An Investigation into:

What are the Factors that Teachers in Four Primary

Academy Coastal Schools in South-East England

Identified as Influential in the Development

of their Respective School's Curriculum

by

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore the process of how four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England reviewed their curricula following the implementation of the National Curriculum (2013) for England.

The respective sample schools did not have to adopt the National Curriculum (2013) because of their academy status (DfE, 2013). However, in the process of their curriculum review and subsequent curriculum development, they had to ensure that their core curriculum aligned with the government's increased expectations of pupils' knowledge by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 as set out in the National Curriculum (2013).

This qualitative research was conducted using an interpretivist paradigm. The empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews with four class teachers (participants). Each teacher had responsibility for subject leadership in their respective primary academy coastal school.

The data (gathered from participant interviews) shows three key findings relating to teachers' perceptions of factors that would influence the curriculum development process and, as such, impact the quality of the developed curriculum in the four primary academy coastal schools.

The first key finding that emerged from teachers' perceptions in all four primary academy coastal schools was that the school's context/profile influenced their curriculum development process. This factor would need to be taken into account if their school's curriculum was to provide pupils with the learning opportunities and experiences, they would need in order to prepare them for the next phase of education and life in general.

The second key finding that emerged from this research was that teachers identified both internal and external factors beyond the school's context/profile that influenced the curriculum development process in their schools. This determined their approach and influenced their thinking throughout the curriculum development process. They also highlighted the need for teacher training in

curriculum development.

The third key finding that emerged from teachers' perception of the factors that influence curriculum development in their schools, was the importance of school leaders affording teachers' autonomy in the process. Due to the autonomy given to academies in the development of their school's curriculum, teachers are becoming increasingly pivotal to its success.

This research has made a substantial contribution to the limited body of knowledge in existence about the process of curriculum development in primary academy coastal schools. It has provided valuable information about curriculum development and has shed light on an under-researched element of an ever-changing educational landscape.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this research to my mother Doreen Robinson, to my stepfather Captain John Robinson, my father Leonard Riddell and to close friends and family whose support has been invaluable. Finally, above all to my husband Andrew True who has been a never-ending voice of encouragement.

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Abbreviations

ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
CCCU	Canterbury Christ Church University
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
EAL	English Additional Language
EATA	Ecological Approach for Teacher Agency
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS1	Key Stage One
KS2	Key Stage Two
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
NC	National Curriculum
NCETM	The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics
NCSL	National College of School Leadership
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PISA	Programme for International Assessment
PPG	Pupil Premium Grant
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SATs	Standardised Assessment Tests
SBCD	School Based Curriculum Development
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Specialist Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Specialist Educational Needs and Disabilities
STA	Standard Testing Agency
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter 1

Research Context

Introduction

The focus of this research is an investigation into 'What are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum?'. This research is based on teachers' perceptions from their first-hand experiences of factors that influence the process of curriculum development in their schools. The sample teachers involved in the curriculum development process in their respective schools, took on the mantle of 'agents of change' by the very nature of the work they undertook. However, to what degree they were afforded this opportunity was dependent upon the level of empowerment afforded to them. This research investigates the identified phenomenon which is achieved by means of social and material environments and affected by experiences across different temporal dimensions (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2013). This introductory chapter gives a brief account of the context of teacher perceptions regarding curriculum development and relates to my professional background which has served as the motivation for conducting the research. This chapter also offers a rationale for the research and sets out its intended aims, all of which are strongly linked to the current educational context, concluding with a brief overview of the structure of the thesis and the focus of each of the following chapters.

1.1 Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development

A resurgence of academy schools' autonomy regarding curriculum development became clear from 2010 with the Academies Act's legislation passed in the same year. Rhetoric emerging from the Academies Act focussed on curriculum autonomy and the

development of each respective schools' curricula. A new found trust in academy

schools (Department for Education (DfE), 2010; Gove, 2013b) gave them a greater

ownership over their curriculum allowing academies to take action in terms of

developing their own curricula. After decades of centralised curriculum control, the

government loosened restrictions in this area leading them to comment that the

National Curriculum (NC) for England had confined schools in terms of their

curricula (DfE, 2010, p. 10). Due to reforms in legislation (Academies Act 2010),

teachers in academy schools are now encouraged to become involved in the process of

their respective school's curriculum development. This immediately engendered a

two-tier system in terms of maintained schools and academy schools in the light of the

legislation (Academies Act, 2010). With Academy schools being allowed to develop

their own curricula whilst maintained schools have remained shackled to the statutory

NC (2013). This is discussed further on in this thesis.

Following decades of centralised curriculum control, the government analogised the

National Curriculum (NC) as prescriptive and restrictive (DfE, 2010, p. 10) and

requested teachers' support in its reform (DfE, 2013b). Academy status granted

schools wide-ranging autonomy (Gove 2010b) particularly regarding the curriculum.

Any maintained school that converted to academy status was disapplied from the

statutory National Curriculum (NC, 2013). This was also an automatic right for any

new schools being built as they automatically became an academy. This was part of

the government's intentions in changing the education landscape in England. As a

result of this, schools new to academisation began to develop their own curricula. For

many, this involved teachers to such a degree that their opinions, thoughts, and

judgements were given unprecedented value and credence due to their day-to-day

delivery of the curriculum and their professional experience. It became apparent that

one of the advantages of having teachers involved in curriculum development was that they knew their pupils and could develop a curriculum using their contextual knowledge. This unique knowledge gave them insight into the knowledge, skills, and life experiences of the local community that the school served. Fundamentally, the legislation (Academies Act, 2010) enabled teachers to play a greater role in curriculum development since the Education Act of 1988. With the educational policy landscape changing and the onus (in terms of curriculum development) being placed on the shoulders of leaders and teachers, their experience of the school context and the pupils that they serve has never been so vital. Teacher's contextual knowledge and understanding of their respective schools will add additional information into the curriculum development process and could aid the design and development of it (Albusaie,2016). The school's curriculum needs to address pupils' wellbeing, physical and academic needs, specifically to the school's context therefore teachers' first-hand knowledge and understanding of their pupils is needed. The notion of a 'best fit' curriculum that matches pupils' needs is one that enables pupils to develop their understanding of the world around them and survive within it.

Legislation within the Academies Act (2010) included the statutory expectations of academy school's curricula remaining broad and balanced (this is echoed in the NC of 1988 and the NC of 2013). The notion of a broad and balanced curriculum was highlighted as a concern by the Cambridge Review Trust (Alexander, 2010a). It was identified that primary teachers' curriculum capacity was an issue in terms of their conception of planning a broad and coherent curriculum (Alexander, 2012, p. 1). This is discussed further in the literature review (see p. 63).

