesting finding from this analysis is that no trait is regarded, on average, as being not relatively important. This suggests that the selection of traits was valid and consistent with professional perceptions of good practice. One criticism of the analysis and traits is the possible neglect of one or more essential traits from the list. However, none of the KPs suggested any others. The results in Table 4.13 show that the KPs put an emphasis on sound bureaucratic systems, the visionary leadership of the head as a change agent, and how this vision is shared effectively to influence, measurably, school improvement and effectiveness. Clearly visible school improvement and effectiveness both objectively measured using performance indicators such as examination results and felt subjectively as the well-being and ethos of the school are seen as essential school traits. Good working relationships within the SMT and collaborative decision-making in general are seen as desirable but
not essential, whereas SMT responsiveness to core staff is seen as essential.

**Analysis and Findings from Document Analysis**

Content analysis was used to analyse and map concepts from a wide variety of school management and contextual documentation both from Larchdale and from the wider sample of 37 secondary schools. Management documentation was collected following the scheme defined by Robson (1993) and outlined on page 100 above. Content analysis was implemented using the coding system of the conceptual framework described above in Table 3.1, page 79, and explained in Redacted N. Examples of coded document analysis are the Larchdale SMT role maps included as Redacted E. Content analysis involved multiple re-readings and coding instances in developing and utilising the theoretical frameworks described above (page 79) enabled the grounding of theory related to collegiality and contingency based leadership.

The five types of common school documentation collected for the wider sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools are listed in Table 3.10 above, featuring for each:

(i) the most recent Ofsted report in order to determine Ofsted ratings for the school and the quality of leadership and management

(ii) performance data for 1998-2002 in order to measure school effectiveness over the medium term

(iii) the school prospectus for admission in Year 7 to investigate school ethos and vision

(iv) the current SMT role map for evidence of the type of SMT structure and coherence of roles
(v) the current school development plan to find evidence of vision, targets for improvement and consistency with other documentation.

Documentary analysis of school Ofsted reports, their published performance data, the data obtained from their prospectuses, SMT role maps and SDPs has been completed for the wider sample of large mixed secondary schools as described in Chapter 3 on page 100 above. This has enabled both objective and subjective judgements by the researcher on the effectiveness of a particular school and, more tentatively its SMT. Annual examination results at Key Stage 4 GCSE and Ofsted inspection ratings can be seen to provide relatively objective performance indicators for each school in the public domain, but this can be open to criticism as has been discussed previously.

The discussion of findings from the documentary analysis of this sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools in the study follows. The data is recorded in Table 4.14 below, based on the coding explained on page 102 above. From analysis of the data that was collected as responses from the Focus Group discussions, exercises and also from the very wide ranging documentary data from the wider sample of schools there is considerable evidence of the three types of SMT structure in practice and that there are a very wide range of management styles within SMT communication with various levels of collegiality and collaboration at play. In some of these schools the leadership of the head may be justifiably termed *contingency based*.

The nature of the data collected, the analysis and the funnelling of evidence from the sample of 37 secondary schools has been highly personal and subjective from the researcher’s perspective and it is important to assert at this point that all judgements, inferences or conclusions drawn from this documentary evidence are necessarily
Table 4.14 Contextual and Performance Data for the 37 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Locale/ Envnt</th>
<th>%5+ A*-C GCSE Mean 99-02</th>
<th>Ofsted School Rating</th>
<th>Ofsted Head/ SMT Rating</th>
<th>SMT Type (at 07/02)</th>
<th>SDP Coherent/ Costed</th>
<th>Quality Of Brochure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>R/CP</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>I/CP</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>U/TF</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>I/TF</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>Core</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>R/PR</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>S7</td>
<td>U/CP</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Core+Ext</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>S8</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<tr>
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<td>U/PR</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Core+Ext</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>U/DR</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I/TF</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>S21</td>
<td>U/TF</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Core+Ext</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
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<td>U/TF</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Core+Ext</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>S25</td>
<td>I/PR</td>
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<td>Core+Ext</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Core</td>
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<tr>
<td>S27</td>
<td>I/PC</td>
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<td>Core+Ext</td>
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<td>S28</td>
<td>U/PR</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<tr>
<td>S29</td>
<td>U/PR</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>S30</td>
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<tr>
<td>S31</td>
<td>R/PR</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Core</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>S32</td>
<td>R/PR</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core+Ext</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S33</td>
<td>U/PC</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Core+Ext</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>S34</td>
<td>U/TF</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Core</td>
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<tr>
<td>S35</td>
<td>I/TF</td>
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<td>Core</td>
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<td>S36</td>
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<td>Core</td>
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<td>S37</td>
<td>R/PC</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of data in Table 4.14 shows the following features:

(i) there are more core SMTs (25) than core +extension SMTs (12) in the sample and there is no pattern discernible between the type of SMT structure and the Ofsted rating of the school or its leadership and management.

(ii) schools that are turbulent fields (8) have generally lower performance at Key Stage 4 over time and more B or C Ofsted ratings (5 out of 8, 62.5%) than the other schools in the sample (12 out of 29, 41%).

Of the 14 PR schools, 9 have strong indicators of management effectiveness and 8 of these schools have core SMTs.

