THE STATUS OF TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION
PART II of THE EVIDENCE BASE

SCHOOL-BASED CASE STUDIES: THE STATUS OF TEACHERS IN ORDINARY/TYPICAL SCHOOLS

Introduction

This document forms part of the Evidence Base of the Teacher Status Project, a nationwide study of the status of teachers and the teaching profession in England. The research was carried out at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and the Department of Media and Communication\(^1\), University of Leicester. It ran from September 2002 to December 2006, and was commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) following a process of competitive tender.

The project had three main aims, and the methods used to address these aims are listed below: The aims were:

1. to establish a baseline and monitor changes in perceptions of the status of teachers and their profession, among teachers, associated groups and the general public, between 2003 and 2006
2. to understand the factors that might influence perceptions of status and teachers' attitudes
3. to identify how perceptions of teacher status can be improved.

The Teacher Status Project: research design

The first aim was addressed through a series of cross-sectional national surveys of the opinions of the groups listed above, and a longitudinal survey of teachers’ opinions. The main surveys were conducted in the first and final years of the project. In the intervening years, a programme of school-based case studies and focus groups of teachers was carried out in order to address the second aim. Particular emphasis was placed on the perceptions of he individual teacher throughout the project. The media study, which also addressed the second aim, followed a similar pattern with surveys of national and selected regional press coverage of teachers, teaching and education conducted in 2003 and 2005. Interviews with education correspondents and a retrospective survey of press coverage dating back to 1991 were carried out in 2004. The third research aim was addressed within the surveys and case-studies and through a synthesis of their findings.

The research methods and findings are presented in the Teacher Status Project Evidence Base (RR831B) of which this document forms one part. The Research Brief (RB831) summarises the whole project, and a more detailed overview is provided in the Teacher Status Project Synthesis Report (RR831A).

The timeline below shows how the results reported in this part of the Evidence Base fit into the project activities as a whole.

\(^1\) Originally the Centre for Mass Communications Research
## The Teacher Status Project research activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Research activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2002 - February 2003</td>
<td>• Design, piloting and preparation of questionnaires for surveys of public opinion, teachers and associated groups (parents, governors and teaching assistants) and sample construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>March - September 2003</td>
<td>• Public Opinion survey I</td>
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<td>• Teacher survey I</td>
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<td>• Associated groups survey I</td>
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<td>• 1st trainee survey</td>
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<td>• Media project ‘rolling week’ survey I</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2003 – January 2004</td>
<td>• Analysis of surveys (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Development and piloting of case studies programmes and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February - July 2004</td>
<td>• ‘Type I’ school case studies: schools selected according to school phase, size, region and achievement level from those which participated in the surveys</td>
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<td>• 2nd trainee survey</td>
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<td>• Recruitment Managers email survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2004 – July 2005</td>
<td>• Longitudinal survey of teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Type 1 school-based case studies re-visits</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Type 2 school–based case studies: schools selected for their particular status</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Type 3 case studies: focus groups of teachers working in e.g. PRUs, in CPD and research, and minority ethnic teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – September 2005</td>
<td>• Media project ‘rolling week’ survey II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 3rd trainee survey (June)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analysis of case study data (ongoing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2005 - February 2006</td>
<td>• Preparation for 2nd round of surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March – May 2006</td>
<td>• Public Opinion Survey II</td>
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<td>• Teacher Survey II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Associated groups survey II</td>
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<tr>
<td>June – December 2006</td>
<td>• Continued analysis and writing</td>
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Part II of the Evidence Base contains the following chapters:
- Chapter 6 - Introduction, methodology and schools in Part II
- Chapter 7 - Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Own Status
- Chapter 8 - Internal School Relations and teacher status
- Chapter 9 - Teaching and Learning
- Chapter10 - External School Relations
Chapter 6: Introduction, methodology and schools in Part II

Overview
The remainder of the report presents the case study research of the project, which was specifically focused on the second aim of the project. It aimed to understand the factors that influence teacher status by exploring the multiple dimensions of teacher status as seen by teachers themselves, and to develop insights into the third research question as to how status can be improved. This part of the report looks at status as seen by teachers in general, working in ordinary or typical schools. Data from this research is reported in the following four chapters. The remainder of the report, in Parts III and IV presents specific case studies of teachers working in a variety of settings and roles. These include: teachers in classified schools (in Part III); minority ethnic teachers; early years teachers; teachers working in special educational needs; teachers working within pupil referral units; supply teachers and teachers engaged in CPD and research (in Part IV). These more specific case-studies enable an exploration of how these settings and roles might influence specific teachers’ subjective understandings of their status.

In Part II, which comprises the following four chapters, the research examines the status of teachers as perceived by teachers in ordinary/typical schools (classified as ‘Type I’ schools for the purposes of the report). The main aims of this case study research in these schools were:

- To identify how teacher status is understood in general by teachers themselves and to understand the sources of esteem, changes in, and variations in their status.
- To explore the effects of recent initiatives on teacher status, including developments around:
  a) Work-life balance
  b) Teaching and learning practices
  c) Widening participation and extended schools

The research was based on qualitative data and extensive case studies, involving semi-structured interviews in twenty-two schools, visited between 2004 and 2005. The main findings are reported in the overviews of Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Introduction
When conducting the research exploring how teachers feel about and understand their status, teachers rarely talked about ‘status’ using the word itself (unless prompted). This intimates how explorations of status must encompass teachers’ own views about status through engaging with their own related discourses about ‘value’, ‘self-esteem’ and ‘rewards’. The research in Part II therefore first explores teachers’ more abstract conceptualisations of status (in Chapter 8). It also charts the way that government initiatives that directly or indirectly seek to address teacher status are received in practice (Chapters 9, 10 and 11). The wide
ranging and deep qualitative research also gives insight into the way that contextual factors, including individual teachers’ interpretation and schools’ reception of the policies, have real implications for teachers’ status (see MacLure, 1993).

Teachers often stressed the practical effects of new initiatives as factors influencing their status. In particular, Chapter 8 explores how moves towards improving work-life balance have influenced teachers’ sense of status. The radical overhaul of teaching responsibilities in *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement* (DfES, 2003) has seen an increase in the numbers of teaching assistants and higher level teaching assistants expected to take over administrative, secretarial and some teaching tasks. By refining the teacher’s role and reducing their workloads, it is hoped that the job will become more attractive and improve teachers’ ‘work-life balance’. Nevertheless it could also potentially undermine teacher status by disturbing comfortable norms of status and solidarity (Brown, 1965). The data in Chapter 8 explores how far these factors influence teacher status.

Chapter 9 explores how changes directed towards improving standards of teaching and learning are perceived by teachers to influence their status. The increasing transparency and accountability, opportunities for self-monitoring and feedback, introduction of performance related pay, advanced skills teaching, and the requirement for teachers to apply for progression through a pay threshold after their first few years in teaching allow teachers to remain focused on pedagogy but have their expertise recognised and rewarded by financial remuneration. Some of these new measures help create a ‘stepped’ career with duties linked to pay levels, which potentially help to increase the status of the profession in the public eye. However moves towards evaluating technical expertise achieved through tangible outputs is associated with deprofessionalisation, a loss of trust and autonomy, whilst stratification may provoke feelings of ‘relative deprivation’ (Hoyle, 1969) which may disrupt other aims towards increased collaboration. Again, the chapter assesses how relevant teaching and learning factors are in influencing teacher status.

Finally, Chapter 10 explores the influence of collaboration with other stakeholders and interested members of local communities through the Extended School initiative and the (DfES, 2004) ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ initiative. According to the government’s White Paper, ‘Higher Standards: Better schools for all’ (DfES, 2005) it is the government’s intention to commit £680m to the extended schools’ initiative by 2008 in order to develop a core offer of extended services through schools. These include health and social care, adult learning, study support (after school clubs and supplementary schools) for children and adults, child care from 8am to 6pm, parenting support, ICT access, and various community activities. The White Paper sets the key targets for extended schools stating ‘By 2008, we want half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools to be providing access to these extended services, with all schools doing so by 2010’.

The extended schools provision aims to improve outcomes for all children, improve educational outcomes and enrich their lives for the future. Yet in providing access to services through schools, these initiatives also recast the role of the teacher as one of a number of professionals working in a team. They also encourage teachers’ engagement with parents as partners in children’s learning. According to Hoyle (2001), this has the potential
to raise teachers’ status by overcoming their association with children and increasing the esteem in which they are held by the community. On the other hand, Hoyle also suggests that by expanding the role of the teacher further, the process may have less favourable impacts. The breadth of the teacher role is a factor in UK teachers’ low status, in comparison to teachers elsewhere on the continent who enjoy higher status and whose job is more specialised, and focuses on teaching and learning (Santiago). Chapter 10 discusses the extent to which the case study schools have advanced towards meeting the government’s idea for extended school environments and the impact of these arrangements on the status of teachers.

**Methodology**

The research data for this strand of the research is drawn from twenty-two case studies of ordinary/typical schools, which are classed here as ‘Type I’ schools. Of these, eight core schools were selected for second visits on the basis of internal and external school features that were interesting to probe further, including management style, pupil behaviour, resources, achievement levels and socio-economic location. All case studies were undertaken to heighten understanding of perceptions and opinions of teachers and as a result of the qualitative approach, are not intended to be a representative sample of teachers. However, much care has been taken to ensure that the schools are chosen from a wide range of parameters to ensure contextual location of where the opinions derive from, and this ensures validity and relevance (Silverman 2001). Thus the selection of the 22 Type 1 case study sites took into account national, local and school–based criteria. The case study sample was drawn on the basis of analyses of the 2003 survey data, and schools were selected from those showing:

- a good response rate with at least five secondary or three primary questionnaires returned by teachers and at least one 'adult other than a teacher' (adjusted for small schools.)
- high or low achievement levels for the local area, taking into account local deprivation indices and information about catchments from OfSTED reports.

In addition the phase, size, and overall achievement level were considered. The table below lists the selection criteria.

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2 Originally ten of the 22 Type 1 schools were selected as ‘core schools’. This was reduced to eight when second visits had to be suspended during the period of purdah prior to the General Election, on the grounds that new issues did not appear to be emerging from the return visits already completed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1: Type I Case study site selection criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional guides</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location (rural/ urban/ inner city)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School selection guides</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of response to the survey of teachers in the Initial Teacher Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School performance level*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on NFER performance bands which are quintiles of a performance variable composed of a school's average total score for each individual curriculum area and an overall average, weighted by the number of pupils in a school to reduce the effect of small schools.

**Case study interviews and analysis**

Ideal case study programmes were sent to each school in advance but the actual programme was negotiated with each school. The case studies aimed to include four or six individual or small group interviews (for primary and secondary schools respectively) with teaching staff, including middle and senior management. Interviews were also conducted with one or two representatives each of: support staff; governors and/or parent representatives. Discussions with small groups of pupils were supplemented by the collection of relevant documentation (brochures, newsletters, annual governors’ reports, OfSTED reports) and general observations of the site and surroundings. The semi-structured interviews were based on a loose structure which explored the participant’s personal career, perceptions of how teachers are seen by other people and finally the impact of government initiatives and any other factors they raised as influencing teacher status. Ethical consent was established in advance, whilst the participants’ right to confidentiality, anonymity and to withdraw at any point were explained prior to each interview. Interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed or ‘semi-transcribed’ with notes elaborated with extended quotes.
The transcripts from the eight core schools were subject to computer assisted analysis using the software package Atlas-ti. During the early stages of the project a conceptual framework of categories of factors likely to influence teacher status was theorised from relevant literature and the expert knowledge of the research team. Within each major category, a number of codes were constructed based on the analysis of teachers open comments in the 2003 surveys, which were defined at first use. These *a priori* codes used for the analysis of the interview data were extended to include further inductive codes, in the tradition of exploratory qualitative research (Seale and Kelly 1998). The data were also organised according to a number of facesheet codes (e.g. school) which were exported and analysed by researchers on the project, some using Miles and Huberman’s (1994) data display matrix method. These steps ensured validity in analysis. The remainder of the schools were subject to manual analysis, using the same codes.

**The schools**

The schools, listed in Table 6.2, have been allocated pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity. The eight core schools are identified with an asterisk (*).