Curriculum development concerns were furthered raised by Priestley and Minty (2013) by describing them as a 'lost art' because teachers have become de-skilled in

the process and, as such, lacked the required knowledge and the type of thinking (both critical and analytical) required to develop a school's curriculum. Wheelahan (2010) et al., concurs with their views and expands on this by remarking that curriculum development is in crisis given that, for the past thirty years, schools (due to the NC 1988 and 2013) have been developed by a 'centralised power structure' (Fisher, 2012, p. 238), namely the government. The centralisation of the development of the curriculum has seen both leaders and teachers de-professionalised (McCulloch, Helsby, and Knight, 2000) and reduced to mere deliverers of the curriculum (Trowler, 2003). Over 88% of teachers had never taught in schools prior to the NC (1988) when there was autonomy in curriculum development for schools (DfE, 2014a).

Over time there has been increased pervasive accountability (Hammersley, Fletcher, and Strain, 2011, p. 871) which has preoccupied schools since the introduction of league tables. The autonomy that academies have gained with curriculum development has meant that there is a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils which are measured through national testing. Nonetheless, the wide-ranging top-down rapid and unremitting changes (Davidson, 2017) that have occurred has meant that both leaders and teachers have become undermined and disempowered when it comes to curriculum development. The harm this has done to these professionals in education has fused the notion of central directives with accountability, leaving schools chained to accountability regimes (Brundrett and Duncan, 2010, p. 5). This suggests there was tension between legislated autonomy for academy schools and contrasting policy which affects reality whereas leaders and teachers felt constrained by regulations (Leat, Livingston and Priestley, 2013, p. 235).

Autonomy for primary academy schools seems to be a façade and a deliberate ploy to keep schools manacled to the NC (2013) constraining them in their attempts to

develop their curricula due to statutory assessments in schools within core subjects. Therefore, retaining disingenuous power over the developed curriculum, the legislators narrow attempts made by leaders and teachers to provide a curriculum that would start to address the inequitable opportunities within education that continues to exist within schools in England. It is suggested that autonomy for primary academy schools adds to the complexities and inequalities of education in England rather than simplifying the education system. Reay (2017) expands upon the inequitable education system in her book, 'Miseducation: inequality and the working classes' (2017) which draws upon her own personal experiences and is in response to Jackson and Marsden's (1962) 'Education and the Working Class'. Their work argues that academy schools have added to the inequitable education system in England by being run and led on a business model. For academy schools and LA (Local Authority) schools, these inequalities can be seen through the legislation in place and the autonomy academies have in developing their own curricula. The disparities are particularly highlighted within the curriculum offered by maintained primary schools versus what academy schools can offer. The only piece of legislation that is common to both types of schools is to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced (NC, 2013; Academies Act 2010) which means an academy school curriculum can technically be very different from a maintained school's curriculum. Therefore, the legislation surrounding the curriculum for both types of school has highlighted an anomaly in entitlement and arguably compounds curriculum inequalities between maintained schools (LA) and academies in England. The issue that arises is that the schools are being governed by two distinctly different regimes premised within government legislation; one in which schools have autonomy over their curricula (academies) and the other in which schools do not (LA schools). The dichotomy is that academies are not restricted to the content and subjects they can offer as they do not need to comply

with the NC (2013), unlike LA schools which are restricted and have to comply. However, both types of schools are assessed and judged on the quality of their education and the curriculum on offer (Ofsted 2012; DfE,2010) based on the same regime, namely by HMI (Her Majesties Inspectorate) Ofsted inspections and National Tests (SATs). This highlights that the judgements made through inspections and national testing are not decided on a level playing field given the different legislation involved in curriculum development. It is suggested that the curricula for both academies and LA schools start from a different premise and therefore, the frameworks used for judging the curriculum are unequal. This disparity between academies and maintained schools in curriculum development is important as the NC (2013) was presented by the government as a guide for academies yet required for maintained schools (both publicly funded schools). Therefore, it is pertinent to reflect on the development of the NC (2013) at this point because it is necessary within this research to consider its possible impact on the curriculum development process for academy schools.

During the development of the NC (2013), a consultation period was evoked by the government in which professionals could respond to the proposals put forward. The consultation period began in February 2013 and closed in April (DfE, 2013b), which meant there was a tight turnaround time for professionals hoping to respond. This affected the number of responses received and, as such, left limited time for redrafting or amendments to be made to the NC (2013) proposal. This suggests that the responses from professionals were not valued as there was a need to ensure the NC (2013) was quickly implemented in schools in September (2014). Thus, the NC (2013) was shoehorned into place with little time for schools to prepare for its implementation. The government saw the NC (2013) as a document that could be used

as guidance for academy schools' leaders and teachers to refer to in relation to their own curriculum development. However, the uncoupling from the NC for academies has proved to be complex and will be discussed further in the literature review (see p. .

Teacher involvement in the development of their school's curriculum provides an opportunity for teachers to act as change agents and develop agency through their involvement in the process. However, this opportunity may be somewhat capped for teachers who work in LA schools as they legally must follow the NC (2013) whereas academy teachers should potentially be more involved in the process of curriculum development due to the schools having autonomy. With the government raising the expectations in the NC (2013) of what pupils should know by a certain age (increased knowledge to be gained within each year group), many schools took the opportunity to review their curricula. This increase in pupil knowledge would need to be considered by academies as a disparity may occur and create issues for pupils transitioning from primary academy schools to their secondary phase of education. Although national targets (a combined national standard of 65% at the end of KS2 in reading, writing and mathematics) have not changed regarding national tests, the amount of knowledge pupils need to have gained by the time they take Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in year six needs to have increased. Schools have grappled with the knowledge gap between the NC (1988) and the NC (2013) to ensure Year 6 pupils could achieve national expectations. For many schools, the implementation of the National Assessment Framework (2016) saw a decrease in the national standard achieved in the first academic year. It is suggested that this was a challenge for schools and in order to address this issue, it could be argued that schools narrowed their curricula to achieve core standards nationally due to increased government expectations. Since the

implementation of the NC (2013), inspection frameworks have started to redress the balance in terms of inspecting (Ofsted) the whole curriculum which, in turn, has triggered schools to review curricula and what they are teaching. There has been an intense preoccupation placed on primary pupils achieving core (reading, writing, mathematics) national standards for far too long and as a result, not achieving a broad and balanced curriculum. In recent times there has been a seed change occurring which has been triggered by various inspection frameworks focused on pupils' needs. This has allowed pupils to become well rounded human beings by providing a diverse curriculum and a range of experiences that enable them to thrive.