(iii) schools with incoherent SDPs (5) did not receive Ofsted A ratings.

(iv) of the schools where Ofsted ratings are both A (20), 16 have core SMTs, coherent and costed SDPs and very good quality prospectuses, and of these 11 have at least a mean of 50% 5+ GCSE A*-C students in the period from 1999-2002.

(v) analysis of SMT role maps for the 37 schools showed that SMT roles were well defined and comprehensive in 22 schools and the 15 schools without well defined roles included the 5 with incoherent SDPs and no Ofsted A ratings.

(vi) structural change to SMTs in the sample of 37 schools had occurred in 11 or who had changed the structure of the SMT by excluding non-LG members and their core is the LG and 4 more were in the process of moving to this core LG structure, so that in all 29 of the 37 schools will
have core LGs and six of the schools were continuing with a core LG and
extension group meeting together inclusively as SMTs without the LG
meeting as a separately as a core

(vii) analysis of school prospectuses for intending Year 7 pupils and their
parents were judged poor for 2 schools, both of which had similarly poor
indicators in their Ofsted ratings.

However, the inferences and conclusions from the analysis and findings from
the 37 secondary schools have provided some interesting insights for the
conclusions relating to the second research question: what are the collegial and
collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more
generally? What is clear here is that no clear picture of a paradigm of collegial
practice within these SMTs.

**The Impact of SMT Collegiality on School Effectiveness**

The third and most challenging research question for this study is what is the impact
of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on their effectiveness?

*Impact* implies the influence or impulse of theories or ideas on practice.

This research has identified the categories of Table 4.1, page 107 above, relating
to collegial practice of SMTs both at Larchdale and in the wider context of the
schools reported by KPs and the sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools, and
their affect on school effectiveness. In this section, data from the Larchdale case
study, from focus group discussion and the mapping exercise are utilised to gauge
the impact of collegial practice within SMTs in secondary schools on their
effectiveness. This data may, or may not have been drawn upon in previous
discussion, since it is imperative that data analysis and findings relate to addressing coherently and comprehensively the specific research question under enquiry.

**The Impact of Strong Leadership**

H1 and H2 at Larchdale and 12 of the 16 heads in the schools described and discussed by the KPs were energetic and enthusiastic. They were proud of their schools and their leadership, expressed delight in working with students and had great confidence in the majority of their teachers. Within the focus groups KPs reported that heads in general were knowledgeable about what was happening in the various teams in their schools in terms of the quality of teaching and learning, social inclusion and pastoral care as well as their own specific ongoing issues. KPs were unanimous in both focus groups that these heads relishes leadership. At Larchdale H1 gave this impression to the researcher in six conversations during the course of 2001. Four members of the then extended SMT felt they needed confidence in the strongly authentic and authoritative leadership of their head, and take energy from this confidence. Head H1 at Larchdale conducted weekly SMT meetings in a way that seemed to SMT members as validating their work and that their contributions to debate were considered, but a different four members of SMT considered that these meetings were badly structured and ‘woolly’.

Head H2 encouraged the SMT members to be critical of their performance, especially if progress (with students, tasks and with teams) was not up to par. Other heads, as reported by KPs in the focus group discussions, appeared to do this best by modelling self-criticism and utilising as a strength.
KP3 reported the head of S8 describing in one SMT meeting a task that she had tried to accomplish, and then criticising her methods to her team. It was conjectured by the other KPs that if this was done in a positive light, always seeking to respect SMT activity and commitment then the SMT can be a supportive environment for all. The schools led by such heads, according to KPs, are satisfying environments in which to work, as expressed by DHoY at Larchdale in their semi-structured interview. In FG1 KP6 characterized the role of the head of S9 as

"...clearly facilitating the efforts of teachers and managers to be better teachers and managers by collegial discussion and by asking colleagues to consider how something could be done differently." (KP6, FG1, November, 2000)

KP6 continued by saying that

“...the head’s questioning was not seen as tacit criticism but as enquiry by a critical friend with an intense interest in new ideas…” (KP6, FG1, November, 2000)

This approach fosters the ideal of collegial practice and also of contingency based leadership. Evidence from this study (Tables 4.12 and 4.13) suggests that successful heads adapt their leadership styles organically but adopt an essentially bureaucratic and task centred approach to focusing their SMT on clear goals. KPs in FG2 were in agreement that heads facilitated SMT goal setting by constant interaction with the SMT. The Larchdale SMT interaction included ‘targets’, ‘planning’, ‘improvement’, ‘development’, indicating a knowledge base set around planning and goal setting. KPs were sure that heads in schools where SMTs worked within this
framework of self-motivation worked harder themselves and gained reinforcement from within SMT itself. In S16 reported by KP2 in FG1, the head and SMT had begun to adopt greater collegial behaviour in meetings: for example, joint chairing and setting of agendas – yet in no way was the head weakened in terms of authentic leadership. These behavioural categories are interesting in the analysis of contingency based leadership that fosters pro-active and effective self-managing teams.