**Table 6.2: Characteristics of Type I case study schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Government Office Region</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flint Marsh Primary*</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>Pupils are from mixed ethnic backgrounds, higher than average SEN pupils. ‘Very good’ OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asquith Primary*</td>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>In area of high unemployment, social deprivation, high SEN and higher than average entitlement to free school meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas House Primary*</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>In affluent area, mainly white pupils, below average free school meal entitlement, OfSTED ‘very good’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosland Primary*</td>
<td>Inner London</td>
<td>199 or less</td>
<td>Catholic school, half of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. OfSTED ‘good’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balfour Primary*</td>
<td>Outer London</td>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>High levels of pupil and staff mobility, above average entitlement to free school meals. Removed from special measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillan High*</td>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>599 or less</td>
<td>In affluent area, low unemployment rate. Oversubscribed, mainly white British pupils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Henry Hadow College*</td>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>1000-1299</td>
<td>In affluent area, ‘satisfactory’ OfSTED rating, average free school meals, 10% pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name</td>
<td>Government Office</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elton Community College*</td>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>1300 or more</td>
<td>In affluent urban area, with less affluent rural population. Oversubscribed school, over split sites. ‘Good’ OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Cooper Primary</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
<td>300 - 399</td>
<td>‘Good’ OfSTED report, attracts more economically deprived families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevelyan High</td>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
<td>599 or less</td>
<td>Community school in rural area, ‘good’ OfSTED but areas for improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Wilkinson Primary</td>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>Mixed catchment area, ‘good’ OfSTED, c.25% free school meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Edward Infants</td>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>Rural location serving pupils of mixed backgrounds, very good OfSTED report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulmar Secondary</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>599 or less</td>
<td>In socially deprived area, almost 50% free school meals, low attainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Alec Clegg Infants</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>199 or less</td>
<td>Suffered falling school numbers, good OfSTED, pupil behaviour good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitbreads Junior</td>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>200 – 300</td>
<td>High achieving school, mainly middle class pupils, oversubscribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwood Primary</td>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>199 or less</td>
<td>In economically deprived area, over half pupils with free school meals, below average attainment, ‘good’ OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearing Primary</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>Very large school with mixed abilities, 10% pupils have English as second language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwyn Prins Secondary</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>600 – 999</td>
<td>Ethnically diverse population, high proportion with English as second language, good OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Lowe VI Secondary</td>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>600 – 999</td>
<td>Very economically deprived area, but selective admissions policy. ‘Outstanding’ OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenna Primary</td>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>400 or more</td>
<td>Average free school meals and below average SEN, ‘satisfactory’ OfSTED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruskin Infants</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>300 - 399</td>
<td>Economically deprived area, almost half pupils have free school meals and from minority ethnic backgrounds, including refugees and travellers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7: Teachers' Perceptions of Their Own Status

Overview

This chapter responds to one of the overarching aims of the Teacher Status Project, ‘to understand the factors that might influence perceptions of status and teachers' attitudes’. It does so by investigating factors such as how status is shaped and whose opinions are important in defining it. The chapter considers explanations of the sources of teachers’ positive sense of status, or related concepts of identity and esteem, and aims to:

1. Understand how teachers feel about themselves and their profession and where teachers’ personal sense of status comes from.

2. Understand teachers’ thoughts on the public perception of their status, both now, in the past and in comparison with other professions

3. Understand how differentiation within the teaching body impacts on different teachers’ perceptions of status and considers whether the type of school, age and/or length in the profession affects their status.

The main findings of the chapter are:

- Teachers’ sense of status derived from their identity as teachers and the vocational nature of their occupation. The data demonstrated the extent to which they have embraced teaching as constituent of their own personal identities.

- Internal praise within the school and amongst parents was a particularly positive source of status, although external recognition through teacher awards was deemed divisive and counteracted the collegial environment sought by teachers. Teachers valued accolades from colleagues who were considered to have a greater awareness of their roles above the rarer recognition received from those outside of the profession.

- Teachers felt that teachers had once been venerated by the public as similar in stature to doctors, but the profession had been relegated to the ranks of service sector professionals in recent years. Explanations offered included the greater transparency demanded through national testing, performance tables and a more informed public, all of which helped to demystify the profession, as well as changes in the role of teaching to behaviour management and disciplining pupils.

- Teachers derived an enhanced sense of status when credited with additional responsibilities and/or promotion. Teachers securing AST positions, or who took on responsibilities for disseminating teaching and learning, behaviour management or general management experienced a greater status and self-esteem than others.
The Evidence

How do teachers feel about themselves and their profession and where does teachers’ personal sense of status come from?

a) Teaching as a vocation

Research to date has shown that teachers’ status and professional self-identities are predominantly oriented to psychic rewards (the subjective satisfaction achieved through work) rather than extrinsic or ancillary rewards such as money, prestige or power (Lortie 1975). This emerges out of historical association of teaching with ‘service’ and internal structural factors within the profession which favours emphasis on present-oriented job satisfaction. One of the clear findings of this strand of the teacher status research was that teachers in all schools - across a range of posts – continue to perceive teaching as a ‘vocation’. Thus rather than discuss status per se, they explained their orientation to their job through reference to emotional terms, including being passionate, being prepared to sacrifice themselves for the good of their students and hoping to inspire change in others. At Crosland Primary School, for instance, teaching staff referred to how the job involved, ‘a love of teaching, a vocational thing’, whilst the headteacher at Gillan High School described how his self-esteem came from ‘doing the job properly’ and ‘believing the life chances of children will be changed for the better in the way you create a school’. The theme was echoed by governors and parents. A parent commented, ‘Teachers teach because it is their vocation in spite of low status – it is intrinsic motivation that causes them to teach’. This reference to innate characteristics was repeated by a teacher at Sir Henry Hadow College, who described her motivation to teach as, ‘something inside’ whilst the deputy headteacher there commented, ‘you can’t make a teacher, they’re actually born’.

Teaching was portrayed as an integral part of interviewees’ self-identities. The description of ‘being a teacher’ is therefore more than a descriptive label of a job and is linked to a much wider set of values or moral outcomes. These were invoked to explain some career decisions of teachers; one 27 year old NQT decided to work at Sir Henry Hadow College for instance, despite its reputation for poor behaviour because, ‘If I can manage to work effectively with them, then what I’d bring them would be enormous, and what they’d bring me, they’d teach me a totally different philosophy of life’. Some even went so far as to describe teaching as a service with a religious motivation. The headteacher of Asquith Primary School referred to how ‘I do feel this is my ministry. It really is a vocation’ and a teaching assistant at the Catholic Crosland Primary School referred to how: ‘you have to be a special person. I would say it comes from God, it is what path has been chosen from you’. Other teachers stressed their commitment towards philosophical values and abstract ideals associated with the task of education, employing these in opposition to another world outside of schools that is associated with competition and profit. As the headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College said, ‘there’s passion for people and a belief in doing something for the sake of people, not for the sake of profit’. These ideals were also used to offset some of the wider disadvantages perceived as part of the teaching profession. A teacher at Elton Community College
explained, ‘You are seen to have a vocation these days rather than a professional desire to do that kind of job, and vocation means an occupation that people put up with a lot of difficulties in their working life to do’. However, the headteacher of Asquith Primary School described the commitment as both a, ‘strength and Achilles heel’. Whilst impassioned involvement of the teachers helps the school, it may have detrimental personal consequences as the teacher may find it hard to leave work behind.

It is also clear that the main source of esteem for teachers continues to be the children they work with. The headteacher at Asquith Primary School referred for instance to how ‘the bottom line is I care passionately about the children’. At Flint Marsh Primary School, the deputy headteacher referred to how she feels valued, with, ‘the children hugging me, smiling saying hello, telling me about what’s going on.’ At Asquith, a teacher also explained the satisfaction she felt building relationships, gaining pupils’ trust and providing a ‘safe harbour for them’ outside of their sometimes stressful lives outside of school. She referred to the pleasure working with children at an age where ‘you can see things click with them’. Another teacher there confirmed, ‘To me that’s the most important thing, the relationships with the children’.

In secondary schools, although teachers gain esteem also through imparting subject knowledge and keeping up to date with technical developments, their status is also gained through relationships forged with pupils. A teacher at Elton Community College referred to the pastoral work she did with older students and mentioned that when they thank her, ‘that’s priceless really’. Also particularly important was behaviour management/discipline; a teaching assistant at Elton Community College mentioned, ‘those with skills in managing pupil behaviour gain prestige within the school’, and an NQT there felt those teachers with good classroom skills in managing pupil behaviour were ‘seen as more professional, higher status’. In Sir Henry Hadow College, a male NQT teacher suggested that technical expertise will only become relevant once the respect of students is ‘won’:

‘I’d say behaviour has the most impact on student perception of teachers than anything else ... the first thing you have to get before they care about your technical knowledge, is your behavioural management.

b) Appreciation in internal relationships

Although teachers’ esteem is significantly influenced by their relationships with pupils, it also emerged from the data that the appreciation that teachers receive for the work from those within the school they work shapes their status. This is particularly important because the difficult aspects of the job are to some extent weighed up against the appreciation that they receive from significant others within the school environment. Expressions of ‘thanks’, commentaries on what teachers have done or indications of respect from pupils, parents or colleagues, were identified as powerful motivators. A school where staff felt particularly valued is Flint Marsh Primary School, which was run with clear and fair leadership by the headteacher. As the deputy headteacher expressed, ‘And we say, ‘thank you, you’re doing a really good job’’. Discussing her experiences, the deputy headteacher described:
What else makes me feel valued? People coming into the school and saying ‘Oh, it’s really nice here, there’s a really nice atmosphere’. That makes me feel that I’m a person of value: that I’ve done something of value ...When I’ve made a comment, somebody coming back to me and saying ‘I’ve thought about what you had to say and I really think ...’ and then having a professional discussion about it. ... Parents coming back and saying ‘Thank you for giving me the time’.

Positive relationships within the school environment function as internal ‘social glue’ that bonds the school together. This opinion helps explain also teachers’ negative evaluations of schemes such as Teaching Awards, which are a public and external acknowledgement of certain individuals’ achievements. Of many people mentioning teaching awards, only one comment - by a parent - was positive, as negative feedback stressed the problem that whilst they singled out some teachers, many other deserving teachers were left unrewarded.

Teachers feel less status when they perceive their work to be unnoticed and unappreciated. The assistant headteacher at Crosland Primary School, left her former school and explained, ‘One of the reasons why I left was because I felt that my hard work wasn’t being valued’. Teachers in schools in socially deprived areas or those with negative OfSTED evaluations, such as Asquith and Balfour Primaries, were particularly prone to feelings of low status. A teacher at Balfour pointed out, ‘the dissatisfaction comes from a lack of recognition from the establishment in a school like this where all the staff work very hard, but because you don’t meet targets, you’re not condemned but you’re not recognised’. However, the views of external actors are not considered as important as teachers’ own feeling and the internal valuations of those who truly understand the job. A teacher at Elton Community College for example commented, ‘my own views of me are the most important. I have enough experience not to give a damn – I know I’m doing a good job’.

How do teachers feel they are publicly perceived, both now, in the past, and in comparison to other professions?

The majority of teachers felt the public perception was based on unfair myths about what teaching involves. The headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow felt a ‘major frustration’ was the image ‘that teachers get these long holidays’. This public perception was particularly grating given the increased workloads and restrictions on holiday time as he explained, ‘they talk about work-life balance but I take the time when I’m told I can have the time. In the past twenty years, I’ve never had the flexibility to take a holiday when I actually want one.’

Teachers also felt that the status of teaching had been eroded in recent years, with a commonplace belief that teaching was, in the past, on par with doctors and lawyers, but was now level with other service professions, such as nursing and social work. The headteacher at Trevelyan High, said teachers were regarded, ‘not in the same light as doctors and people like that, we don’t get the same respect from the public and the media as they do’. Some explained this as a result of a process of demystification of the profession in that, ‘the public are more informed, they question things more now’. The provision of information through league tables meant, according to an administrator working at Elton Community College that
‘they are not sat up on a pedestal as they once were’. The passing of a ‘golden age’ was related to a shift towards a more cynical or ‘blame’ culture and wider societal problems that teachers had to deal with.