In terms of curriculum development, many academy headteachers have said that they feel pressured to comply even when they have the power to do something innovative and different due to the single issue of budgets (DfE, 2010, p. 16). Headteachers have stated that they find it difficult to sustain their own school improvement strategies and that it takes determination to follow their own approach (DfE, 2010, p. 16). This implies that curriculum development could become a muted activity shying away from creative and innovative possibilities. Therefore, the impact of this on teachers suggests that they can become constricted in their roles when developing the curriculum as required by policy (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015b, p. 128; Davidson (2017)). There is a presumption that teachers can thrive in a complementary matrix of autonomy and accountability, rather than capitulate to accountability factors. This could change teachers' perceptions of curriculum development as autonomy has been tainted by government policy. The issues raised within this section are apparent and have been part of my experience as a professional working in education.

1.2 Researcher's Professional Background

I have worked as a School Improvement Adviser for fifteen years and prior to that as a primary school Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, SENCo, Key Stage Leader and class teacher with various subject responsibilities. Curriculum development has always been of keen interest to me. I strongly believe that all involved in education should take an active interest in curriculum development because it is through the curriculum (both 'taught' and 'hidden') that pupils access essential knowledge and skills preparing them for adult life. Having worked in education for over thirty years, I have seen a myriad of changes in primary education. Schools are central to social reform and with increasing expectations from the government, schools are the conduit to ensure future generations become responsible citizens contributing positively to society. Schools are expected to work closely with parents or guardians, involve the local community and collaborate with each other to address pupils' needs effectively. Schools have a responsibility to provide a curriculum that will act as a platform to launch young people into their next stage of education so they can be successful in their future lives whatever pathway they choose to take. However, a one-size-fits-all curriculum is not the solution because all human beings/pupils are different and do not come from the same mould. Pupils may be dealing with all kinds of challenges in their young lives so we need a curriculum that can be flexible and rise to the challenges they are facing to provide them with confidence and resilience to deal with future challenges in their adult lives.

In my time as a School Improvement Adviser, I worked with a vast range of different designated primary schools but the ones I feel most passionate about are the coastal schools serving high areas of deprivation. I live in a coastal town and have a level of empathy with the issues they face. I believe that if schools can develop an effective

and purposeful curriculum for their pupils, there may be some chance of addressing the huge inequalities in England's education system. By diminishing gaps between socio-economic groups, those pupils living in impoverishment may start to thrive on the learning opportunities a school can provide. However, it is with trepidation that I suggest this as some educationists have said it will take between 10 and 50 years for the learning gap to close for our impoverished pupils (Martin, 2017). However, I believe that through a school's curriculum, educators can show pupils what opportunities and possibilities there are in life and provide them with the tools to achieve their desired goals.

I have lived through a time when the primary school curriculum became so prescriptive and introduced national strategies for both English (Literacy) (DfEE, 1998) and mathematics (Numeracy) (DFEE, 1999a) (NLS and NNS respectively) and was eventually replaced by the Primary Framework (DfES, 2006) alongside schemes of work from the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These government initiatives affected the inspection framework where inspectors sat in hour-long lessons making judgements on the content of lessons linked to the strategies (NLS, NNS). Although at the time Ofsted did not appear to promote the NLS and NNS strategies, nevertheless, they judged the learning which was structured according to Strategy recommendations. For example, in its broadest sense, a lesson starter, followed by the main body of learning and then a plenary. This straight-jacketed approach meant teachers became automatons as deliverers of the curriculum. It stripped teachers of their professionalism, creativity, and knowledge regarding curriculum development. Whilst the strategies were not statutory, the pressure schools inevitably faced was if they did not adopt the recommendations that came with them and were then found wanting in terms of standards, they could be criticised by the government and through

the Ofsted inspection regime. Once again, schools were jumping through hoops as the government believed these strategies would raise standards in core subjects. Most teachers' professional development was caught up in a sea of how to deliver the strategies and schemes of work without due regard being given to teacher input. Some teachers were only familiar with this way of working depending on when they had trained. The stripping away of critical professionalism had turned some teachers into automatons, especially those teachers who taught in Year 6. These teachers clearly had the pressure of SATs hanging over them so deviation from the NC core subject content could mean schools were either seen as successful in relation to the percentage of pupils who passed the tests or seen as failures if the schools did not achieve national targets. My personal view of primary school SATs is that they are a blunt instrument used to measure academic standards in core subjects (reading, writing and mathematics). Some primary schools working in high deprivation areas and not attaining national standards by the end of Key Stage 2 started to narrow their curricula. This narrowing of curriculum reduced pupils' opportunities to gain a greater understanding of the wider world around them. In the light of academy conversions, this has increased the possibilities of primary schools who are not achieving national standards by the end of Year 6 to be challenged by the DfE to convert to academy status and work with an Academy Trust to improve outcomes because the government at the time viewed academies as the panacea to improving standards.

In my professional experience, I have seen primary schools change one lord and master, namely a Local Authority, to another, an Academy Trust with varying results in improving outcomes. In my opinion and indeed in my experience, many Academy Trusts tend to act swiftly on what are deemed 'failing schools' by replacing leadership and restructuring staff to ensure the schools become a standard driven machine. With

the process of a takeover, there is little consideration for those who become the victims of this often-tyrannous regime. The unwavering pursuit of success based on standards can have detrimental effects on teachers' attitudes as they perceive everything as being done unto them and not in cooperation with them. This can include curriculum development as many schools will buy in an 'off the shelf curriculum' because they see it as a solution to cure all curriculum ills. My personal and professional view is that this is short-sighted because it de-skills teachers and presumes pupils are all the same, which is far from the case. Travelling down this route does not allow primary schools to consider how the curriculum that is going to be delivered can best serve its pupils' needs. There is a power struggle between the environment where teachers are effectively disabled when developing the curriculum as required by policy (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015b, p. 128) and those who are given the opportunity to influence and write the school's curriculum as well as knowing the pupils' they serve. Affording teachers, the opportunity to be involved in curriculum development is advantageous because the curriculum can be tailored to meet the needs of pupils. For example, it may be deemed that a number of the pupils would benefit from first-hand experiences in seeing a play in a theatre because they are learning about scriptwriting or a particular character in history. This may be an experience they would never have had if it were not for the school planning and implementing enriched activities in their curriculum. A purchased generic off the shelf curriculum would not take this into account. Many schools who have adopted an off the shelf curriculum have found that they have ended up adapting and developing the curriculum they have bought in. However, it would be remiss of me not to recognise that schools may need support and direction in undertaking curriculum development, which is a complex process, so realistically some schools may need a template to work from and initially a bought-in curriculum may provide that for them. However,

if school leaders do not give teachers an opportunity to be involved in curriculum development, teachers are in danger of becoming dormant and ill-equipped for the role of curriculum developers which could negatively impact on their role as facilitators.