From the categories that have emerged from the data, that of ‘political restructuring’ is at the current time the most evocative of what can be seen as strong, authoritative leadership. There were a number of examples of SMTs where heads are utilising the new concept of the Leadership Group (LG) to restructure their SMTs. In America Mitchell and Tucker (1992) and Hoerr (1996) assert that that political re-structuring can increase the power of an autocratic instructional head. The hierarchical core with extended SMT model has a number of features that seem to increase the power of the head, but the heads with such SMTs were not seen as necessarily autocratic or instructional. Politically restructuring the SMT in either of the two models can also be seen as an effective tool of inspirational and visionary leadership to compliment school effectiveness and improvement by strengthening the SMT. However, the evidence from this study suggests that there are a variety of levels of rhetoric at play in SMT practice and the extension of the contrived collegiality typology with respect to evidence from SMT practice in Table 5.2 on page 172 below formulates a conceptualisation of this rhetoric. In FG2 the KPs agreed that an ineffective head may struggle to deal with a well-intentioned sub-group of the SMT raising its own difficult issues and problems which are then avoided only to erupt as crises later.
Dissent and its management was a key aspect of the wider context investigation. Harling’s (1984) remarks (page 45) provide a clear warning for any head that if there is substantial destructive dissent within the SMT, which can be termed as *intrinsic* dissent, towards the leadership practice, methodology, philosophy and culture then the management of the school is likely to become fractured and dysfunctional. Evidence from Larchdale of AH4’s support of H1 shows that even if a large majority of the teaching staff display destructive dissent ie. *extrinsic* to SMT, but the SMT is unified, the management of the school may well be effective. KP4 in FG1 said that that there was a case of a head in S28 utilising extrinsic destructive dissent to generate a situation for restructuring the SMT and promote change, although the group view from FG1 was that this is more difficult with the deepening recruitment crisis.

The researcher raised the issue of dissent with KPs in FG1 and gained insights from responses on the incidence of extrinsic-constructive dissent and how it is managed in public within schools and whether this might be a critical indicator of how collegial and collaborative practice is actually working in a particular school. The collective view of the staff on the strength and style of the head’s leadership, authenticity and authority might be seen as key to the ongoing success of any school. In some schools, as indicated by FG1, the head, particularly a recently appointed head, may have an un-realistic or over-zealous approach to engendering change which can create turbulence and dislocation, even though in recent history the school can be objectively identified as effective by the criteria defined earlier. At Larchdale, the appointment of H2 saw the debate of numerous initiatives, for example, the eLearning school and electronic registration, which were never implemented due to lack of core support.
Focus group discussion also included similar examples of fluidity-turbulence arising from SMT re-structuring as reported by KP2 and KP4 above. A new head who almost immediately changes the roles of deputy heads can either achieve a positive experience if the deputies are receptive and capable of self-renewal and the head’s vision is shared with them effectively or it could be a negative outcome in the case of deputies who are antagonistic or resistant to change, or where the head has not been able to communicate their vision. The perceived lack of structure and vision in the head’s leadership can cause the SMT to be dysfunctional in terms of collaborative practice even though it could be seen as an effective team in operation and task management. The category of fluidity-turbulence can also be detected in the Larchdale SMT role map documentation. There is evidence from FG2 discussion that more effective SMTs were more collegial and collectively more stress-tolerant but KP7 felt that the:

“‘people-centred’ focus was enhanced by women senior managers but not necessarily women heads…who seem to me to often have very strong male qualities...” (KP7, FG2, December 2000)

At Larchdale H2, a female head, was felt by the majority of the SMT to be a more effective head than H1, a male. As described above, the androgyneity of senior management can be seen as a major area for further research. The work on goals of Odden and Wohlstetter (1995) and Schwann and Spady (1998) clearly views the misalignment of vision and mission within school organisations as a block to significant change, and in FG1 KPs were in agreement with KP2 that since

“…visions and goals have a short shelf-life they must inform all decisions...” (KP2, FG1, November, 2000).
and suggested that even if there is a real consensus on vision and goals amongst
the head and SMT and they are certain where they want it to go, but are uncertain of
the mission of how they can get it there, then school improvement will be
problematic. FG1 felt that leadership of the head is key, and spoke in terms of the
West-Burnham (1997) criteria of vision, creativity and sensitivity, again embodied in
the concept of contingency based leadership. In FG2 discussion one participant
impressively recited:

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without
vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change
the world!”  

(KP3, FG2, December, 2000)

and ascribed the quotation to Fullan. Even more impressive. However, the source is
actually from Jay Barker (1995). But the persuasiveness of this quotation was
appreciated and reflected upon by FG2 at the time – it was as if heads’ vision
had a mystical significance.