In particular, the sense of an eroded status was explained with reference to discipline issues, and perceived changes in the teaching role. It was believed that teachers no longer command the same authority and respect because they have ‘to constantly maintain discipline ... Parents look to schools to discipline children, there’s less stay-at-home Mums than in the past, less good parenting, and discipline is harder’ (NQT Elton Community College). Yet whilst discipline increasingly is felt to be the remit of teachers, they feel ‘disempowered,’ as a teacher at Sir Henry Hadow College described that teaching is, ‘tough, really tough, because teachers have no real discipline measures available to you anymore’. One NQT believed ‘too many rights have been given to the children,’ and that ‘children have more power than they should have’. A TA at Crosland confirmed, ‘if they [pupils] don’t want to do something they don’t do it, and have an attitude of ‘what can you do to me? In the past, they never questioned you’. One young female teacher at Sir Henry Hadow referred to how she was regularly reduced to tears because of the ‘behaviour of the students and the things they said’ which meant, ‘I felt powerless and personally attacked’.

The headteacher at Gillan High School pointed out how their external status is linked more to ‘behaviour than academic issues’ whilst a number of teachers across a range of schools felt that ‘we are the butt of society’s ills’ (deputy headteacher, Elton community College). Teachers felt ‘that everything that goes wrong in society is entirely our fault’ (deputy headteacher, Flint Marsh) including drug-taking and obesity. The headteacher at Trevelyan High continued to explain his feeling that schools are blamed, unfairly, for poor pupil behaviour, ‘... people do think they can do their [teachers’] jobs, Joe Bloggs thinks “what are these teachers playing at?” ... It takes on a dynamic of its own and the status of the teaching profession isn’t where it should be’. The fact that parents had been through the education system themselves was itself cited as problematic for teachers’ status, as the deputy at Flint Marsh explained, ‘everybody feels they have an ownership of education’ (see Chapter 10 for more consideration of parental relationships). On the other hand, the behavioural issues also prompted some admiration as people tell them, ‘it’s a job I couldn’t do’ and ‘I don’t know how you manage’. Another teacher at Gillan High School echoed these sentiments and suggested, ‘but if it [behaviour] does start to improve and I think the public can see that that is happening, then I think that can only go a way to improving teacher status I think’.

One factor that was particularly identified as negatively shaping the public perception of teacher status was the media. The deputy Headteacher at Crosland Primary School referred to a ‘Daily Mail syndrome’ as he bemoaned the diminishing status of teachers. It was generally felt that the media cause teachers to be ‘less trusted now than they used to be’ (AST, Douglas House Primary). Primary school teachers were aggrieved by reports which they felt suggested that teachers were responsible for ‘things that go wrong in society ...’ They felt that dealing with issues such as pupil obesity, drug-taking and poor attendance is not the sole responsibility of schools and ‘... that’s why it’s even more maddening when they kind of blame us for everything ...’ (deputy Headteacher, Flint Marsh Primary School). The
feelings of our interviewees was that the tendency of the media to focus on the more negative aspects of schooling in relation to issues such as, teacher/pupil relations, examination results, scandals involving teachers, for example, might adversely affect their professional status. The Assistant Headteacher at Gillan High School explained:

*Generally, in terms of teacher status, I think an awful lot of it depends on the media and media coverage. I really do. I think for any individual school if they’re going through a hard time or they’re having problems or something happens with a particular pupil, I think the way that it’s handled in the press can have a big impact upon that school and the teachers in that school.*

Most staff were disappointed that television and newspapers alike were presenting distorted images of school life, teachers and their responsibilities. A teacher at Sir Henry Hadow College agreed, *‘The problem with teacher status is media coverage that deems fit to slate teachers’ efforts every time there is a round of results … this has an impact of parental perceptions’. A teacher at Elton Community College exclaimed:*

*It would be nice for someone to give us a break, give something positive about teachers. It would be nice to have a programme on television to show how hard teachers work, without looking at a school where children are running amok.*

It should be noted however, that local newspapers were considered by teaching staff to present more accurately the experiences of teachers and their schools. A teacher at Gillan high school compared national and regional newspapers and concluded that *‘the local news is a little bit better because they have been telling us, recently, about schools that have improved and I think that helps to raise the status of teachers’.*

Another factor that helped shaped a perceived negative perception and reduction in teacher status was the difficulty of measuring the ‘outputs’ of teachers’ work. The deputy headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College explained, *‘I’ve always felt that education is onto a loser because we haven’t got an immediate identifiable product’. In Flint Marsh Primary School, a teacher expressed the difficulty of ranking professions, ‘we don’t save lives, we don’t have evident profits and attempts to measure in targets is double-edged … it’s never an opportunity for praise’. Another stated, ‘financial experts in the city, that sort of thing, they earn millions of pounds. We don’t have anything that says we’ve made this amount of profit at the end of the year do we?’ And another confirmed, ‘how do you measure what a child’s done? You can’t measure it’.*

Although the eroded status of teaching was mentioned, in some schools, such as Asquith Primary School, it was rationalised with recourse to the explanations given in question 1. A teacher there said:

*everybody’s under pressure ... in the NHS, and its difficult to compare as I have always been in teaching ... You’re in your own world really and it’s very different to the world that’s out there and I can’t compare to other people. Yes, other people in other jobs might have a better staffroom where they can meet each other but that sort
of thing doesn’t bother me. I enjoy working with the children and the day I don’t is the day I leave. To me, that’s the most important thing, the relationship with the children.

In Flint Cross, the deputy headteacher also felt that teachers had become more professional in the public eye:

I think that Primary School teachers 10 years ago, were seen more as... the woman with Jesus boots, and the old mac, and probably a fag hanging out of their mouth. Over the last 10 years I do think that we’ve become more professional, and we have sold ourselves better. And I guess the GTC as it were, does a little bit more of that.

How does differentiation within the teaching body impact on different teachers’ status?

a) Role Differentiation

Given the importance of internal sources of esteem, teachers particularly expressed how they felt higher status a result of adopting particular positions, mainly because this meant that they were sought out by peers for advice. Two primary schools in particular stand out as workplaces where members of staff feel valued: Douglas House Primary School and Flint Marsh Primary School. In both schools, ‘extra’ responsibilities were allocated to teachers at various levels across the school hierarchy. In Douglas House Primary School, for example, one teacher in the senior management team led a ‘behaviour day’ for fifty people and explained that it, ‘very much enhanced my professional expertise’. In the same school, an AST had been involved in a ‘Big Writing’ initiative which ‘has had an effect on the way colleagues view me. Everyone has thought it was a brilliant idea and has come to me for advice and to watch some of my lessons’. Although it took her ‘out of her comfort zone’ she said, ‘I suppose everyone else had respected me more for doing that’. The consultancy responsibilities that accompany the AST role had done much for the self-esteem of a teacher at Ashley Cooper who said, ‘I think I’m respected, I don’t think there’s anybody who doesn’t respect me as a teacher … They know that you don’t get to become a consultant or AST if you haven’t got a good level of teaching skills and ideas’. A female teacher in senior management also explained:

This is a new role. I’m Team Leader for TAs. The new role has given extra work but it’s also given me a clearly defined role within the SMT - that’s good in terms of status amongst colleagues - they know who to come to.

In Flint Marsh Primary School, the school similarly gives lots of people differential responsibilities, through devolved leadership, which gives enhanced status. For instance, whilst the deputy headteacher was on maternity leave, the task was divided between six teachers to give them the opportunity to experience some of the responsibilities associated with the role. This has positive ramifications for teachers’ status, as the Assessment co-ordinator there explained, ‘You’re seen in school as a good leader, as a good practitioner as well. So I think that does lift up your own self-esteem’. Teachers there refer to how there is a
sharing of responsibility and good practice, which means they feel ‘depended upon’, or ‘viewed as being trusted’ rather than being ‘purely responsive to the headteacher’s vision’ (Mahoney and Hextall 2000: 87).

Of course, the degree of role differentiation is contingent on the scale of the school. Particularly for smaller primary schools, the roles are divided between fewer staff. In Crosland Primary School, however the smaller scale was perceived by a teacher as an advantage, in that she was given opportunities to do tasks that would normally go to more experienced staff in a larger school. Again, this was expressed in terms of relationships with peers: ‘I feel as though I’m being heard, I feel as though I’m making a positive impact on people, I’m actually able to support them’.

b) Type of School

Although this is investigated in more detail in Part III, it emerged from the research that the branding of schools through the specialist school initiative had some effect on the status of teachers within the school. Sir Henry Hadow College was rebranded as a specialist college, and the exercise was positively evaluated, because it created a common motivation for staff. According to an NQT there, its impacts have been ‘enormous’. The headteacher comments, ‘the staff have embraced the concept and recognized it as an opportunity for all to aspire to something different and be seen differently’. Another headteacher (Trevelyan High) confirmed the positive impact that such changes have on a school, explaining, ‘Specialist schools has had an impact on the status and prestige, that is partly why they go for specialist status, so that raises the profile of a school’. However, this is by no means always the case. For Elton Community College their specialist status as a technology college is somewhat ‘a standing joke’ due to their out of date ICT equipment.

These issues relate not only to the general branding of the school but the effect of the physical environment, buildings and resources on staff satisfaction. At Flint Marsh Primary School, a number of comments reflected the pride teachers had in the school buildings, as one described, ‘It’s brilliant and lovely in there. Our sports hall is lovely and we’ve got new buildings coming up as well’. However, interviews at the other three schools, Elton Community College, Asquith Primary School and Balfour Primary School reflected concerns about fund allocation. One teacher at Elton community College complained that most of her teaching was in mobile classrooms with limited facilities. In particular, Balfour Primary School was a school that has suffered cuts to their resources. A teacher even mentioned, ‘Last year we ran out of pencils and one of the governors had to go to IKEA and get all the stubby little pencils for the children to use for SATs. It drives you mad’.

The pressure on resources leads to feelings of demoralisation; the headteacher at the school felt undervalued, citing an instance when she was refused permission to decorate her room by governors. She said, ‘...and somebody said ‘well isn’t getting the toilets done more important?’ and it was dropped. At the time nobody knew I was thinking about leaving and I was actually quite hurt, so that says something about status doesn’t it?’ She also commented
how the lack of funds meant that she was unable to pay for a headteacher’s secretary and had funding for a bursar only one day a month. Her role had expanded significantly, and she commented, ‘I resent it. I’m trained to teach, I’m not a trained accountant’. 

A number of staff in schools commented that there was an interesting link between resources, children’s behaviour/performance and staff satisfaction. In Sir Henry Hadow College, a teacher suggested that the funding as a specialist college and new school uniform has ‘definitely made a difference on behaviour’. At Gillan High School, a teacher commented on how he gained satisfaction from improving the IT room, and that ‘everyone who taught it said to me, ‘the children have come in with a definite positive attitude because they’ve got new computers’. Conversely, pressures on resources are thus felt to have important knock-on effects; a teacher at Elton Community College referred to how it ‘is depressing to give out tatty textbooks’ whilst at the other extreme, a newly qualified teacher at Sir Henry Hadow College commented,

For me it’s very exciting, Arts status aside, as I’m learning loads myself and that raises my status. Because of interactive whiteboards, it’s now in my interest to know how to design websites for students, to create a webpage for their homework etc. all those software programmes I can use, and that raises my status as I need more skills to do my job effectively.

The phase of the schools is also influential for teacher status. A teacher at Asquith Primary School felt the difference in non-contact time means that primary school teachers have to juggle too many jobs. At Douglas House Primary School a governor felt that primary schools were a ‘Cinderella’ and that secondary schools were able to embrace new developments more easily because they had more funding. In addition to differences in funding, primary school teaching was seen externally as less demanding. At Douglas House Primary School a teacher mentioned that ‘especially in the primary sector – we can be seen more as childcare’, a point of view echoed by another who felt secondary school teachers got more respect. However, within secondary schools themselves, primary school teaching was seen as enabling staff to benefit from positive perceptions by parents. The deputy headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College explained,

[parents are] less tolerant of secondary. Primary school teachers are seen as mostly women in a ‘nice mothering role’. They see secondary teachers though eyes that perhaps relate to their own experiences of school.

c) Age

Interviews in some larger secondary schools indicated that there was potentially a cleavage in attitudes between younger and older teachers. The ‘older’ teacher workforce at Sir Alec Clegg Infants felt they benefited from mutual support through living through life events over many years. And the deputy headteacher at Ellen Wilkinson saw a clear difference between younger teachers conforming to government expectations and more independent thinking older teachers. He explained,
What they’re looking for in younger teachers is flexible people, who follow instructions, aren’t quite as professional as they used to be and good operatives who will operate the very carefully detailed manuals that they’re given without too much bother... Younger teachers are extremely committed and obedient to the government approaches. They seem very well trained but don’t have independence of spirit there perhaps needs to be ... The young ones are a very different breed.