For teachers to become effective agents of change, they need to be knowledgeable about how their respective school's curriculum has been designed and how factors directly relevant to their particular context have influenced its design for the benefit of their pupils. Four primary academy coastal schools serving high areas of deprivation were chosen for this research because they chose to develop their own curricula whilst using the NC (2013) as guidance.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

This research aims to gather empirical evidence within a theoretical context to construct a logical set of conclusions regarding the research question (Sadovnik, 2011). The focus is solely on primary academy coastal schools. Teachers' knowledge, experience and competencies are central to any curriculum development (Alsubaie, 2016). Due to the legislation surrounding the autonomy of academy schools developing their own curricula, academy teachers can be afforded the greatest autonomy in shaping their school's curriculum. To what extent they embrace this autonomy varies. The aim of this research is to find out from the sample school teachers what they perceived as the influencing factors that affected the development of their respective school's curriculum.

Ultimately, this research aims to make suggestions at the teacher level as well as at school leader level in terms of the outcomes. Realistically it is at the school leader level that it may have the most impact regarding how such leaders and teachers could

approach curriculum development considering the factors that may inherently affect it within the current systems available to them. With teachers acting as change agents in the curriculum development process, it is intended that practical outcomes aim to support the process in an era of policy change regarding academy schools.

The government considers that the autonomy afforded to academies (Academies Act, 2010) and the additional accountability, act symbiotically. However, this does not necessarily equate to legislation affording schools opportunities for curriculum development, instead teachers are automatically included in the development process. There is no parity between the two (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). The DfE is concerned that autonomy at school level equates to freedom from local authority maintenance (DfE, 2016a). There was little government interest regarding what this may mean for individual teachers; for example, there has been no audit into the take up of NC disapplication. The persistent linking of 'raised standards' with autonomy and freedom from LA control (DfE, 2016a) suggests that output data is the DfE's primary concern. Teacher involvement in the development of an academy school's curriculum is relatively insignificant and is something of a by-product of the curriculum development process.

It is recognised that the scope of this research is small and involves just four sample schools. This research will provide a useful source of information which schools operating in a similar context to the research schools may draw upon. In terms of influence over major decisions made on the national stage, the impact of the outcomes will be limited due to the size of the sample. However, in relation to the four sample schools, it adds additional knowledge to the field. The government has a view as to how education should move forward in England, and as with any government, research that is not in accordance with their aims is unlikely to be included in their

own rhetoric about curriculum provision. An example of this was when Michael Gove (2010a), the then Secretary of State for Education, referenced in his speech worldwide examples from Singapore, America, Canada, and Sweden that were sympathetic to the dyad of autonomy and accountability.

For this research to serve its purpose, it is necessary that the four sample schools chosen for it had teachers involved in the development of their respective school's curriculum. Schools working in areas of high deprivation in coastal regions would provide an added perspective to the research in an area that has not been studied before.

1.4 The Emergence of Primary Academy Schools and those in a Coastal Setting

Academisation arose as the government at the time introduced the initiative to recognise outstanding school and as time went on the initiative broadened to encompass school that required improvements and ultimately the initiative was opened to all publicly funded schools. The incentive for schools who had an option to convert to an academy, was the autonomy afforded to them through government policy (Academies Act, 2010). This opened the way for academies to become self-managing. Most academies are now managed by an academy trust, who receive funding directly from the government to manage the school. In comparison to maintained schools, they have greater autonomy in how they conduct matters with regards to curriculum and financial management for example. Academies are not fee-paying schools compared to independent schools; they adopt some of their management structures from fee-paying independent schools. Academies along with

other types of schools in England are all inspected by Ofsted. A key feature that remains the same in both Academies and maintained schools is that they must all adhere to the same admissions, special educational needs, and exclusions policies, this includes national testing (SATs). Academies are not bound by the national curriculum and therefore may establish their own along with their own term dates. Currently, the DfE expects maintained schools to convert to academy status and be managed by an Academy Trust if they are deemed "unsatisfactory" by Ofsted. Academy Trusts are non-profit organisations. They are able to hire their own personnel and have trustees who are responsible for the success of the Trust. A Trust may consist of a single academy or a group of academies. Businesses, colleges, other institutions, religious groups, and volunteer organisations are among the sponsors of certain Academy Trusts.

The English academy school's initiative is proving to be one of the most comprehensive and radical school reform programmes ever seen in a developed nation. Academies, unlike community schools, are self-contained, state-funded institutions that are governed and operated independently of local government. In nearly all instances, maintained LA schools are conversions of pre-existing schools that take on pupils who are still registered with the school but have considerably greater operational autonomy than in their previous status. Nearly 15% of primary schools in England have become academies at the time of writing this thesis. A considerable number of schools became academies following a change of government in May 2010, whereupon legislation—the 2010 Academies Act—expanded the programme's scope significantly. When significant concerns were raised that schools in certain local authorities (typically those serving poor urban and coastal neighbourhoods) were not providing pupils with a high-quality education, the

initiative was launched during the 1997–2010 Labour administration. There was a general awareness that something needed to be done to enhance the performance of some schools. A new kind of state school, administered by a private team of independent co-sponsors, was suggested as a replacement for existing schools. However, the context in which a primary academy school operates can have a significant impact upon the type of curriculum offered in a school. In terms of primary academy coastal schools National SATS results indicate pupils do not do as well as their counterparts in non-coastal areas (ref. to data on p.28).

Disapplication from the NC (Academies Act, 2010) and long-standing performativity measures from which there is no escape for any English school (Ball, 2003), seems to evoke conflict and it is teachers who are at the centre of these reforms. In recent times the school system in England has evolved rapidly to include over two and a half thousand primary academies (DfE, 2015b); a significant number of teachers are subject to these conflicting policies. Fewer primary schools are converting to independent academies. Academy Chains are the dominant structural organisation (ibid.) meaning the issue of individual teachers having curriculum capacity is key as there is the risk of centralised chain structures and systems quashing their autonomy. This is of raised importance as 'there is at present no convincing evidence of the impact of academy status on attainment in primary schools' (Education Select Committee, 2015). Indeed, the drive for conversion (Cameron, 2015) seems to be the result of an unsubstantiated DfE (2016a) belief that academies improve standards. Overall, such important changes within the educational policy landscape demand 'new ways of theorising the work of teachers and the ways in which schools and teachers operate' (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015, p. 128) and it is to this my research will contribute.

Initially, the focus of this research was to ascertain teachers' perceptions of the factors that influence curriculum development in primary academy schools. However, the focus of this research changed as a result of the government's (2015) commissioned study undertaken by Stokes (2016) into pupil underperformance in national tests in primary schools in coastal areas. The government's study specifically focused on the variations in performance between coastal schools and non-coastal schools (Stokes, 2016). It was apparent from the initial focus of this government research (2015) on curriculum development in primary academy schools, that it should consider that each of the chosen primary academy schools should serve coastal communities (within 5.5kms from the coast) in areas of high deprivation in South-East England. Therefore, each of the four sample primary academy schools chosen specifically for this research serve coastal areas of high deprivation and were schools where underperformance was recognised DfE.