The notion of collegial practice can be extended beyond what Bush (1995) contends
that organisations determine policy and make decisions through consultation and
discussion leading to consensus, by incorporating the ‘five different doors’ to school
improvement outlined by Joyce (1991). The evidence from the analysis of Table 4.14
where 29 of the sample of 37 secondary schools had or were moving towards
having a core LG suggests that secondary school SMTs can be more effective
when smaller, tighter and more simply collaborative, that is, they communicate
within the network the progress on the tasks that they are delegated rather than
exercise collective decision-making in a larger team.
Analysis of observations at Larchdale also support this view, and the responses of KPs to the Professional Perceptions exercise suggest that collaborative decision-making is a desirable rather than essential characteristic of SMT practice. The results of the mapping exercise suggest strongly that there is conceptual pluralism in the way that effective, authentic heads utilise collegial, political and bureaucratic practices in their operational, tactical and strategic management strongly identified with this contingency based model of school leadership. Of the behaviours, traits and styles outlined in Table 4.1 there are ten key characteristics that correspond directly to the leadership qualities of the head, and these form the basis for the attributes of contingency based headship as outlined in Table 3.2 on page 81. In the mapping exercise KPs clearly view that the effective and visionary leadership of the head is a key ingredient of school effectiveness and that successful heads incorporate these ten key characteristics in their leadership and management in differing contexts.

As described in the definition on page 24, rhetoric can be identified in observed practice or recorded discussion when the participant asserts one philosophy or emphasises the importance of a characteristic but whose actions and practices contradict their assertions.

The results of the two semi-structured interviews with core staff at Larchdale also demonstrated this rhetoric. The questions were specifically targeted to tease out the perceptions of the participants on how their SMT operates collegially, and the responses clearly show that whilst both HoY1 and DHoY valued the individual support given by individuals on the SMT, the team itself was not seen as collegial.
In FG2 KPs were candid about their experiences of the failure of heads to engender true collegial practice and cited the difficulties of a particular head in dealing with intrinsic destructive dissent. KP4 and KP7 described their common experience of school S5, confirming that the SMT in the school was:

“..in crisis… one newly appointed assistant head was very disaffected and critical of SMT practice…and extremely toxic in meetings especially towards the head…”

(KP7, FG2, December 2000)

Since this school was seen as effective and had received a very positive Ofsted Report it might be expected that the SMT functioned effectively and collegially but from the responses of KP4 and KP7 this may be not the case and in this discussion KP2, KP3 and KP7 felt there is less positive evidence supporting the impact of collegial practice within secondary school SMTs than might be implied by its centrality in theory.

From KPs responses it can be conjectured that if a school has leadership which has an autocratic bureaucracy fitting the structural-functional/political typology of Busher and Saran (1994) then it will have effective systems and well-defined SMT operational and strategic roles independently of any consultative or collaborative structures. This is supported by the Larchdale semi-structured interview findings and after careful transcription and analysis of the interview responses it can be strongly suggested that there are major and fascinating issues of substance, rhetoric, micro-politics and ambiguity present in SMT practice at Larchdale, even though AH2 and AH3 were extremely positive about the effectiveness of the Larchdale SMT as a team and think that H1 had been
“…pro-active in including everyone in decision-making.”

(AH2 in conversation with AH3 and the researcher, June 2001)

In another school reported at FG1 by KP2, the SMT had a core and extension model. Members of the extended SMT not within the core were line managed by core members. After observing SMT meetings and undertaking informal discussions with SMT members in the school KP2 thought that:

“…it appeared that SMT itself was dysfunctional but it had a small core of recently appointed staff whom the head had given a special role…”

(KP2, FG1, December 2000)

KP2 explained that this core met with the head informally on a frequent basis that ensured the exclusion of the other SMT members at these times. It is possible to gauge from this state of affairs that the complete SMT reflected a high degree of intrinsic-destructive dissent, and that the head had managed this by re-constituting a smaller, non-dissenting core. The head had effectively disenfranchised the dissenting sub-group and reinforced his authority with subordinates in the new core. This head had also appointed to the SMT colleagues with whom he had worked with as a deputy in his previous school. Establishing at least one loyal non-dissenting inner-core member of SMT is, from KP discussion, one of the best strategies for managing dissent and other KPs confirmed that it had led, in their view pragmatically, to the appointment of colleagues who had worked with the head previously post, cynically pointed out by KP2 in FG1 as “…nepotism or cronyism…”.

A difficult dissenting voice can be the erudite, charismatic and essentially polemical extrinsic-destructive dissenter. Various management strategies used by H1 and H2 in
dealing with this type of dissent at Larchdale have been observed, in particular the case described above where H1 primed AH4 for his support prior to the full staff meeting discussing the new school day. But there were three cases reported by Larchdale staff in conversations with the researcher where the rebuke was made by H1 in private.

One strategy of intrinsic dissent management utilised by heads is invoking the core LG model, opposed to ‘flattening’ team structures following Katzenbach and Smith (1993). H2 did this to reduce what was perceived by her to be the cumbersome nature of the Larchdale SMT meetings involving 10 or 11 members, but can be seen as eroding the collegiality of the SMT as a decision making body.

In the following final chapter on Conclusions the findings from the Larchdale case study and the Wider Context Investigation are discussed and applied to new thinking on the nature of secondary school SMT collegiality.
Chapter 5

Conclusions

Introductory Remarks

This research study has sought to investigate, analyse and reflect on the nature of collegiality within secondary school SMTs and also on the relationship between collegial SMT practice and contingency based headship. Is there any substantive evidence of collegial SMT practice at Larchdale, or in the chosen wider sample of 37 mixed comprehensive secondary schools, having any influence on their effectiveness? Is there evidence of collegial substance or management rhetoric?