At Douglas House, the Chair of governors felt that the calibre of NQTs is superior as they are knowledgeable and confident, and take being inspected in their stride. In Elton Community College, the younger members of staff were also seen by a TA as more tolerant and broadminded, whilst older teachers were viewed as less flexible, and as the headteacher described, were deemed to find it harder to adapt to prescription. One younger female teacher felt that this was perhaps explained by the older teachers’ feelings of physical exhaustion from dealing with students’ behaviour, as well as the fact that more established staff had more managerial roles. This reduced their contact with students, whilst they were also perhaps, ‘less interested in the problems of fifteen year olds’. A male NQT in the school also commented on the demoralisation and cynicism of older staff and expressed hopes that he himself could avoid becoming ‘jaded’ in the future. Whilst he described himself as idealistic however, he does not see teaching as a vocation for life and suggested that he might leave because of the long hours.

In Sir Henry Hadow College, a newly qualified teacher suggested that the motivations for younger staff, such as himself, are financial. However, this same teacher chose to come to a ‘difficult’ school because of the challenges it presented, thus this orientation does not replace vocational commitment:

And offering money for training, it’s made a massive difference. Look at all the people who are coming in - I’m the youngest NQT, almost 27; five years ago, would that have been the case? I was shocked that I was one of the youngest, that means a lot of people are coming in from other jobs, and that’s directly because it’s more attractive financially....People need, if they’re coming from business, to see 10-20 years down the line, that they can earn the sort of salary that they think would be interesting. Before there were only headships and deputy headships, now there’s ASTs, all sorts of liaison posts, Academies, lots more avenues for earning more because you’ve got more responsibility. It’s finance, it’s the bottom line.

d) The Status of Subjects

It was expected that secondary school teachers would attribute derive status from their role as subject teachers, so the research explored whether there was a relationship between subject identity and status. No strong consensus about this was apparent. There were some suggestions that teachers of core subjects were of higher status than others, but rather more suggestions that subject did not influence status at all.
Summary

The culture of teachers and the structure of rewards do not emphasize the acquisition of extrinsic rewards. The traditions of teaching make people who seek money, prestige, or power somewhat suspect; the characteristic style in public education is to mute personal ambition. The service ideal has extolled the virtue of giving more than one receives; the model teacher has been ‘dedicated’ (Lortie, 1975: 102).

The evidence presented here on teachers perceptions of their status, and their explanations of the sources and variability in teacher status suggests that despite a number of external interventions, Lortie’s (1975) research findings continue to be salient in the present climate. Teachers sense of their own status is strongly linked to ‘psychic rewards’; the vocational satisfactions from teaching and longer-term moral outcomes anticipated through their work. Second, although personal satisfaction remains paramount, there is considerable evidence that esteem in derived mainly from other staff, particularly when there is clear role differentiation. This inward-looking orientation however can mean some teachers are vulnerable to lower status when working within the particular school environments. There is also a risk that different orientations to teaching may cause friction particularly between older and younger staff, although on the whole, systems in which role differentiation is used within a democratic environment of collegial support, feedback and shared leadership is where teachers appear the happiest.
Chapter 8: Internal School Relations and teacher status

Overview
This chapter is guided by the project’s second aim and focuses particularly on how one important factor: working relationships and conditions influence teacher status. In particular, the research coincided with the implementation of the (2003) Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement policy initiative which provides for teaching assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA) to take over a wide range of administrative and secretarial tasks from teachers. When fully implemented, it provides for cover to allow teachers to spend 10 per cent of their time to carry out planning, preparation and assessment (PPA). By reducing teachers’ workloads and improving their work-life balance, this potentially affects the status of teachers. The Chapter examines teachers’ reactions towards the strategies that different schools have adopted in response to school workforce reform, and exposes the ability of the policy interventions to enhance or decrease teachers’ self-esteem and professional ability. The chapter is structured around three main questions, which ask:

1. How have case study schools moved towards improving teachers’ workloads and what impacts has this had on their status?
2. Do teachers feel that teachers’ pay and performance management will enhance their status?
3. What influence do participants think the implementation of such reforms might have on teacher status?

The main findings of the chapter are as follows:

- Many teachers valued the relief from mundane administrative responsibilities offered through the workforce reform agenda and most teachers welcomed the immediate benefits to their work-life balance.

- Whilst teachers welcomed the opportunity to focus more of their time on teaching and learning activities most felt that the remodelling agenda and requirement for schools to provide PPA time for their teachers relied upon a financially unsustainable strategy, which might not enhance their status in the long run.

- The reality of PPA, particularly in schools which have been underperforming, proved frustrating for some teachers, who simply received new duties and responsibilities.

- Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries, feeling that they were not commensurate with the work they do. Pay initiatives based on teachers’ performance caused confusion among teachers, who also considered such policies to be divisive and demoralising.
The Evidence

How have case study schools moved towards improving teachers’ workloads and what impacts has this had on their status?

Among the primary schools, Flint Marsh Primary School and Douglas House Primary School were the most positive about improvements in work-life balance. At Douglas House Primary School an AST felt that teaching was, ‘Good fun. Everyone pulls together, we work well as a team, [with] different strengths. Hard work but I enjoy coming to school – it is a happy school’. Remodelling was greeted positively; the headteacher thought that the ‘use of TAs [is] brilliant ... a great idea’. However, this was qualified with a concern expressed also by a TA, that, ‘the general public may not like it – they already think teachers have it soft. But school will make it work’. Another suggested that it had caused confusion, and was concerned that TAs may be ‘used for supply cover in some schools’.

Teaching assistants at other primary schools, including Crosland, were upbeat about the new working arrangements. A TA at Underwood also thought that the strategy was ‘brilliant for teaching’ and although she felt TAs were underpaid, she felt the money was ‘neither here nor there, it’s pence’, because she did the work as she enjoyed it. A teacher at William Edward was grateful for the relief from what she saw as more mundane tasks, although again had reservations about the initiative’s sustainability. She said of the reforms, ‘wonderful, haven’t touched a photocopier in months, brilliant, I love it. But the government haven’t thought it through, they’re not going to be able to finance it next year’.

In Flint Marsh Primary, a larger than average primary school, PPA time and the use of LSA\(^3\) support were already well established. Each teacher had 10 per cent non-contact time per week and participants spoke of ‘work-life balance’ with pride, just as they might talk about an achievement, or a long desired acquisition: ‘This school is fantastic. I mean we’ve got a thing called ‘work-life balance’ here’ (TA, Flint Marsh Primary School). The deputy elucidated how this had been achieved,

> From the point of view of the work-life balance we’ve looked specifically at that, and we’re one of the lead schools in the borough at that because we’ve got lots of things in place that will be statutory, like [in] three years, we’ve been doing it for the last ten! ... we’ve really focused on what we’re doing. We’ve looked at our meetings and meeting times, which are training and development, but if there’s nothing firm on the agenda, what’s the point of having a meeting?

Our second visit almost a year later showed similar attitudes: ‘I think we’ve put a lot of effort this past year into the work-life balance and that’s made a huge difference’ (SENCO and literacy coordinator). The ‘work’ on work-life balance included a ‘work-life committee’ which took a pro-active role by arranging social events for all staff, such as yoga, bowling, a netball team, theatre trips, even a trip to France, as well as providing help with domestic chores such as ironing, car cleaning and car maintenance. Generally, this helped raise the status of staff, as they felt valued. As shown in Chapter 7, much of this could be explained

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3 LSA, Learning Support Assistant was the job title used by the school
by the internal acknowledgement of their achievements, as the deputy headteacher pointed out:

I think we celebrate people’s achievements as a school. And I think we do praise. We’re not kind of American in the sense of putting the best teacher of the month in our newsletter sort of thing ... it’s not the British way! So we don’t do anything like that but we are very supportive.

However, although work-life balance was acclaimed, there were mixed views about roles and responsibilities. Teachers appreciated not having to do the mundane administrative tasks, but at the same time, TAs were beginning to experience work overload. One expressed:

And obviously we’ve started taking on more of the teacher’s tasks as well in the way of paperwork: photocopying. So we’re sort of getting no extra money for that so it’s a bit ... obviously the teachers work 24-plus [but]...I think the LSAs are feeling quite pressured ... when we seem to be getting so much more work for not more money... my workload has doubled since I started ... I think that’s where we lose a lot – A lot of us are not recognised and ... feel that we are not being looked at as professional people.

This view was repeated at another secondary school, where, according to a TA, the teachers were happy, but the administrators, having had some assertiveness training, felt that ‘teachers are being paid money for old rope and more and more is being loaded on to them for no salary increase.’ Teachers referred to the ‘friendly atmosphere ... no lack of will to do things ... with a range of people prepared to lead with confidence in an environment of no threat. There is no blame culture’. But a TA warned ‘there are cracks in the plaster’ because the SMT did not listen to administrators.

Doubts from other teachers were raised about the negative impact of the remodelling proposals on their status,

This idea that learning support assistants can take a class I think is doing a huge disservice to the teaching profession. A learning support assistant cannot take a class. A LSA has their own role and ... when they see a teacher teaching ... they don’t see what goes on behind ... all the hours of preparations, all the planning, all the knowledge that goes into why you are doing something ...I find it insulting that a government can think that ... I’ve spent all those years training and somebody who hasn’t can come in and do just as well as I can do. I find it a huge insult’ (T Literacy/SENCO visit 2)

This view was also shared by a teacher with school governor responsibilities at Whitbreads. Discussing government initiatives, she felt the reforms ‘affect[s] your self-esteem and how

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4 This teacher had been on a US exchange and observed ‘great practice like that!’
you are perceived ... You’ve trained for all those years, and it seems they can put somebody...who amounts to a parent helper in our place’.

Much concern rested on the practicability of the reforms. Even in the progressive, and indeed entrepreneurial, Flint Marsh school, the reforms were not seen as ideal. According to the deputy headteacher, ‘It’s a little bit difficult to put in place like they want it to be put in place’, but she conceded that, ‘The principle is right.’ Further doubts about the reforms were aired by the headteacher and deputy headteacher at Sir Alec Clegg, where concern was raised about having sufficient resources to train and remunerate teaching assistants to cover classes. The headteacher asked:

Who’s going to give cover? Are we going to be able to pay our CSAs enough to do a class responsibility? Are we going to train them effectively? And who’s going to pay for it? Do they want it? Because some don’t do they? If they did they’d go and be teachers ... and get paid for it’. 

Similarly at Crosland, a small primary school where the reforms were well received, the Government’s scheme was considered ‘unworkable’ by the assistant headteacher. Here most of the TAs were also lunch-time supervisors who ‘only get a half-hour break a day’. In contrast to the previous school, TAs frequently supervised classes and were doing so before the government reforms. One TA had been put in charge of the TA team and commented that this had raised her sense of status, and that ‘you really notice it when you go on courses or you meet TAs from other schools, that really our status in the school is quite high’.

At the other end of the scale, staff at Balfour Primary School, a school facing recent difficulties, with extremely challenging children, seemed unable to envisage a satisfactory work-life balance. All referred to a sense of workload increasing, and one teacher could not see how this could be reduced as long as there were SATs. Experienced teachers and NQT alike felt ‘bogged down by paperwork’ and some teachers even felt that TA support apparently created extra pressure to prepare for the TAs. The NQT described the effects, as she said: ‘It affects your personal life but it’s like an addiction ... You can’t live with it and you can’t give it up’ (NQT).

An experienced teacher at Balfour also expressed the view that TAs ‘… are great! At the most they could keep order, but they’re not going to give a good lesson. It’s a joke!’ Lack of money seemed to be the underlying obstacle to improvements of all kinds. The headteacher had no secretary and, as she put it, having trained to teach, resented having to be an accountant. She likened her work-life ‘balance’ to feeling ‘like a bit of elastic’, under tension from both ends. A parent described how a previous teacher had left on the verge of a nervous breakdown; a governor went home after a morning in school feeling ‘completely frazzled’ and such views contributed to an overwhelming sense of overwork.