The findings of the report commissioned by the DfE (2015) led by Stokes (2016) highlighted several factors which contributed to primary coastal schools' underperformance. Firstly, there seemed to be a myth around coastal school performance which had grown out of a purported 'feel-good factor' that coastal towns were considered pleasant places to live with fun, sea, surf, and sun on the menu ready to be enjoyed by all. In speaking to the headteachers of each of the four primary academy coastal schools, the reality for many pupils was rather different.

It was somewhat shocking to find out that some pupils had never visited the seaside despite living in a coastal town. This startling finding was echoed in a DfE commissioned report by Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2015). There were, and still are, significant pockets of high deprivation because a considerable proportion of the pupils' served by the schools involved in the research were/are living in poverty and

suffering high levels of deprivation. One of the main reasons for the high levels of deprivation was due to the high levels of unemployment through the loss of industry in 'ports and tourism to resorts' (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015). Another reason for the high unemployment in coastal towns was due to half the possibilities of gaining employment are restricted by the coast and sea, unlike non-coastal towns. These factors have a strong bearing on the limitations for people living in the coastal towns and, as such, create impoverishment for many families. However, issues of poverty are not unique to coastal schools. What is unique to coastal schools is their demographic and that they have higher levels of disadvantaged families attending them than non-coastal schools. Expressed as a percentage of all disadvantaged pupils in state-funded mainstream schools there are between 16.2% and 17% respectively, compared to between 26% and 27% of pupils attending coastal schools are classified as disadvantaged (DfE, 2016) and less than 30% of pupils achieve national standards in secondary schools (Ovenden-Hope and Passy 2015). There has generally been an economic decline in coastal areas for decades (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015). 'Waning industry, limited transport infrastructure and low paid work along with few skilled employment opportunities mean that coastal populations have fewer choices than people in other areas' (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015). However, there must be caution, a health warning paid to national coastal data as there is a danger of making sweeping generalisations and as such there are some schools nationally that buck the trend (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015).

In relation to the four sample schools selected for this research, the levels of deprivation were reflected in the data provided on each of the respective schools' websites and confirmed high levels of disadvantaged pupils and high levels of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). All four sample schools involved in the

research had nursery schools attached to help prepare the children for readiness to start school. This was one way to support those impoverished families to prepare their children for school life. Having funding made available to the families is crucial to help their children's transition into school. Parents living in poverty are now entitled to funding for their two-year-olds who may need a nursery place. However, nursery attendance is not compulsory so the impact of ensuring children are ready for school is inconsistent. Consistent levels of attendance at the sample schools involved in the research was an issue. Low attendance was affecting learning and resulted in the manifestation of gaps in knowledge which left pupils with disjointed understanding within particular subjects/topics. This is indicative of pupils with poor attendance. Schools have been encouraged to provide catch-up lessons by the government to counter the impact of persistent pupil absence.

Academy	Attendance Overall	Attendance of Pupils who are Persistently Absent, 2015-2016	National Attendance
		Over 10% absence	
	2015-2016		Overall 2015-2016
Academy 1	0.938	0.794	0.95
Academy 2	0.905	0.654	0.95
Academy 3	0.944	0.816	0.95
Academy 4	0.935	0.803	0.95

Table 1: Attendance Figures for the Four Primary Academy Coastal Schools

1.5 Claim for Originality

The claim for originality for this research is that, at the time of the study, no research had been carried out on curriculum development in the four chosen primary academy coastal schools that serve areas of high deprivation in South-East England. This

research focuses on the factors that influence curriculum development from the perception of the teachers (participants) that were involved in this research. A random sample of four teachers from each academy were chosen by their respective headteachers to take part in this research.

This is a significant piece of research because it explores what factors influenced the four primary academy schools serving coastal catchment areas of high deprivation when developing their curricula to meet the needs of their pupils (physical, emotional, and academic). Additional profile information regarding the schools can be located in Chapter 3 p. (Methodology).

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, all of which aim to provide data on the following research topic: 'What are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum'.

The leading question in the research is: 'What factors, related to the teacher's influence, affect curriculum development in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England'? Interview questions derived from sub-questions which arose out of the literature review will be discussed in the Methodology Chapter p.96-97.

This section aims to demonstrate how the research question is integral to this thesis by briefly summarising each subsequent chapter. Chapter 1 sets the broad context for the research. The Literature Review (Chapter 2, p. 32) considers the following, the purpose (s) of education, teacher involvement, teachers knowledge base, teacher thinking, the curriculum process and teacher's involvement in the process, curriculum

models, teachers acting as change agents (their agency) in curriculum development and teachers' work in the context of the schools that may impact on their perspectives. In addition, what influences teachers' perceptions along with their personal capacities and beliefs is explored. The Methodology Chapter, (Chapter 3, p. 86) addresses the underpinning for the research, the philosophical perspective and research design and gives a rationale for the research methods used. A key premise is justifying the research quality, and to this end, there is a discussion around its ethical procedures as well as the principles and processes of the data analysis. The Results Chapter (see p.125) presents the empirical data for the interview questions where it discusses teachers' comments. The final chapter (see p.199) reflects upon the findings and implications of the research and offers recommendations for curriculum development in primary academy coastal schools resulting from the findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will consider a range of philosophical and empirical sources with an aim of situating this research and demonstrate its relevance as well as justifying its importance. It is argued that both internal and external factors affect the curriculum development process. Therefore, the research is investigating this phenomenon through asking teachers, involved in whole school curriculum development in primary academy coastal schools, what their perceptions are of the factors that affect the curriculum development process. (An Investigation into, 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary Academy Coastal Schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum.')

This literature review initially considered a broad range of literature regarding curriculum development which determined relevant themes in relation to this research. As a result, the following themes will be examined, the purposes of education along with political agendas; external and internal factors that can affect curriculum development; a discussion of neoliberalism, de-regulation, and re-regulation in relation to market forces in education. The literature review then considers school-based curriculum development, covering a range of themes linking teachers as curriculum developers, what influences their thinking, personal capacities, knowledge, identity, and self-efficacy. Penultimately, the elements of curriculum and the complexities surrounding knowledge are focused upon, concluding with curriculum

definitions and models. Prominent authorities within each of the themes as indicated above, such as Reay (2017), Biesta, Priestley (2015), Minty (2015), Robinson (2015), Male, (2012) and Ball (2016) et al, have been drawn upon as they have highlighted factors that would influence curriculum development and, as such, create a conceptual framework for this research.