The three research questions posed in Chapter 1, on page 23 above, concerned SMT collegiality at Larchdale, in secondary schools more generally and the impact of SMT collegial practice on secondary school effectiveness. This chapter is structured in four parts, the last three parts addressing the three key conclusions in answer to each of the individual research questions in turn. The first part focuses on a discussion of the extension of contrived collegiality, identified in the pro-active, positive, harmonious but often dichotomous, antagonistic, almost antithetical relationship between the exercise of leadership, particularly in the implied practice and rhetoric of transactional and transformational leadership, and the collegial mechanisms of SMTs. The application of the wide variety of qualitative methods, including grounded theory, has led to the development of the categories identified in Table 4.1 on page 107 above, categorising the influences on the effectiveness of SMTs. These categories are utilised in all the sections below.
The three key conclusions from this study relate directly to answering the three research questions, but as they also involve discussing the substance and rhetoric of SMT teamwork. It is now important to continue with the exposition of a tentative extension of Andy Hargreaves’ (1994) concept of *contrived collegiality*.

**The Nature of SMT Collegiality**

The nature of SMT collegiality is highly complex and innately micro-political.

On the evidence from the findings of the previous chapter a tentative extension of contrived collegiality within SMTs can be suggested that reflects elements of both substance and rhetoric at play. This is possible by using a conceptual approach to the description of collegial practice and extending concepts from substantive literature.

This extension of contrived collegiality is outlined in Table 5.1 below, together with a classification of substance or rhetoric and with examples from evidence in practice:

**Table 5.1 Extended Typology for SMT Collegiality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Collegiality</th>
<th>Substance/Rhetoric</th>
<th>Examples in Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentional collegiality</td>
<td>substance</td>
<td>Generated intentionally by the head and SMT and evident in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic collegiality</td>
<td>substance</td>
<td>Self-generating based on the philosophical stance of most SMT members also evident in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dichotomous collegiality</td>
<td>rhetoric</td>
<td>Organic collegiality that is clearly evident but denied by the members of SMT opposed to it and preferring more hierarchical practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coerced collegiality</td>
<td>rhetoric</td>
<td>Forced collegial practice surrounding mock collective decision making processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythic collegiality</td>
<td>rhetoric</td>
<td>The head and SMT state and believe that they are collegial but there is clear evidence in practice that they are not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of the Extended Typology for SMT Collegiality

Each category of the typology is discussed below.

**Intentional** collegial practice is evident in the working mechanisms of some SMTs and co-exists with leadership characterised by *contingency based headship*. Intentional collegial practice that promotes effective and efficient SMT decision making and task delivery has some impact on overall school effectiveness and it is linked to *intentionality* and *authenticity* outlined by Bhindi and Duignan (1997).

**Organic** collegiality is typified by a flexible, amoebic approach to SMT collaboration which operates independently of policy, philosophy or directional characteristics of SMT members. It is essentially substantive because it is explicitly evident in practice but differs from intentional collegiality because it is implicit to the working mechanisms of the SMT. On reflection, senior managers would conclude that this form of practice was substantively collegial but would deny that there was an *intentional aim to invoke it*. Organic collegiality, like intentional collegial practice, promotes effective and efficient SMT decision making can have some impact on school effectiveness but it may be too fluid and to promote clarity and coherence within SMT processes, leading to a ‘garbage can model of organisational choice’ after Cohen, et. al. (1972) and evident in Oakfields School (Bell, 1989). It may be seen as working independently from the designs of the contingency based head.

**Dichotomous** collegiality is highly micro-political and hinges on the denial of organic collegiality within elements of the SMT by the head or other individuals even when it is substantively evident in the collaborative practice of sub-teams of SMT. This denial is rhetoric and is evident in the case of two findings from KPs. In one SMT the
head was highly managerialist and autocratic, dominating SMT meetings, yet a
sub-team of a deputy and two assistant heads worked collegially on Key Stage 3
strategy. In S4 the ineffective head cancelled SMT meetings regularly and denied that
the SMT was a true team, yet sub-teams met and worked collegially and effectively,
having a clear impact on the effective management of the school.

Coerced collegiality involves participants who are aware being forced into teamwork
by an autocratic, hierarchical or power-coercive head or SMT but powerless to
register their objections to this practice. In the evidence provided by KPs, coerced
collegiality results in little discussion, and compliant legitimation, of decisions that
may well be flawed in themselves or rendered unworkable. At Larchdale it may be
claimed that H2 changed the SMT meetings structure of SMT to enable coercive
collegiality and exclude dissenters from key decision making processes.

Mythic collegiality is the antithesis of dichotomous collegiality: whereas dichotomous
collegiality is characterised by the denial of substantive collegial practice and the
rhetoric is iconoclastic, mythic collegiality is based on the false assertion that collegial
practice exists within SMT when it is clearly evident that it does not. Since, as is clear
in the literature, for example, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) and Drach-Zahavy and
Somech (2002), teamwork, collaboration and heterogeneity are seen as important
there are heads who assert that their SMTs are collegial, but in reality they are
clearly not. In one case, the head concerned was identified by KP2 as an essentially
micro-political operator who was well aware that their assertion of collegiality
was false, and in the other case KP4 felt that at S5 the head was really quite unaware
of the lack of real collegial practice within the SMT. This case is highly correlated
with increasing institutional turbulence in a placid random school.