Among the secondary schools, generally positive attitudes to the reforms emerged but there were again strong evident concerns about funding and very different approaches to implementation. In an enterprising, successful beacon middle school, Gillan High, the threat of disruption posed by the proposed reforms was perceived at all levels. A teacher said,
The idea of putting classroom assistants into classroom – I have serious doubts about that. It would be lovely to have more time to do things, but again it gives the impression out that anyone can come in and teach.

She continued:

... the idea is teachers go away and plan it, but to my mind my favourite bit of the job is teaching the lesson. We have spent four years at university learning to do this job.

A head of year similarly said:

They’re up for it certainly, they want to do it and I’d be quite happy to let them do it. I would be concerned that there are times with behaviour issues and there are those people the children know of as classroom assistants and in the children’s eyes they have a different status from a teacher’s, and they do... Children respond differently to them.

Another prevalent view here was that although the shift of many administrative tasks to TAs and ‘the office’ had been a major improvement, new DfES requirements had instantly moved in to fill the space. An assistant headteacher, for example, listed the stream of new ‘audits and memos’ relating to health and safety, CRB checks and training for adults other than teachers. Despite the benefits of workforce reform, he felt that these were ‘conspiring against us to make us busier and do more things’. As a PE teacher, he pointed to his unpaid, altruistically motivated, extra-curricular responsibilities: ‘people have done it over time because they were interested in sport when they were young and people did it for them’. Reluctantly, he was now beginning to question whether it was worth the increased paperwork involved.

A parent who was a member of the school support staff also expressed some of the doubts she held about TAs teaching:

As a parent I would be somewhat concerned because I think I’m sending my child to school to receive the best education, the best teaching, the best service that I can possibly obtain ... I think well ... if it’s not going to be a teacher with all this training, experience and qualifications then why would I send him to school? I could do it myself.

Similar pictures emerged from two more secondary schools. At Sir Henry Hadow College, the reforms were seen as positive in principle and the headteacher felt that the school was ‘a long way down the line’. However, they raised concerns that jobs, such as putting up displays which reflected their professionalism would be lost, and that second, ‘we can’t afford it ... when it gets to September 2005 where everybody is going to have that 10% time ... we’re not going to get that money’. It was the matter of professionalism that worried the headteacher at Fulmar, as they explained:
I actually feel that a lot of the workforce reform measures have a deprofessionalising [effect for] the profession ...What they [the unions] want is for teachers not to do any kind of cover over the next few years. Bringing in supply teachers to do that would cause so much more hassle for our staff because the kids would not accept them and it is much easier for us to cover ourselves. We are going to find creative ways around it. The government are not putting enough money into the initiative to support it, and it will work badly, although I like the concept.'

By our second visit, the school had achieved specialist school status and changed its name. Then, a TA was working as an unqualified ‘inclusion coordinator’ and found that she was treated very professionally by teachers and heads of year. The headteacher attributed the different skills to teachers and TAs:

a TA may have tremendous skills working with young people on the pastoral and welfare side but the salary may be £10,000+ less than a teacher who might have plotted that route. … [but] … there are many teachers who do not have the development skills to work with children in the same way a TA does.

The overriding impression from the data from all schools is that they welcome the principle but question the means. There was particularly concern that TAs workloads had increased, that their pay was inadequate and that some of the gains in work-life balance for teachers were soon being lost in more paperwork or administration. This is reflected in some comments by a teacher that ‘Some people work very hard for very little money - the Classroom Support Assistants (CSA)’, whilst another commented, ‘A CSA is like another teacher [but it’s] a pittance that she’s earning’. Perhaps the concern for others’ status is not surprising since any individual can discuss another person’s status legitimately but can only speculate about the status or esteem in which s/he feels they are held. However, this mutual concern could be regarded as evidence of established, functioning status and solidarity norms, which might augur well for negotiated realignment of roles. However, where existing relations were dysfunctional or beginning to fracture, workforce reform presented greater difficulties.

Do teachers feel that teachers’ pay and performance management will enhance their status?

Personal wealth is regarded by many as one indicator of social status, and in the past, low pay has been a recurrent theme associated with the teaching profession in the media (Cunningham, 1992). As Hoyle (2001) has pointed out, however, the sheer number of teachers as public servants has placed a limit on the pay levels teachers can achieve. The introduction of performance management (PM) for teachers in 1999, linked to pay and professional development represented a radical assault on the principle that teachers, once qualified, conformed to a common national pay scale. It introduced greater extrinsic motivation for teachers to develop their careers by linking a higher rate of pay to evidence to be provided by the teacher of performance against eight teaching ‘standards’. In practice,
however, progress to the upper pay scale is limited by the school’s ability to pay. Mahoney et al.’s (2004) research on the emotional impact of the introduction of PM revealed its negative effects to be ‘underestimated’. They concluded that ‘managed well and leaving pay aside, a developmentally oriented system of performance management linked with opportunities for further professional learning’ was welcomed by teachers. Unfortunately, ‘failure to gauge how the policy would be interpreted by teachers, within a specific political and historical context, merely served to further disillusion, not ‘motivate’ [teachers]’.

In our case studies, participants, whatever their role, were unanimous that teachers’ salaries are not commensurate with their responsibilities. However, there was widespread confusion about performance management, which suggested that thus far, it had not had the desired effects on status. In one large primary school, performance management was greeted positively by the deputy headteacher and a governor said ‘In terms of retention, initiatives like PRP and ASTs have helped us reward people and this has had an impact’. However, the threshold arrangements were described by a primary headteacher (Asquith Primary School) as ‘a fiasco’. Rather than rewarding the commitment and work of teachers in school, they had ‘caused unnecessary heartache to the majority of teachers.’ Nevertheless, after commenting on the heavy time commitment and divisiveness of the scheme, the headteacher went on to say that,

_We will make the best of situations and we will turn things around, so as with performance management, we will make it a positive experience. So we will look at ways in which it could help to enhance the curriculum. We may be looking at such exciting things as bringing in modern foreign languages tutor, so we need the funding._

In another primary the deputy headteacher again regarded performance related pay as ‘Negative, confusing, we’re still not sure if teachers’ pay can be docked for classroom performance, based on results at the end of the year … particularly in the SATs class’. She continued, ‘If done properly, [however] it can be used as a way of supporting poor teachers … The theory of performance related pay is good because you get tired of carrying people … but [that is] being used well … [It can be] used as a means to beat teachers’. This teacher noted also that teacher status in Ireland is much better than in England (an observation endorsed by the OECD survey (Santiago, 2005)), because of shorter hours and the fact that ‘Teachers were paid to meet parents after school hours’. This resonates with the view of a school governor, who suggested that ‘… to regard teachers on a level of medicine, a huge pay rise would help – and attract high fliers’. A parent had similar views, suggesting that ‘maybe [with] higher wages, it would be seen as a good career to go in to’.

In the secondary schools, pay was again considered too low. For the deputy headteacher at Ellen Wilkinson, teachers’ salaries were not sufficiently high to support a sense of professionalism. Comparing his salary with that of a doctor, he explained that it was,

_Quite a struggle bringing up three kids. I never felt like a professional from that point of view, definitely not a professional salary. I’ve got a brother who’s a doctor, they have a very different lifestyle to me. I don’t have comparable qualifications to_
my brother but I do to friends who have a very good lifestyle. It’s always been second-hand cars and camping holidays … so I don’t feel it’s a profession from that point of view.

In the secondary schools, views on performance management remained uncertain. In a large recovering school the deputy headteacher considered performance management to be ‘poorly thought out’. Although potentially motivating, they were concerned that colleagues reviewing teachers might be ‘soft and pally and not prepared to be challenging’ so that ‘I’m going to end up with a pay bill that goes up astronomically but I’m not going to change any performance’. Other teachers were evidently concerned about ‘the performance criteria, how are you going to judge?’ Another raised this difficulty:

If a school [or] teachers have a class which hasn’t achieved what it should, does that mean they’re going to take a drop in wages? Rather than a bonus on top? That’s realistic in industry, if you don’t meet the targets set for you … I don’t think we need that in teaching. You’ve got checks anyway, with OfSTED, observation by peers, keeping records and assessments, it’s all there anyway.

The chair of governors at another highly successful school, where ‘all 22 teachers got through but there was no money for them. Dreadful’, was highly critical:

The governing body! Most governors are not able to teach though they are willing to test teachers. They should never ever be asked to sit in judgement over teachers. Who are these governing bodies?

At another academically successful school, one teacher, who having passed the threshold assessment, was positive about performance management, added, ‘I am not sure many other professions have to jump through hoops for extra money’. Her older male colleague took the view that performance pay had not raised teacher status, and would not: ‘Pay and status are separate …’ However they still felt that, ‘better pay would attract a higher calibre of people in. Entry to some courses are two Es.’ This school served an affluent area and the teachers’ comments often included comparisons between themselves, others or other professions, indicating perhaps a degree of status anxiety absent in other regions. An NQT felt, for example, that,

there are those members of the public who are earning significantly more than teachers who tend to judge people, gauge people, on how much they are earning. And “as teachers earn less, they know less”, and should be at the beck and call of the parent.

Likewise, a teacher in her early 30s at Ellen Wilkinson who had had difficulty buying a house, said, ‘work-life balance is not great, the money isn’t fantastic if you compare comparable professions at the same level.’ She went on ‘years ago teaching was on a par with doctors and lawyers but that has long gone on a financial basis’. In common with many of the teachers we interviewed, she alluded to a lack of the psychic rewards of being appreciated, ‘It is not about the money, the money isn’t bad in teaching really but we are
expected to deal with quite difficult stressful situations day in, day out, without people appreciating’. In London schools, many of the financial initiatives are felt to be of little use in overcoming the difficulties of working comfortably on a teaching salary in the capital. One NQT at Balfour talked about ‘the awful situation’ when she looked for accommodation and felt little support from the LA. This has implications for staffing, as at Crosland, where many of the staff were from overseas and did not wish to buy houses; however, the high costs of rent meant that there was a high turnover of a mobile staffing population.

What influence do participants think the implementation of such reforms might have on teacher status?

It might be predicted that the reforms of workforce remodelling and performance management would have positive effects on the status of teachers. On the basis of Hoyle’s analysis, the semantic status of teaching would be improved if teachers were seen by the public to have delegated some responsibility for managing potentially unruly children to other people, whilst intensifying their own teaching and learning roles. On the other hand, as Lortie (1975) pointed out, some teachers tend to be dedicated to classroom teaching, and see their raisons d’être as being taken over by people with lesser training and qualification. The prevalent attitude is the second. Teachers’ conceptualisation of teaching seemed to remain holistic, with teachers concerned with classroom management as well as pedagogy. An administrator, who recognised that students were beginning to look for support from them rather than teachers, said:

*we have to be careful with the workforce reforms that we don’t take too much away from teachers so that they are making no connection with the students. I don’t want it to be that they go into a classroom, teach the lesson and walk away.*

On the other hand, where teachers and TAs worked well together, in the schools where working relationships were cohesive, most of the case studies indicated considerable mutual respect, with teachers interested in the effects of the reforms on the status of TAs, and with TAs and other stakeholders showing considerable occupational esteem for teachers. This mutual respect is largely based on recognition of different areas of expertise and different types of responsibility. Thus, in two schools, mutual respect was based on very clear role demarcations, with teachers teaching, and TAs monitoring behaviour, preparing resources, and being prepared to step in and help when needed. The prospect of them actually taking classes was however seen as a threat to teacher status and a devaluation of their expertise and training. In other schools, teachers greatly valued TAs’ assistance with teaching and learning, sharing planning or entrusting it to TAs particularly where the TA was assigned to children with special educational needs. In one school TAs also had non-contact time for planning and preparation. In such schools, implementation of PPA time according to the DfES model, covered by TAs, would potentially eliminate such shared planning. Ultimately, it might enhance teacher prestige but at the expense of school solidarity.
As regards work-life balance, three case study schools seemed to be making positive progress sometimes through organising activities to increase the ‘life’ element socially and/or through physical recreation. Where PPA time was available, teachers appreciated the extra planning time, but still took work home. Elsewhere gains were acknowledged but often at a price, such as reduced efficiency, or consumed by new duties and responsibilities. In schools recovering from difficult periods, work-life balance seemed more difficult to attain. Critical to all of these cases, however, was the degree to which teachers felt valued in their schools. The most positive examples enjoyed collegial support as well as explicit senior management appreciation of their efforts. As one teacher in a school with very good staff relationships, explained that a new member of the senior management team, who had increased SMT accessibility, had ‘had a beneficial effect on morale of the staff’. She felt that this had affected the staff’s sense of their own status, but ‘without patronising you, knowing that you are valued and that your views are respected, and that you’ve got a place in the school’. She felt that this had to come ‘from your SMT and colleagues ... predominantly internally ... it’s got to be internal because this is your place of work’.