2.1 The Purpose(s) of Education and the Current Political Agenda with regard to the Academisation of Schools

There has been a myriad of philosophical writing on education and schooling by philosophers such as Plato (429 BC–348 BC), Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC), Locke (1632- 1704) and Rousseau (1712–1778) who considered the purpose of education in their respective societie, (Nodding, 1995; Reed & Johnson 1996). From the 19th to the 21st century, educationists such as John Dewey (1902), George Counts (1932), Gert Biesta (2015), and Diane Reay (2017), have also offered their views regarding education and schooling. As Biesta (2015a) comments, there has been much discussion about how to improve educational processes and practice but 'very little explicit discussion of what such processes are supposed to bring about' (Biesta, 2015a, p. 15) i.e., the purpose(s) of education. Biesta (2015a) claims that one reason for this may be that 'the question of educational purpose is seen as too difficult to resolve – or even as fundamentally irresolvable' (ibid.).

Reflecting upon Dewey's (1902) views in regard to a starting point for education, he believed it rested with the child and their experiences. In contrast to Dewey's thinking, Counts (1932) moved away from Dewey's child-centred model to a model of education that served the purpose of bringing about social change. Counts, seen as a

progressive educator of his day, was thinking far more widely about the purpose of education than Dewey, with potentially far wider consequences in terms of societal change. There is clearly a tension between Dewey's view of the purpose of education and Counts view, but the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ideally, these two views should merge within a curriculum that addresses the child as an individual, as well as society in the long term. However, this is no easy task, and it is questionable if it is attainable given the inequitable education that exists within England and the UK overall (Reay, 2017). Reay remarks that 'the educational system is enmeshed in, and increasingly driven by, the economy, rather than one that is capable of redressing economic inequalities' (Reay, 2017, p. 11).

England's state education system is, as Reay (2017) declares, class polarised and continues to be so, despite the efforts of a comprehensive education that has not managed to dispel social inequalities. Nevertheless, it is the contention of this study as to whether academy primary schools can tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of its pupils given the autonomy afforded them through legislation (Academies Act, 2010). Then, in turn, start to close social inequalities through the learning experiences and opportunities it can provide. In reflecting upon the success of achieving this through a school's curriculum, one would need to consider both internal and external factors that impact upon the curriculum development process. In considering the influence and power some factors have, such as government legislation and funding (both recognised as key drivers within the education system in England), one can ultimately determine the type and quality of education a pupil may receive. There has been no greater time of educational change since the 1944 Butler Education Act. With academies seen by the government as the chosen type of school for the future in England, there is an expectation placed on them to ensure all pupils achieve well as

their main purpose is not only to educate pupils, but to raise academic standards in education overall.

For a curriculum to be successful in its aim, it is reliant upon highly skilled teachers. Therefore, in order to achieve the ultimate aim of highly educated pupils who have a broad range of knowledge and skills, it is suggested that society needs teachers to be committed to their roles, be highly trained and knowledgeable, creative, and know how to develop a school's curriculum in order to meet all pupils' learning needs. Therefore, it is further suggested that the quality of teacher training must be given priority as it is a cornerstone to a pupil's ultimate educational success. An issue arising from this is whether we have the best possible people stepping forward to train as teachers in the first place and that the training they receive provides the necessary knowledge and skills that will enable them to develop a school's curriculum. Whilst this could be a contributory factor in terms of teachers becoming proficient in curriculum development, this is not an issue that will be fully addressed within this research but is something that could extend this research for another time. This issue has implications in terms of academy schools' autonomy in developing their own curricula but an alternative to this is teachers receiving in-service training that would enable them to become proficient in their roles as curriculum developers. This factor for teachers who work in academy schools is couched within a political background of government legislation (Academies, Act 2010).

The political rhetoric around this is that education is 'the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it's an essential preparation for adult life' (Gibb, 2015, The Education Reform Summit). Gibb (2015) expanded on this statement during his speech at the Summit by explaining that the government sees the education system as a way of delivering on its commitment to social justice. This is somewhat of

a tall order. The achievement of social justice is negligible in our fragmented state system of education within which there are 'significant class inequalities' (Reay, 2017 p14). Gibb (2015) intimated that the purpose of education is about 'introducing pupils to the best that has been thought of and instilling in them a love of knowledge and culture for their own sake', (Gibb, 2015). This rather pompous statement does not address what constitutes 'the best that has been thought of or how one would instil a love of knowledge' (ibid.). While acknowledging his sentiments, the language and tone of Gibb's (2015) statement reinforces Reay's (2017) comments about the deep class divisions in schooling and society. Gibb's (2015) vision of education is that it is a practical business. One that ensures young people receive the preparation they need to secure a 'good' job and a 'fulfilling' career. They need to have developed a resilient and moral character to overcome challenges which would aid them to succeed in life (Gibb, 2015). Again, Gibb's (2015) rhetoric is open to expansive interpretation as to what constitutes a 'good' job, a 'fulfilling' career and the characteristics of 'moral character'. These words are easy to say but are far more challenging to achieve. The government's main vehicle to drive their educational agenda forward is through the academisation of schools which adds further permutations in the education system with the purpose of ultimately funnelling parental choice to one option only, an academy school. Consideration will now be given to the inequalities in the education system.

It can be argued that the curriculum provision on offer to primary pupils in England does not reflect Gibb's (2015) vision of education but is inequitable in terms of legislation, funding, and policy. As Reay (2017) remarks, 'we have never had a fair educational system' (Reay, 2017, p 43). The educational provision available to both primary and secondary pupils in England is fractured due to legislation that

perpetuates a class-based system where there are advantages for some (private sector) and disadvantages for others (state sector). One example of this is where struggling schools are deprived of crucial funding.

Reay's (2017) writing strikes a note of despair with the education system when she says, 'There is only so much that educational institutions can do to improve social class inequalities, given the economic and social context in which they operate' (Reay, 2017, p 43).

The inequalities of social class preoccupy much of Reay's (2017) writing. Without doubt, further disparities are created by the types of school designation, for example, private schools, faith schools, LA schools (which could include faith schools) and academies. These various institutions do not provide a cohesive education model for pupils but serve to reflect the class divisions in society and a growing inequality for many pupils. Academisation has not been the panacea that it was intended to be. It is one in which funding for academy schools is now managed by private sources, namely Multi-Academy Trusts. In examining public sector education, there is evidence of inequalities in the funding of maintained and academy schools. Reay (2017, p 51) comments that from April (2010) to March (2012), the government spent £8.3 billion on the academy's initiative. Some of that £8.3 billion came from the £95 million set aside to help improve underperforming schools. Plainly, this has created an even greater divide amongst maintained and academy schools, leaving underperforming schools without the necessary funding to level up the learning opportunities and experiences pupils require to meet the expected national standards in education. The reappropriation of funds from maintained schools to academy schools has injected the means for academies to provide an education that should meet the needs of its pupils. However, this left more vulnerable maintained schools with less funding which

impacted on learning opportunities and experiences. As a result, their pupils get a worse deal in terms of high-quality learning experiences, particularly those pupils who come from impoverished backgrounds and are behind in their learning expectations for their age. With educational systems straddling both the independent and public sectors (academies) of education, a mix and match approach to the educational systems has been created instead of an alignment which is more equitable for all pupils.