The extended typology of contrived collegiality is supported in the literature, as outlined in Chapter 2 above (page 42), for example, Hargreaves (1994) and Brundrett (1998), who initialises the questioning of the rhetoric collegial practice in school management by emphasising control rather than true legitimation.

**Perceptions from the Larchdale Case Study**

The first key conclusion of this study relates to Larchdale and answers the first research question: what were the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in the single-site case study secondary school, Larchdale?

H1 and H2 sometimes abused the processes of discussion and consultation in SMT meetings in order to effect the contrived legitimation of policies and decisions. It was here that the micro-political aspects of dissent management were clearly seen to disrupt this contrived legitimation, suggesting management rhetoric was at play. However, from a deeper perspective on the analysis and findings of the Larchdale case study it is evident that there were internally perceived high levels of *intentional* collegial and collaborative practice within the SMT and that there is also evidence that this practice was at work in some of its sub-teams and other teams in the school. However, interview evidence from the DHoY and evidence from SMT minutes suggests that there are elements of *mythic* and *coercive* collegiality at play.

Larchdale is clearly a challenging *turbulent field* school within the Hoy and Miskel (1987) typology. H2 replaced H1’s large amorphous SMT with the core LG and employed an extended SMT, the SMG which, although seemingly influential in collaborative decision-making, implied an even more hierarchical structure for the
SMT than under H1. This contradicts the business approach of ‘flattening’ teams of Katzenbach and Smith (1993), but it can be tentatively suggested that the SMG invokes the ‘distributed leadership’ model advocated by Gronn (2000).

This research study has analysed the behaviours, traits and styles of leadership of the head and their SMTs and promoted the model of the contingency based head in Table 3.3 on page 82 above, and the theoretical framework for analysing collegial versus autocratic keywords outlined in Table 3.4 on page 83. From the findings described previously and as indicated in Table 3.3, heads require complex behaviours and traits in exercising effective leadership and management of schools. The leadership practice of both H1 and H2 at Larchdale had identifiable elements of contingency based headship, since H1 exhibited a high degree of clarity in task related functions, especially curriculum planning, budgetary management and resource allocation together with high levels of collegiality with respect to a real philosophical belief in the principles and practice of teamwork and collaborative practice within the SMT. The SMT under H1 displayed coherence, and within SMT H1 displayed authenticity and intentionality, in line with the conceptual framework developed by Bhindi and Duignan (1997).

H2 also displayed features of contingency based headship, for example, a strong and missionary sense of vision and an equally strong instructional intention that her vision is shared effectively combined with an unflagging commitment to change. SMT members with dissenting views may well have been excluded from the power-broking core of SMTs by heads invoking a meeting structure which limits these members’ access to decision-making. This was
utilised as a strategy by H2 at Larchdale, ostensibly at one level to reduce what was perceived by a number of SMT members to be the cumbersome and unwieldy nature of the Larchdale SMT meetings involving 10 or 11 members, but at another level can be seen as eroding the consensual and democratic nature of the SMT as a whole. Table 5.2 indicates management strategies for addressing dissent that have been observed at Larchdale and described by KPs in focus group discussion.

### Table 5.2 Management Strategies for Addressing Dissent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive Dissent</th>
<th>Intrinsic Dissent</th>
<th>Extrinsic Dissent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• valid argument</td>
<td>• regular discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• conviction of self</td>
<td>• regular feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• responses to ‘what if’</td>
<td>• conviction of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• critical friendship</td>
<td>• public support by SMT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destructive Dissent</th>
<th>Intrinsic Dissent</th>
<th>Extrinsic Dissent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• majority legitimation</td>
<td>• public rebuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• utilise rest of team</td>
<td>• conviction of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• disenfranchise</td>
<td>• private rebuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• invoke core LG model</td>
<td>• public support by SMT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The semi-structured interviews with HoD1 and DHoY at Larchdale contradicted the feeling widely held within the SMT under H1 that it was cohesive and effective and exemplifies intentionality of collegial practice. This emphasised the perceptive gulf that still exists between some of the core staff and the SMT. This has prompted further researcher reflection on the ability of the Larchdale SMT to move the school forward with the a large minority of dissenting core staff projecting this view. There is a echo here of the first focus group discussion surrounding a failing core staff which stifled the good intentions of a transformational head at S10. After the participant observation and semi-structured interview exercises it is clear
that the more grounded ethnographic research design and process can be more effective in developing a real ‘feel’ for realities of practice within an institution.

The transition of leadership from H1 to H2 at Larchdale radically changed the nature of management practice at the school. There is persuasive evidence, from DH1 and AH4, that H1 was a strong leader with many gifts as a teacher and manager, displaying many characteristics of the contingency based model and managing the SMT with a balance of bureaucratic efficiency and intentional collegiality. But that Larchdale School did not move forward may well have been in the main due to influences beyond his control. The evidence from Larchdale indicates that H2 was a strong leader in, for example, her zeal in restructuring the SMT, but with many different talents than H1. She exhibited, as already indicated above, many of the characteristics of the contingency based model but managed the SMT more rigidly than H1 with greater emphasis on bureaucratic efficiency than collegiality. Evidence from performance data that Larchdale was moving forward may indicate that H2 was a more effective head than H1, and the later structure of the core LG with the more stand-alone school management group proved to be more effective than H1’s extended SMT.