Finally, pay and performance management issues revealed views of greater similarity across these schools. Teachers’ pay was universally considered inadequate, whilst an even worse situation was widely acknowledged for TAs given their increasing levels of workload and responsibility. There were mixed views on the effects of performance management, some seeing its potential to improve the quality of the profession and attract better qualified entrants, but coupled with uncertainty about how the outcome might be funded, its effects on good staff relations and how, in the first place, teachers’ performance should be judged. In one school the teachers openly collaborated in completing their TAAFs\(^5\) in order to protect their good relationships. The potential for positive effects of performance management on teacher status, through the creation of a stepped career path with continued incentives, was not widely recognised. Oddly, whilst recognising that new ‘paperwork’ tasks (even if electronically mediated) were filling their recently acquired non-contact time, teachers did not refer explicitly to the inherent paradox of government proposals intended to improve their work-life balance coinciding with demands for increased productivity and associated ‘paper’ (or online) work.

**Summary**

Our teachers are using effective approaches to teaching and learning, are working in teams with other teachers and support staff, are committed to their own development and confident in exercising their professional judgement; and have higher status, proper remuneration and incentives, more responsibility and autonomy, more support and a better work/life balance (DfES, 2002b p. 7)

This chapter has presented school-based views on major policy initiatives on workforce reform including workforce remodelling, reducing teachers’ workloads and performance management. The Type I case study schools provide a range of positions in terms of implementation and opinion on these reforms. We found both positive and negative examples among both primary and secondary schools. A picture may be emerging that the better the staff relationships in the schools, the further advanced the sharing of roles and

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\(^5\) Teacher Assessment Application Form
responsibilities. One noticeable issue is that where teachers and TAs were working well together, they were either both focusing on teaching and learning issues (see Flint Marsh Primary School, Douglas House Primary School and Sir Henry Hadow College) or their roles were very clearly differentiated (Gillan High School; Elton Community College). Using Brown’s (1965) thesis, in these settings where relationships are established and status and solidarity norms operate harmoniously, home-grown reform may have advanced smoothly through consultation. An imposed reform model, however, could create status conflicts. In particular however, the DfES model for reform tended to be spoken of as good in principle but ‘unworkable in practice’, or ‘not feasible in this school’. Moreover, if anything, comments on the effects on status focused more often on the gains to TA status and the potential damage this could cause for teacher status.
Chapter 9: Teaching and Learning

Overview
As a further response to this project’s second main aim, ‘to understand the factors that might influence perceptions of status and teachers' attitudes’, this chapter explores the ways in which teaching and learning issues, in recent years, had an influence on teachers' sense of their profession's status, their individual status or their self-esteem. In particular, the chapter explores how government initiatives relating to teaching and learning impacted on teachers' sense of their status. In our case studies, we found that the ways that teachers responded to our questions about teaching and learning developments and initiatives were best synthesised in answers to the three implicit sub-questions listed below:

1. How have different criteria or mechanisms for evaluating teaching and learning impacted on teacher status or self-esteem?

2. In what ways do teachers' autonomy and accountability in relation to their classroom practice impact on their sense of status?

3. Does CPD have an impact on teachers' sense of status?

The findings of the chapter are summarised as follows:

• The OfSTED inspection regime provoked mainly negative comments from teachers with concerns about a lack of dialogue between inspectors and those being inspected, the stress caused by the procedure and the effects of the process being used to sift out certain teachers.

• Teachers felt that government imposition of unrealistic targets and teaching strategies demonstrated distrust for teacher professionalism and their abilities to achieve desired results. They felt it undermined their autonomy to translate their expertise and skills to provide solutions for pupils according to their learning needs.

• The comparisons made between schools (particularly through performance tables) which share little in common in terms of pupil turnover, pupil cohort differences and other pupil characteristics, were felt to misrepresent local circumstances and demoralised teachers by undermining the work they do.

• Where schools were found to operate structured CPD programmes for their teachers, teachers felt that they were valued by school managers. They reported increased levels of self-confidence in their teaching skills which they felt contributed greatly to their sense of status.
The evidence

1) How have different criteria or mechanisms for evaluating teaching and learning impacted on teacher status or self-esteem?

Teachers tended to be keen to discuss this question in relation to three broad areas of government policy that we mentioned: testing, OfSTED and the National Curriculum and strategies. On each of these, there was a wide range of views.

a) Testing

It was on testing and on associated issues like league tables and targets that teachers were most keen to talk and also most pervasively negative. While there were complex differences among individual teachers, it was not possible to detect systematic differences between schools or between different stages or positions across schools. The following views about the negative impact of testing on teacher status were repeatedly expressed:

1. Teachers' reputation and morale was undermined by the quite unfair comparative judgements made between schools and between successive stages and cohorts in the same school. This demoralising distortion may be especially great in London, where pupil turnover can change any particular cohort in a school radically over two years. The 'value added' approach was considered less distorting than the previous even cruder approach, but was still a source of injustice and demoralisation.

2. The quality of teachers' professional work and therefore their professional self-esteem was undermined in a number of ways. Most commonly mentioned of these are the distorting effects of testing on the curriculum, with the majority of subjects - not tested through SATs - being neglected, and those aspects of English, mathematics and science that are not tested in SATs also being neglected. Concern was also expressed about the danger of children who were unlikely to meet targets being 'written off' because of the league table system.

3. Teachers' felt their professional status and self-esteem was unjustly undermined by the neglect of teacher assessment in favour of the less reliable and less valid use of one-off high-stakes external testing.

4. Teachers' self-confidence was undermined because of the pressure they were put under by an obsessive over-emphasis on targets.

Other more idiosyncratic comments on the impact of assessment included some that were more positive as well as additional complaints. Assessment For Learning\(^6\) was highlighted as

\(^6\) AFL – for information on AFL see [http://www.qca.org.uk/7659.html](http://www.qca.org.uk/7659.html) [accessed Dec 2006]
a good initiative. Teachers' overall view of the SATs regime was however summed up by one of them who commented that 'the government didn't think out properly what the impact of SATs on young children or teachers would be'.

b) OfSTED
Views on OfSTED were not generally so vigorously expressed, and not quite so predominantly negative. Teachers in several schools talked of the positive impact on one's self-esteem or on the school's public reputation and the practical usefulness of being thoughtfully observed and given feedback by inspectors. In general, however, there were rather more negative comments, about the lack of dialogue with teachers and even pupils as the TA at Sir Alec Clegg complained that the 'OfSTED inspector blanked the children, looked straight through them. I think that is wrong'. Interviewees also spoke of the implausibility of verdicts based on single observations, and the artificiality arising from schools' extended preparation. A teacher at Whitbreads Junior School, with school governor responsibilities, said of OfSTED inspectors 'they don't understand what it's like, they see the shiny surface and have changed the goal posts'. The changing priorities and approach of the inspection regime reduces people, according to a teacher at Asquith Primary School, 'to nervous wrecks', and in the opinion of a teacher at Trevelyan High School, 'serves to sift out teachers who are under-performing'. A teacher at Crosland Primary School described the 'devastation' caused by poor results, the damaging impact of Chris Woodhead's pronouncements, and the variable quality of inspection teams. The headteacher at Balfour Primary School explained how she was leaving the profession because of her disapproval of an OfSTED system that was in her experience 'mechanical', 'inflexible' and not based on professional expertise. A Teaching Assistant at Elton Community College commented on the effect of OfSTED reports being made public, 'bringing teachers down off their pedestal'. Positive comments were made about the new self-assessment regime, as a move towards respecting teachers' expertise, and about the move to shorter notice, causing less disruption and stress.

c) National Curriculum and Strategies

The views expressed on the impact of the National Curriculum and of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on teachers' lives and status were in many respects quite diverse and seemed to reflect, to a considerable degree, teachers' varying individual histories. There were however two recurrent themes. One was that, while the National Curriculum and Strategies may have varying strengths and weaknesses, their usefulness depends on them first evolving, being adapted and shaped for use by professional teachers in their own distinctive schools. The second theme was perhaps the other side of the same coin. It was that, whatever merits these national initiatives may have, they do limit the scope for creative professional teachers to use their expertise in the interests of the children. Together, the two themes suggest that, whatever qualities these national curriculum and pedagogical initiatives may have had, their educational value has been limited, in teachers’ eyes, by insufficient attention being paid to teachers’ own creative teaching skills. In other words, insufficient status has been given to the role of the teacher in curriculum delivery.
2) In what ways do teachers' autonomy and accountability in their classroom practice impact on their sense of status?

This was a theme on which our respondents had a great deal to say, with notable differences in some respects between schools.

We found no arguments among teachers about the need for them to be accountable. Older teachers were very ready to talk about the inadequacy of accountability arrangements twenty years ago; and all teachers were happy to be accountable for their work. But while the principle of accountability was not in dispute, questions were raised about some of its practical manifestations. For example, some senior management teams were ready to explain how they held teachers systematically and explicitly to account through their performance management procedures for the quality of their teaching; but others, such as the deputy headteacher at Flint Marsh Primary School, were equally ready to tell us that performance management, as presented to them, is impossible to do well, 'so it's just something else that you have to do rather than it having any impact'. More generally, older teachers, tended to feel that there had been a shift 'from the sublime to the ridiculous - twenty years ago we did what we wanted, now we're far too restricted', in that, they said, 'there are so many constraints and you're accountable to so many people' (teacher, Asquith Primary School). A particular source of demoralisation was the amount of time-consuming paperwork, which was often understood as being primarily for accountability purposes. A teacher with responsibility for assessment coordination at Flint Marsh Primary School explained, 'I sometimes feel that you are not trusted because you've actually got to have it written down'.

Several teachers explained to us that their pride in their professional expertise was closely related to their understanding of the task of teaching as requiring judgement about children's present educational needs, based especially on a knowledge of the children, but also on such things as a recognition of the importance of children's questions, of showing them things, of variety, of a balanced curriculum, and of fostering children's powers of expression and communication. Translating your understanding of children and of education into practice, they told us, is where the job is so rewarding, and that's what's necessary to do the job well. That is still possible, some of them told us, but it's very hard, because there are so many constraints, especially on time. There was a real danger, some teachers told us, of 'relying heavily on externally imposed plans and not making our lessons as interesting or creative as before' (teacher, Flint Marsh Primary School). Some teachers seemed to feel they had little alternative but to adopt a technician role, complying with what was prescribed, as a teacher from Flint Marsh Primary School explained:

Ultimately, it’s new initiatives upon new initiatives ... this is how they believe children should learn in schools ... and then we just have to comply with that and incorporate the new initiatives within our teaching.

A teacher at Whitbreads was happy to embrace this approach adding:

the numeracy and literacy hour I've taken on board because for a long time teachers went on about autonomy but they were in some respects failing the children and I say
give me prescription, tell me what to do and then you’ve got the delivery and you’re not running around finding the resources ... I like prescription. I think it’s a good thing.

Others still subscribed to the belief that there was a need for teachers to have the time, space and authority to make professional judgements about what external ideas were working and on how they should be developed to be more effective; but they tended not to believe that they currently had the necessary conditions to fulfil such a role. These kinds of complaints about a loss of professional autonomy in the classroom that undermined the quality of teaching came predominantly from primary school teachers, although there were differences even among primary schools in the extent to which this loss seemed to be felt. It was a Gillan High School teacher who summed up the perceived impact on teacher status most succinctly:

government initiatives don't do the status of being a professional any good at all because you get the idea that people are giving you lessons to teach - teaching is about far more than that. They've got less understanding of what the teaching profession is like.