Government legislation (Academies Act, 2010) enables a certain amount of autonomy in terms of freeing up academies from following the NC (2013) and allowing them to devise their own curricula, providing it is broad and balanced. As to whether academies take advantage of the autonomy afforded to them in the Academies Act (2010) to create their own curricula or still embrace the NC (2013) as a platform from which they create their own school's curriculum is a variable dependent upon the academy.

Returning to Reay's (2017) thoughts on the academisation agenda, she articulates that academisation has broken up the comprehensive system and put in its place a system that is more selective, more fragmented, and less democratic (Reay, 2017, p 47). On further examination, it would appear that various educational institutions could compound inequality and potentially widen the social class gap in society. This could be done through policy and the government's educational agenda in regard to the academisation of schools specifically in the curriculum pupils are taught. Therefore, if we are to level up the opportunities for all maintained schools to bring them on par with academy schools in terms of curriculum development, equality of opportunity, and teacher autonomy, the government needs to return to education policy and remove the constraints placed on maintained schools. Currently, maintained schools are

straight jacketed in terms of their liberty to design their own curricula and provide equality of opportunity for its pupils and teacher autonomy. In taking this narrow view on curriculum development in maintained schools, education policy has fractured educational provision and has heavily contributed to the inequality of opportunity in maintained schools.

At this juncture, it is fair to say that the UK government and educationists hold a range of views about what the purpose(s) of education are or should be. There is no consensus and one may never be reached because each will look at the task through their own lens, which inevitably will have some distortion due to a personal or institutional bias. However, there are some common threads which emerge in Biesta's (2012) work which are worth exploring. Biesta (2012) offers an interesting perspective, suggesting that there should be an ongoing discussion about the purposes of education which implies that searching for a specific purpose or purposes of education is counterproductive. He tackles the conundrum by saying that 'education generally performs three different (but related) functions' (Biesta, 2012, p 19) which he refers to as qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Qualification refers to the knowledge, skills and understanding that enable people to contribute to economic growth; socialisation refers to the impact of education, i.e., to continue a set of values, norms, or culture in society. Subjectification is the opposite of socialisation. Biesta (2015a) comments that the purpose of subjectification refers to the independence of thought and refers to people being 'more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting' (Biesta, 2015a, p 21). These three integrated functions are a far more profitable way of looking at what education is for when compared to the political rhetoric of Gibb (2015) and the UK government's (2015) platitudes. Biesta (2015a) echoes Reay's (2017) writing in that education should serve the purposes of

enabling people to develop the skills and qualifications that will afford them the opportunities to contribute to the economic development and growth of society. Unlike Reay (2017), he offers a further and more rounded view of the functions/purpose(s) of education. Biesta (2015a) refers to the socialisation function of education whereby an individual is immersed in the norms and values of their culture (both desirable and undesirable aspects), but they also develop independent views and opinions (subjectification). Although socialisation and subjectification may seem at odds with one another, it is feasible to assume that education will always have some particular and individual impact that is unique to a person in addition to its socialising function, 'inserting individuals into existing ways of doing and being' (Biesta, 2015a, p 20). This is evident in the process of academisation where school management systems are changed when converting to academy status from maintained status. Essentially, the management of an academy school is based on a 'business model' (Ball, 2016) meaning checks and balances no longer take place under LA control but with new masters, a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). These Trusts were formed to be primarily concerned with the purpose of raising educational standards (attainment and progress) along with ensuring young people receive preparation for life so they can secure employment that will sustain themselves and the economy (Gibb, 2015). Gove (2013a) remarked, that if schools mimic the business world, it places them in a competitive marketplace and, as such, standards will be driven up. This is a far too simplistic view of how standards are driven up. It is suggested that the competitive marketplace between academies leads to them vying for the most academic pupils to attend their schools, with some schools wanting pupils to sit entrance exams so they can pick and choose who will attend. It is further suggested that Gove's (2013a) views do not engender an equitable education for all publicly funded pupils as it adds a further layer of bureaucratic legislation that does

the absolute opposite to ensuring all pupils receive an equitable education, at least in principle. Clearly from the government's adopted position on the purpose(s) of education in England, they are based on neo-liberal principles rather than the healthier holistic perspective that is espoused by Biesta (2010). This has led to the breakdown of the comprehensive system of education, for the most part, it has been replaced with a semi-privatised system that embraces neo-liberal principles. Academisation has been heralded by the government as providing an answer to raising standards especially in those LA schools that were converted to academy status because they were underperforming. Implicit in this is the Academisation Act (2010) that affords academy schools the right to structure, design and choose the content of their schools' curricula. Finally, in reflecting upon the purposes of education, if it is the curriculum that is one of the central factors that contribute to the government's overall aims, then it is teachers that will be determining the structure, design and content of an academy school's curriculum if they choose to develop their own. Therefore, it would be more than likely teachers' involvement in curriculum development would enable the school to develop one that would be tailored to meet pupils' needs. This would mean that teachers' beliefs and experiences could influence and shape their approaches to curriculum development. Consequently, it is relevant to consider what influences and shapes teachers' beliefs in regard to education.

Priestly, Biesta and Robinson (2015) suggest that teachers' beliefs are formed in an iterational dimension that explains the impact of a working environment which, culturally, is heavily influenced by externally imposed systems (ibid.) and considers the ubiquitous neo-liberal discourse. The internalisation of policy rhetoric shapes beliefs in this particular circumstance leading teachers to have an 'instrumental or fundamentalist engagement with the engagement of educational purpose' (Priestley,

Biesta and Robinson, 2015, p. 51), manifesting in short term aims and a focus on process rather than purpose and values. Teachers tend to be concerned with the development of predetermined capacities and dispositions to equip children to live within the current manifestation of society, as opposed to enabling them to become agents of change themselves. Ultimately, Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015, p. 55) suggest that a problematic scenario emerges as many teachers struggle to locate their work within deep consideration of the purposes of education. This is problematic as there is a failure to pay due consideration to the important axiology of education concerned as it is, with the values which give education direction, and which provide criteria for judging what we want it to work for (Biesta, 2015b). The argument that, only once these two questions are satisfactorily addressed 'can we begin to make decisions about relevant content and about the appropriate relationships' (ibid., p. 17), draws a clear link to curriculum planning and development. For Biesta (2015a), the axiology of education is a normative question which depends upon values and judgements, and one which needs to address both the aims of and the balance between, the three 'telos' (domains of purpose of education), subjectification, socialisation, and qualification. If these elements are absent from teachers' considerations as suggested, it is unsurprising that their scope to become effective agents of change is limited. This is particularly true in terms of the projective dimension of agency, as purposes are narrowly framed which subsequently narrows consideration of what is possible and frames further action accordingly (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015, p. 55). In having examined the purposes of education, it is contended that the complexities and issues raised in relation to the education system in England between maintained and academy schools, is engendered through government legislation namely the Academies Act, (2010). An Act that influences maintained schools as soon as they convert to academy. This Act changed the legal

requirements placed on those schools, in terms of the nature of the school's curriculum, as they were no longer legally required to follow the NC (2013). This has highlighted an area for further exploration, as to whether primary academies do take full advantage of curriculum legislation (Academies Act, 2010) afforded to them or whether they remain loyal to pre-existing regimes in terms of curriculum development NC (2013). Factors influencing curriculum development relate to inequalities in education which are influenced by government legislation. (ref. Appendix C sub-questions p. 205).