What then was the first key conclusion, in answer to the first research question, what were the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT at Larchdale under H1 and H2? The Larchdale SMT under H1 was collegial, but very amorphous, and although very convivial in meetings, lacked effectiveness in terms of efficiency, communication and resolve. The Larchdale SMT under H2 was a tighter, more hierarchical group which acted rationally and bureaucratically rather
than collegially but more effectively in efficiency, communication and resolve.

**Tentative Thoughts on the Wider Context**

In addressing the second research question of what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more generally, the wider experience and knowledge base of the KPs have been utilised. Analysis of KPs responses suggested there were two main types of structure for SMTs in secondary schools, the core and the core plus extension. In these there are a variety of different types of collegial, micro-political and conflictual mechanisms operating. Evidence from FG discussion suggests that the core model is the more hierarchical and bureaucratic of the two, with the core often acting hierarchically, sometimes autocratically, towards the SMT members outside the core. This manifests itself on with the interplay of power and knowledge – the knowledge base of the core, as the insiders, is considerably more extensive and detailed than that of the individuals outside of the core. This may result in the latter being disadvantaged when discussing issues and also in collective decision-making, especially if the issues are brought ‘top-down’ to meetings of the extended team, supposedly for collaborative thinking. Co-opted members of the extended team are disenfranchised and can be seen as purely information providers (and seekers).

Feedback and discussion suggested that non-core members of such teams see some interactions in full meetings being controlled by the core, whereas the core members do not perceive this ‘credibility gap’. There is here an inherent breakdown in ‘trust’ as discussed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998), Ribbins (1997) and Evans (1998). Findings from the wider context show that collegiality is a desired feature of
practice within SMTs but not essential. This was evident in the key critical incident at Larchdale, the death of a truanting student where the SMT believed that they had responded and had coped well with it, yet individuals amongst the core staff were critical. Critical incidents sometimes lead to crises within SMTs, and since there are more in challenging school environments, it is a measure of SMT robustness and stress-tolerance that allows senior management to function effectively.

So, what then is the answer to the second research question of what are the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT in secondary schools more generally? The findings from the wider context suggest that there are many styles of leadership that borrow from the contingency based model and that the desire for collaborative and collegial practice is real – but, as shown in the mapping exercise, the KPs thought it only desirable rather than essential, and the results from documentary analysis of data from the wider sample of 37 large, mixed secondary schools have shown that heads are moving inexorably to narrower, more hierarchical and more task centred core leadership groups rather than more inclusive and flattened SMTs. The second key conclusion in this study relating to the evidence of collegial practice amongst SMTs in mixed, comprehensive secondary schools in the wider sample of 37 schools is mixed, with little evidence of the preference of heads or their senior colleagues for promoting SMT collegiality.

**The Impact of SMT Collegiality on School Effectiveness**

The third key conclusion in this study relates to assessing the impact of SMT collegiality on school effectiveness. The use of the raw ‘headline’ GCSE and A level scores for objectively measuring school effectiveness and improvement is critically
flawed. More use of longitudinal models such as that of Willms and Raudenbush (1989), based on contextual, environmental and performance data is needed. It then follows that SMT collegiality can be related through performance analysis to assess the impact of collegial SMT practice on school effectiveness. This would be the subject of a far more wide-ranging, in-depth, multi-level quantitative research study. However, on the basis of the performance data collected for the wider set of schools in this study, it can be suggested that in placid-randomised schools which are well or over-subscribed and results are objectively good in terms of value-added, there is little direct correlation between collegial practice within the SMT and school effectiveness when measured by these indicators. But some evidence has identified that schools can be effective when measured by examination performance even though there is an absence of collegial practice within the SMT. In schools which are turbulent however, there is evidence from this study that effective leadership, coherence, clarity of purpose, teamwork and intentional collegial and collaborative practice within SMTs are fostered and strengthened by a contingency based head who is also key to promoting school effectiveness. Contingency based headship may certainly offer a post-heroic alternative to the concept of ‘super-headship’, embracing ‘distributive’ headship, where power is substantively shared with the SMT. So the third key conclusion is that there is considerable impact of a contingency based head on school effectiveness, and this contingency based head will promote collegial practice within Leadership Groups as one of many stratagems enhancing SMT effectiveness.

Evidence from the wider sample of 37 schools suggests that the ‘core’ LG model is more strongly correlated, on the evidence from Table 4.14, to school effectiveness, but this is still highly problematic, since it is crucially dependent on internal contexts.
An observation from the outcomes of this study might be that the six models of management characterised by Bush (1995) can be seen as two distinct and antithetical perspectives – the bureaucratic and the collegial – with four elements operating within each: micro-politics, subjectivity, ambiguity and culture, following the discussion provided by Wallace (1999). The duality of bureaucratic and collegial practice working in tandem shows *conceptual pluralism* set out by Bolman and Deal (1984), where practitioners may display many elements of the six models of management and adopt an essentially contingency based approach to leadership and management.