Indeed, a major source of frustration was felt to be a top-down approach in the development and implementation of policy, which many teachers felt showed a lack of appreciation of what their job entailed. The headteacher at Douglas House expressed, for example, that the government ‘has a good understanding of some of the main issues in teaching but they are distant from the day to day work of schools, and they may not understand what it means to try to get every child up to the standards that have been set’. There was felt to be an unrealistic understanding of what was going on in schools, whilst education was used as a political football (Sir Henry Hadow College, deputy headteacher) and teachers were tools for implementing policies. A teacher at Balfour Primary School felt, ‘there really is a sense in which they [government] will not trust experts’, whilst an NQT there complained,

you have to give them that ... I mean you’ve done a degree ... so just give that respect to us. It’s like you’ll have a degree for that work, and then they take it away from us because they’ve said you have to do this, this and this and you’re not allowed the flexibility. I think teachers should be allowed to be a bit more flexible than they are being told, and I think the curriculum has to change.

In some primary schools there was a sense that there had recently been a slight improvement, with less control, less futile paperwork, and a move towards a better balance between guidance, teacher judgement and accountability. But this was far from a universal view, there being a strong sense still in other primary schools, such as that expressed by a teacher at Asquith Primary School, that 'the last few years has seen a deskilling of teachers' that had been very demoralising. We encountered too an alternative view, of how autonomy could be achieved within accountability, a teacher at Balfour Primary School said 'because I've managed to get the SATs results up, nobody tells me off for not doing things the proper way'.

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In secondary schools, many of the same kinds of complaints were forcibly expressed. But these complaints tended to be balanced by a view, shared by a teaching assistant at Elton Community College, that 'secondary teachers have more autonomy'. In particular, as explained by the deputy headteacher at the same school, 'we still have autonomy in the classroom, which is very important'. Some secondary teachers attributed this greater autonomy to their headteachers who, according to a teacher at Elton Community College, 'ensure autonomy by standing up to external authority'. More commonly, however, it was attributed to a continuing valuable tradition of a high level of autonomy for subject departments.

3) Does CPD have an impact on teachers' sense of status?

CPD was discussed quite fully in the interviews and generally in very positive terms, although there seemed to be considerable variation among schools in the enthusiasm expressed.

There was some consensus that CPD can be quite important in affecting teachers’ status, and in several different ways. Some teachers were very conscious that their headteachers were thoughtfully considering what courses would be valuable for moving them on as professionals; they felt this enhanced their status, the NQT from Sir Henry Hadow College explained, because 'it demonstrates that you are valued'. Also, most teachers showed themselves highly committed to the value of education for their own development: 'if you are not confident in one area, there is always training, or talking to a colleague, to develop yourself' (teacher, Crosland Primary School). CPD thus enhances teachers’ status within the profession by making them more highly skilled teachers. Also, in social terms, teachers were conscious of CPD giving them confidence and in addition inspiring confidence in colleagues whom they had to advise, as a teacher and member of the senior management team at Douglas House Primary School said, 'it makes you feel trained to do the job and professional'.

While personally valued by most individual teachers, CPD is quite markedly also seen very much as a school matter and the headteacher at Asquith Primary School makes the point that, 'It's about linking everyone's own personal development to the school's development'. It is not only for the school, but is generally appreciated as a gift from the school, as suggested by a deputy headteacher at Crosland Primary School who said 'the progress I have made at this school has given me a lot of professional development'. Furthermore, much of the most valued CPD is planned and provided for the school as a teacher from Asquith Primary School confirmed, 'the bulk of our training we do as a whole-school staff' and in the school - 'external specialists have come into the school to train teachers, e.g. in art, which has led me to be more confident in my teaching'. One might suggest that there may be an increased sense in recent years of identification between individual teachers and schools in their sense of their status and confidence in their efforts for self-improvement. CPD participants may also feel that their own status is enhanced by the quality of the provision made for them: 'the induction process at this school is good ... very rigorous, that raises the status of it' (NQT, Sir Henry Hadow College).
One further notable aspect of the contribution that CPD makes to teachers' sense of their status is the crucial part played by LAs. At one important practical level, this is simply as the apparent dominant source of CPD courses. But LAs were mentioned less often as mere providers than as thoughtful planners and organisers of programmes, offering valued guidance about what was needed both to schools and to individual teachers (e.g. NQTs). And at a third level, LAs provided both a practical and symbolic way of widening teachers' horizons, helping them to develop their professional understanding, aspirations and sense of professional status beyond the narrow boundaries of their individual schools. However, it must be said that, while very similar things were said about CPD provision by primary and secondary schools, positive comments about LA provision were restricted to primary school teachers.

Some national initiatives were also praised as providing improved CPD provision. For example, the headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College explained, *'the creation of NCSL has been helpful - far more structure and focus and sharing good practice’.*

**Summary**

The evidence presented in this chapter from the Type I case study schools is about teachers' views on aspects of classroom teaching and learning. It seems to reflect a teaching profession that is very confident about its own idea of teacher professionalism, but aware that this idea of professionalism has been under attack in recent years. At the core of this idea of teacher professionalism is a conception of teachers who are able and dedicated to engage in the subtle, complex and highly demanding job of classroom teaching. Such professionalism includes a readiness to be accountable to employers and the wider society and a readiness also to be responsive to external initiatives for innovation. But it also takes for granted the ultimate dependence of high quality teaching on the judgement, intelligence and skill of the classroom teacher.

From that perspective, central government in recent years has been seen by these teachers to be too ready to impose its own ideas without consultation and especially without providing adequate space for teachers to adapt and develop these ideas and to evaluate them. The government's approach has been too bureaucratic, has been disrespectful and untrusting of teachers, and has shown an inadequate understanding of the nature of classroom teaching. This attack by the government on teacher professionalism has been perceived most strongly by primary school teachers; and there is some feeling in some primary schools that things may now be improving.

Among the government initiatives impinging on classroom teaching, the teachers talked most about testing, OfSTED and the National Curriculum and strategies. They were most negative about testing, its distorting effects upon the curriculum, and its demoralising effects upon themselves. OfSTED's work had not generally been based on a proper understanding of teaching, and had in many respects been damaging both to morale and status, but was potentially useful and the new regime seemed to be better. The National Curriculum and
strategies were seen, at least by older teachers, as representing an over-correction from the different weaknesses of an early era, not as the move towards partnership between government and the profession that was needed.

The teachers generally talked very enthusiastically about their own continuing professional learning, which they saw as contributing significantly to their status. It thus reflected their view of their status as depending primarily on their own judgements about the quality of their work and secondly on the respect and appreciation they received from those with whom they worked.
CHAPTER 10: EXTERNAL SCHOOL RELATIONS

Overview

This final chapter on the Type I case studies again addresses the project’s second main aim ‘to understand the factors that might influence perceptions of status and teachers' attitudes’, by investigating the extent to which widening the scope of schools’ service provision affects teachers’ status. It explores how far schools have implemented recent government policy initiatives which encourage schools to collaborate with external stakeholders and other professionals or create their own existing arrangements with local businesses, communities and individuals. This is an important factor to consider, particularly as the resultant relationships have implications for the esteem in which teachers feel they are held by external stakeholders. This chapter examines teachers’ views of the impact of external school relations on their status by responding to three questions:

1. How far have schools advanced towards inclusiveness, in which stakeholders and communities are involved in school issues?

2. What are the impacts on teachers’ working lives when they accommodate collaboration with other professionals and what implications are there for teacher status?

3. How do teaching and support staff perceive/predict stakeholder involvement has/might impact on their status and/or the status of the profession?

The main findings are:

- The positive teacher/parent relationships generated through collaborative working strategies helped teachers to feel trusted and respected by parents and other stakeholders. Most depressing for teachers, however, were the attitudes of less engaged but more informed parent communities. Teachers felt that the levels of respect from this group had declined over the years and even culminated in parental hostility towards the profession.

- Teachers felt that extending school services to provide greater collaborative working arrangements between professionals had the capacity to provide teachers with a more specialised role. However, a system which merges professionals, who may have competing priorities or conflicting agendas, requires locally derived solutions rather than nationally prescribed strategies.

- Whilst some school teachers (mainly secondary) emphasised the potential benefits of extended schools for teacher professionalism, others were concerned about what they viewed as the loss, financially and professionally, of certain responsibilities to other professionals.
• Teachers and support staff appreciated the general direction in which government initiatives aim to re-shape provisions for children, however, they struggle with what they perceive as a torrent of national policies which tend to discount local concerns and place additional workloads on teachers.

The evidence

1) How far have schools advanced towards inclusiveness, in which stakeholders and communities are involved in school issues?

Schools have for some time, in their prospectuses and home-school contracts, insisted that pupils’ success can be enhanced through positive three-way cooperation between the school, pupils and their parents/carers. Government education policies, such as those contained in the White Paper, *Schools Achieving Success* (DfES 2001b) also insist that opportunities for pupils to fulfil their potential in school are greatly maximised through wider community involvement. Given that most teachers gain their esteem within schools, this outreach has potentially interesting effects on teachers’ status. In this section, we explore how the capacity and will of schools to encourage community involvement is demonstrated among our eight case study schools to varying degrees.

*a) The Community*

Teaching staff at Asquith Primary School spoke proudly of their school’s commitment to allow community members to take assemblies, and appreciate the diverseness of the local population by honouring their various religious ceremonies. Parents of current and past pupils at Douglas House Primary School were encouraged to share in light-touch entertainment and enjoyed attending quiz evenings at the school. At Flint Marsh Primary School, on the other hand, pupils’ learning opportunities were enhanced as they worked with contractors who were regenerating a local park. They transformed a waterlogged and neglected grassy area, by working with them to re-route the river and put in flowers and sculptures. This sort of community involvement had positive benefits for teachers’ status, as the deputy head at Sir Alec Clegg Infant School spoke about the strength of generations of community involvement in the school, ‘… we have continuity, children from the same families and they connect with you. You see people around town years after and they’re always happy to see you’.

However, whilst interviewees at one of the secondary (Elton Community College) and one of the primary schools (Crosland Primary School) spoke about the efforts of their schools to involve parents, there was little mention of any desire to invite wider community participation. The reason offered by both a governor and parent at Crosland Primary School was that the exclusiveness of their Catholic school discouraged the largely Muslim community, in which it is situated, from pursuing any form of interaction with the school.
Consequently, most of their community involvement comes from generations of former pupils of the school. Outreach at Elton Community College was also unsuccessful as, the deputy headteacher explained, local residents were annoyed at the pupils’ movements between the split school sites. Moreover, further plans to expand the school were considered an ‘irritant’. Explaining the challenge ahead for their school, the deputy headteacher said ‘the concept of being a community college has not been embraced ... unless you’ve got a child at the school, there is no reason for you to come here’.

b) Parental involvement

Some teaching staff were impressed with the devotion with which some parents have embraced opportunities to work with staff and pupils. Those at Gillan High School were impressed by the commitment of parents who fought for the existence of the school as it faced closure. However, parental involvement was certainly not guaranteed across all of the schools, particularly in the secondary schools where the majority of interviewees were frustrated with the negative attitudes of parents that over-shadowed any positive experiences of parental support that might make them feel valued. This feeling of despair is confirmed by the headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College who said that the ‘majority of parents are pretty good and they let us get on with our work’ but he also acknowledged that other parents ‘are almost impossible’. This headteacher was concerned that they had little appreciation of the workings of the school and complained that:

the other things that are upsetting are the negatives that impact on you, and that’s the parents, the members of the community, those people that don’t understand education. And their only way of comparing or having a context for education is to think of their time at school.

The picture is much the same at Elton Community College. One of their support staff, who also had child at the school, felt that the parent/teacher collaboration ‘works very well’, and three other teachers spoke briefly about feeling respected and trusted by parents. However the majority of teachers’ comments were dominated by disparaging attitudes towards parents. The same teacher who said she felt respected also said that she didn’t ‘feel the same level of support from parents that I did five years ago’. A teaching assistant felt that teachers were feeling ‘demoralised’ at the lack of support from parents, a sentiment echoed by a NQT who said that ‘the majority of parents undervalue what we do’. The gravity of the parent/teacher discontent is emphasised by the school’s deputy headteacher who also felt that a growing number of parents worked against the school and said ‘there are more parents who are less prepared to support the school and challenge the authority of the school’.