Dissent and its management have become key concepts in this project, since the careful and considered management of dissent, both intrinsic and extrinsic to the SMT, challenges the rhetoric of collegial practice and the analysis of different types and manifestations of dissent been found to be able to aid the contingency based head in finding solutions for the problems of best dissent management practice.

What, then, finally, is the third key conclusion of this study: what is impact of collegial practice within SMTs on secondary school effectiveness?

The simple answer from this study is: very little. In challenging schools with turbulent institutional contexts reflecting massive change, the quality of leadership and management of the head and SMT effectiveness in order to keep the school open, safe and secure needs to be at a generally higher intensity and energetic level than in other, more placid secondary schools. The cohesiveness and team spirit of the Larchdale SMT under H1, although large and amorphous, was effective in the challenging environment, and required high levels of intentional and organic collegiality. H1’s management of the 2001 SMT was contingency based.
Collegial practice is seen as desirable by many, as essential only by a few, however. through conscious reflexivity, being constantly applied to concept formation in this research, there is substantial evidence that issues of substance and rhetoric with regards to collegial practice are at play in all schools as represented by those in this study. Indeed, the evidence of the move from larger SMTs to the tightly knit core Leadership Group, in at least one case reducing the size of the senior team from 11 to 4, taken from the wider context investigation of the 37 large, mixed secondary schools suggests strongly that collegiality, shared decision making and collaborative practice within the SMT is being substituted by a more hierarchical, status driven bureaucracy. This research has thrown up a number of insoluble problems in disaggregating the Busher and Saran (1994) leadership concepts. However, the contingency based model of leadership does take into account their ideas of open-systems, cultural-pluralism and political re-structuring. The contingency based model also has elements of the three types leadership proposed by Duignan and Macpherson (1993) as discussed above on page 64. The contingency based head conducts day-to-day operational leadership in the material world, influences the social world by exercising cultural change through guiding the work of the SMT and is a visionary and reflective practitioner as identified by FG2 discussion on page 144.

It may be argued that the exercise of intentional collegial practice within large secondary school SMTs is crucially dependent on the leadership style and type of the head. The data collection, analysis and findings described above identify key issues of leadership, coherence, collegiality, intentionality and dissent in secondary school SMTs.
**Limitations of the Study**

The conclusions from this study are necessarily tentative, as they are based on the narrow scope of the Larchdale case study and subjective judgements of the researcher and the KPs. Much of the data is based on professional perceptions of leadership and SMT behaviour. Findings in this small scale research study cannot legitimate new ideas, but it is suggested that the study has offered valuable insights into leadership and SMT behaviour and possible avenues for further, more widely based research.

**Avenues for Further Research**

Possible extensions of this research include:

(i) issues relating to androgeenity and gender in SMTs, particularly the investigation of whether female and male senior managers operate more collegially than the other

(ii) application of the contingency based headship typology to a single or multiple case study of the practice of successful secondary heads

(iii) a large scale study in greater depth of secondary school SMTs utilising the extended typology for SMT collegiality introduced in Table 5.1 above.

**Concluding Remarks**

**The Three Key Conclusions from this Study**

The three key conclusions from this study are tightly related to the three research questions as clear and coherent answers:
(i) what were the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMT at Larchdale under H1 and H2? The SMT under H1 was collegial, but very amorphous, and although very convivial in meetings, lacked effectiveness. Under H2 the SMT was tighter and acted more rationally and bureaucratically rather than collegially but more effectively.

(ii) what were the collegial and collaborative processes at play in the practice of the SMTs in the wider sample of 37 mixed, comprehensive secondary schools? There is little evidence of the preference of heads or their senior colleagues for promoting SMT collegiality explicitly, but it does appear as an important element in the management practice of effective schools.

(iii) what has been the impact of SMT collegiality on school effectiveness? It has been suggested that there is a tenuous relationship between the concepts of effective leadership, coherence, clarity of purpose, teamwork and collegial practice in strategic management teams of secondary comprehensive schools, and this forms the concept of the ‘contingency based head’, and this contingency based head is a major factor in promoting school effectiveness.

These conclusions suggest that there is a clear relationship between improving school effectiveness and the discernible levels of visionary leadership, coherence and intentionality in the strategic management practice of secondary school heads and their senior management teams. Furthermore, it is suggested that there is a model of headship – the *contingency based model*, which incorporates and balances heroic
and people-centred leadership qualities incorporating substantive elements of collegial
practice.

There are clearly identifiable and crucial dysfunctional elements present in the
practice of secondary school senior management teams and that these focus on
the interplay of collegiality and dissent and are mitigated by the legitimating authority
of the contingency based head. The contingency based type is no panacea for school
improvement as it does not provide for a set of paradigms for best practice, but is a
valid and theoretical framework by which the purposes and practices of heads can be
analysed.

This research has identified in contingency based headship and the extended typology
for contrived collegiality reflective tools both for heads and senior managers in
secondary schools and for external agents in the fields of secondary school leadership,
management, effectiveness and improvement. It has also questioned the collegial
paradigm and discovered rhetoric as well as substance in SMT practice.
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