Socio-economic disparity might account for much of the breakdown between teachers, pupils and their parents, described above. The teaching assistant at Asquith Primary School felt that the lack of cooperation by parents in her school was directly related to the fact that the school is situated in an area which is economically impoverished and that ‘...if you lived in an area that was more affluent then there might be better respect for teachers’. In its White Paper the government drew attention to the fact that ‘Many, but not all, struggling schools are situated in the most deprived areas, or have a disproportionate number of pupils
where social and family problems get in the way of effective learning’ (DfES 2001b). This is also a problem for teaching staff such as the NQT at Balfour Primary School, who felt that, ‘parents of underachieving children are less cooperative’. At her second interview the headteacher, also at Balfour Primary School, repeated her perception that, ‘white working class and Caribbean parents are the least respectful to teachers’. The financial mobility of parents of pupils at Gillan High School presents teachers with a situation which is almost a reversal of that experienced at Asquith Primary School and Balfour Primary School, however, with similar outcomes. There, teachers were faced with what they saw as an affluent parent community a minority of which have little regard for the lower paid teaching profession. High earning parents’ perceptions of teachers’ salaries, short working hours and long holidays all contribute to the image of a teaching profession that is perhaps an easy option and ‘therefore they don’t give it the status that other parents would give it’. Teachers at the school were concerned that although they had a more informed, professional parent community, the confidence with which these parents were prepared to challenge teachers’ authority was potentially destructive. This echoes observations noted around perceptions of pay differentials in the largely middle class area which undermine teacher status, noted in Chapter 8.

c) Working with external agencies

An example of the types of joint working relations that the government is hoping for in the Extended Schools initiative is evident at Flint Marsh Primary School. There, the deputy headteacher said ‘We have OTs [occupational therapists], we have speech therapists, we have the EP [education psychologist] coming in … The EWO [education welfare officer], Social Services, they all come in’. Speaking directly about the desirability of collaborative working practices, an assistant headteacher from Gillan High School also reported that teachers enjoyed a good level of respect from professionals from other agencies, including the police or health services. The secondary schools appeared to have much less interaction with external agencies, although the deputy headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College explained that the school was attempting to be responsive to the governments call for widening participation. Although they had been providing extra curricular activities for some time, ‘they’re trying to get medical care on site and more ready access to things like Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Connexions etc’.

On the other hand, there appeared to be a greater proportion of dissenting voices about joint working. For instance, another teacher, also from Gillan High School, said that she felt local authority support was lacking. Similar sentiments were echoed by the deputy headteacher at Crosland Primary School who saw the local authority merely as the eyes of central government ‘... by sending their inspectors to check that we’re being good’. And although social workers associated with Flint Marsh Primary School are actively involved with pupils and staff, the deputy headteacher did not appreciate their approach. He explained that the Social Services had suggested a meeting with a parent, to offer support, and had thought, ‘Oh, that’s a really good idea’. However, the social worker suggested that the deputy headteacher should write an invitation letter to the parent and forward a copy to the social
worker; a proposition which was not appreciated, ‘… I’m not their secretary, and I don’t like being treated like that, and I told her to write it herself’.

2) What are the impacts on teachers’ working lives when they accommodate collaboration with other professionals and what implications are there for teacher status?

The impact of stakeholder collaboration on the status of teachers is potentially very important, as schools come to terms with increased intervention by other professionals. Two primary school teachers who spoke positively about the perceived advantages of closer working relations with agencies felt that teachers would benefit from a more focused teaching role, because other professionals would absorb some of the pastoral and social care activities that they are often engaged with. A NQT working at Balfour Primary School felt that teachers had responsibilities that were too diverse, she explained ‘the teaching role is too general and teachers need support from specialists’. The deputy headteacher at Flint Marsh Primary School also expressed how she stood to benefit from specialist support:

It would be marvellous; I’d love to have a social worker working on site. One person who knew ... that would be brilliant ... When I went to Atlanta, in their schools, they had loads of support agencies, and when I described my role, and what I do as a deputy they couldn’t believe it. They couldn’t believe it! They have two deputies, one that’s curriculum, and one that does all the behaviour side of it. They didn’t do any of the health issues, they didn’t do any of the parents, they weren’t involved with the parents at all. They didn’t do the attendance that was all done admin-wise. They had social workers, they had EWOs [Education Welfare Officers]. They had health people, who were limited to aspects of health. You know, I’m trying to find jumpers and shoes for some children in our school. You know they had nurses, they had doctors who would link completely with the school, and they took on that whole side of it. They couldn’t believe the range of things that I did.

Indeed, positive images of the extended school initiative were shared by a deputy headteacher, a teacher and a SEN teaching assistant, each working at secondary schools. All appreciated the government’s enthusiasm for shared school environments, where teachers’ roles are not limited by traditional classroom boundaries. For the teacher at Elton Community College, ‘the role is multi-faceted, you don’t just walk into a classroom and walk out, your involvement in their lives is more significant these days ...’ Sir Henry Hadow College’s deputy headteacher was keen that the initiative should not be relegated to an out-of-hours childcare provision. For the teaching assistant working at Sir Henry Hadow College and who was frustrated at legislative restrictions which she felt prevented teaching staff from advising students on issues such as birth control and sexual health, extended participation with other professionals was overdue, she said ‘We’re supposed to have social workers and a school nurse for the children to ask but it’s not going to happen fast enough’.
However, the coordination of various professional expertise to provide extended school facilities may create a considerable challenge for some schools. Staff at secondary schools pointed out that vague demarcation of duties between professionals may have a negative impact on all concerned. The deputy headteachers at both Elton Community College and Sir Henry Hadow College were particularly critical about this aspect of the extended schools policy and the prescriptive way in which they felt government had introduced it, arguing, ‘it could be really, really negative. There’s a whole range of ways in which the extended hours can be accessed and we’ve got concerns that it may be fragmented and quite difficult to control’ (deputy headteacher, Sir Henry Hadow College).

Similar concerns were expressed by teachers such as the deputy headteacher from Flint Marsh Primary School who said of the extended schools initiative, ‘unless somebody’s going to fund it, all that happens is that your job gets bigger’. Indeed, this concern was expressed by the headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow. Whilst he spoke generally in favour of the initiative he felt further clarification was needed to explain:

... if there’s going to be payment expected from parents for this or do they expect their child to attend for free as extra-curricular is at the moment, or are they going to send them to something where an external provider is coming in and providing something else.

However, the idea of paying external agencies to perform certain responsibilities which teachers have formerly conducted freely as an extension of their duties may be unsettling to the teaching profession. The headteacher for instance continued:

I think there’s some tensions there about if you’re a teacher who’s providing something that’s been free in the past, but somebody else is coming in and providing something else that they’re getting paid for, there’s some inequalities that need to be settled. I think this was always a problem with the funding for out of hours learning.

3) How do teaching and support staff perceive/predict stakeholder involvement has/might impact on their status and/or the status of the profession?

a) Working with parents and the impact on status

Teachers were asked about the impact that collaborative working with parents and other stakeholders was having or might have on their own status. At Douglas House Primary School the AST felt that parents, ‘respect teachers and teachers are generally more valued now than a few years ago’. Both the Teaching Assistant and the NQT at Douglas House Primary School agreed with the AST’s judgement, as the NQT pointed out ‘We have an ever-increasing waiting list, so we must be doing something right’. A member of the same school’s senior management team, however, held strong views to the contrary and during her first interview spoke of the extent to which parents would challenge teachers’ authority. She
said, ‘A lot of parents think that they know better than us, they think that they have the right to question us about everything’. She goes on to explain the damaging effect that such dissenting attitudes can have on the status of the school and on pupils’ respect for teachers after witnessing their parents’ approach. A year later, this senior teacher remained resolute, feeling that:

more parents are interfering and questioning the school’s judgement. This probably reflects changing attitudes in society – people feeling they have more right to dictate what happens – this does undermine us.

Teachers at Crosland Primary School expressed similar feelings of hope and despair with regard to parental involvement. Speaking about her school’s good reputation, a teacher felt reassured by positive reports from parents and other potential parents who had expressed the desire for their children to attend the school. A Teaching Assistant at the same school felt that most parents trusted the teaching staff. They explained that ‘people put their children with them [teachers] for 6 hours a day, so you have got to have a lot of trust’. The same TA, however, also spoke about those parents who show little value for the role of teachers and ‘think teachers are a different level of species who don’t do what they should be doing, when they are’. One of the teachers, also holding responsibilities on the school’s governing body, echoed the comment made above by the senior teacher from Douglas House Primary School, when she said that ‘In the past, parents had more respect for teachers’.

Teachers at both secondary schools and the middle school, however, had both positive and negative experiences to share about the impact of parental and community attitudes towards themselves and the profession. Certainly, some parents had shown teachers due respect, such as the those described by the teacher at Gillan High School who said that ‘there are some parents who recognise that teaching has changed quite a lot … I think some parents will appreciate and respect the profession for that’. They also felt that the respect once held by teachers had been eroded, over time, by the changing attitudes of parents. Nevertheless, a few of the secondary school teachers were optimistic about the impact that adoption of the principles of Every Child Matters might have on their status. The deputy headteacher at Elton Community College felt that although current collaborative working relations had not had a significant impact on the status of teachers, the initiative provided scope for a potential boost to the profession as ‘it will enhance how teachers are seen, because parents will be able to see how much their own child has come forward, as a result of school support’. Both a NQT and the deputy headteacher at Sir Henry Hadow College agreed that the initiative would have a positive impact on people’s impression of the teaching profession. The NQT thought that the initiative was a ‘fantastic idea’, but was equally convinced that its success would need to be supported with sufficient levels of government funding. If this were to be the case, she said, then ‘the fact that government throws so much money at teaching, raises the status straight away because it’s being taken seriously’. Slightly more cautiously, the deputy headteacher felt that the initiative ‘could be a good thing …’ particularly where schools are able to accommodate a range of professionals and provide a more wholesome service, he thinks this would raise the profile of the college so that ‘... it is seen, even more so, as a hub of the community’. 
b) The government impact on status

Teachers had difficulties identifying ways in which the government had any positive influence on their status, although an assistant headteacher at Gillan High School, made reference to recent government policies towards pupil behaviour. If successful, he felt these would, in the distant future, ‘... go a long way to improving teacher status’. This was one of a few positive comments about the likely impact of government initiatives on the status of teachers. However, the essence of the majority of teachers’ views is expressed by the two primary school teachers. The deputy headteacher from Crosland Primary School felt that the ‘government walk over teachers and foist initiatives on us’. The headteacher at Balfour Primary School also said that the low status of the profession derived from government intervention, which has roots in earlier regimes. She explained ‘it’s a long time ago now but it was all attributable to Maggie Thatcher and the Daily Mail and the oil crisis in the seventies, that’s why we have this much diminished status’.

Summary

The data shows that where schools have succeeded in stimulating community involvement, teachers gained esteem from seeing pupils benefiting from the rich learning opportunities available only from external sources. Such collaborations have seen the development of school/community relations which have generated greater awareness and respect for teachers’ roles. Both primary and secondary school teachers have welcomed community involvement on and off their premises and throughout and beyond the traditional school day, however, for some, local circumstances were deemed a hindrance to wider community participation. The chapter has also unveiled an image of primary schools as currently having similar levels of involvement with their local communities as secondary schools but a greater degree of interaction with stakeholders. Yet the same primary schools were less inclined to embrace the government’s more formal extended schools arrangements with external partners, which teachers from secondary schools, more positively, anticipated might enhance the professional standing of teachers.

The negative consequences of parental and external agency intervention cannot be overlooked however. Teaching staff have emphasised the extent to which these interactions have had a destructive impact on their working lives and feelings of esteem and status. Both primary and secondary school teachers complained about parental attitudes which undermined teacher status and authority in an increasingly disrespectful society, particularly as they were more prepared to challenge the authority of the school. Analysis of both primary and secondary school teachers’ views showed working class, less affluent parents as being reported as being less engaged with schools and uncooperative towards teachers. On the other hand, teachers also felt that some of the more affluent parents, with comparable or higher salaries than teachers, were inclined to disrespect teachers and hold them in low regard.

The generally optimistic mood of teachers from secondary schools who welcomed the advent of the extended schools initiative, and envisaged a resultant boost to the status of the
teaching profession, are quelled by uncertainty of the accompanying financial implications. For both primary and secondary teaching staff, in junior and senior positions, as well as being concerned about the financial sustainability of the government’s plans, they held concerns about what they felt was the government’s approach to its implementation. These teachers’ attitudes are perhaps fuelled by what interviewees argued has been a history of inappropriate government intervention and disregard for teachers’ professional judgement.