The following section addresses both internal and external factors that influence curriculum development in a neo-liberal educational landscape.

2.2 External and Internal Factors that Influence the Curriculum Development in a Neo-Liberal Educational Landscape

Neo-liberalism policy bridges politics, social studies, and economics. It seeks to transfer control of economic factors from the private sector to the public sector. Neo-liberalism has become hegemonic on a worldwide scale (Robertson, 2007), signifying a paradigm shift (Ball, 2016, cited in Kneyber, 2016). The paradigm shift from the public sector to the private sector has meant it has transformed how both teachers and learners act and think (Robertson, 2007). Ball (2016) comments that by taking this approach, control of economic factors and social relations transfers to the private sector from the public sector in pursuit of market forces. Persell (1979) furthers Ball's (2016) comments and remarks that the impact of this has meant that the education system in England has been highly affected by the introduction of academy schools, particularly in societal terms, as education is inseparable from its societal context. In terms of neo-liberalism this builds upon liberalism giving an overriding precedence to

individual autonomy, property, and agency (Robertson, 2007, p 3). However, state intervention ensures market functionality meaning governments remain influential within this approach, despite promoting de-regulation (Visser, 2016). Ball (2012) recognises that there is a duality embodied by financial and regulatory government interventions which ensure the limits of the marketplace within an accountability culture. Therefore, devolution and competition in practice are synonymous with central prescription and demands on performativity (Whitty, 2006). An example of this is the juxtaposition of the White Paper (DfE, 2010) with the review of KS2 assessment (Bew, 2011, p. 9). They were commissioned within the same parliament as the Academies Act (2010), meaning formerly that teachers were seen as autonomous professionals with the utmost importance yet counterbalanced with the latter position in which 'external school-level accountability is seen as important' (Bews 2011, p. 9). Therefore, this could lead to 'frustrating pressure and an unnecessarily 'high stakes' system' creating a tension between competing policy agendas (Reeves, 2008; Priestley and Drew, 2016), albeit whilst perpetuating it. It is argued that such tensions make it difficult for teachers to become curriculum developers and effective agents of change due to government legislation and accountability, despite their capabilities and the top-down, bottom-up approaches to curriculum development (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012). Teacher's exposure to a range of voices and discourse is most likely to affect their perceptions of the factors that affect curriculum development. (Appendix C p.205).

Fotheringham et al. (2012, p. 25) highlight that there are a range of national, external, and international factors that influence decision-making in the process of curriculum development. These include environmental agendas, governmental policies, funding, social expectations of higher education institutions, technological developments,

industrial and workplace developments, skills requirements, and national and international economic requirements. Fotheringham et al. (2012) write that it is the subject discipline that influences the process of the curriculum because each subject discipline has its own demands (Fotheringham et al. 2012, p. 25). The implication and interpretation of Fotheringham et al (2012) could mean that pupils are not only affected by all the other factors, but they act as the influencers in curriculum development. It appears from this that learners, society, and subject matter as a triad need to be considered carefully when developing a school's curriculum, as these act as significant variables in any curriculum development process. Curriculum developers, namely teachers within primary academy schools, are required to decide on the knowledge and skills to be covered within the curriculum as well as provide the intent or rationale behind it when developing specific learning. Further to this it is suggested, that whilst a range of factors can act as variables from school to school and can influence the design and content of a school's curriculum, it is crucial to not just look at internal and external factors on an individual basis but to look at their interplay because of their complexities in the way they are interlinked. Focusing on one aspect will not provide clarity but instead a distortion which can influence the design and content of the school's curriculum. It would seem from this that the context in which a school operates affects the approach they take to curriculum development. (Appendix C p.205).

Delivery, or as it is currently referred to the implementation of the curriculum, can emphasise subject matter in a particular area of a subject. For example, broader themes, through the interdisciplinary nature of concepts, or any other related concept that can serve as the focus. As part of the curriculum development process, knowledge

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facts, concepts, and skills related to a subject area may serve as a source to plan activities.

Society also has influence on curriculum development and serves as a source for its development. For example, the development of the NC for England (2014) was based upon the government comparing England's (UK) PISA outcomes (and international assessment for 15-year-olds) to other countries and then deciding that the NC (1988) was not challenging enough and ultimately will have a knock-on effect as to how the population in England could compete in future world markets. Thus, in relation to society, the assessment of needs is pivotal to developing a curriculum that will serve the local community and society nationally. Society may provide the developers of the curriculum a convenient way of dividing life into categories such as health, family, religion, civic roles (Wiles and Bondi, 2010, p. 116). Based on the identified needs, the potential objectives are identified (Wiles and Bondi, 2010, p. 116). Kirk (2012, p. 14) summarises it comprehensively by recognising that the development of the curriculum and its delivery and organisation, is influenced by government policy and statutory parameters imposed within the national accountability framework. As well as with independent school leaders and teachers who plan creatively and innovatively, while remaining accountable to the parents' expectations, motivation levels and pupils' performance (Appendix C p.205). A significant outcome of neo-liberal reforms and its commitment to autonomy (Robertson, 2007; Hall, 2011), is the shift of power from the government to one of governance (Au and Ferrare, 2015). In essence, this replaces one type of authority model with another that moves away from a centralised, top-down, legalistic, bureaucratic one, to one that is reflexive in that it is self-regulating and one that is a flatter structure and able to take on marketplace forces

(Shamir, 2008, p. 3). The next section discusses external factors in relation to government legislation which impact on schools' development of their curricula.

2.3 Neo-Liberal De-Regulation and Neo-Liberal Re-Regulation

Through deregulation, the government puts itself into the position of facilitator rather than that of regulator (Shamir, 2008). This move downgrades the government's status and puts it on a level that is not so public and as such reinvents its role in the academy school sector. Consequently, taking the example of governance, Academy School Trust governors can create efficient and flexible best-practice solutions that allow those closest to the issues to have more control over them (Lobel, 2004, p. 363). It places the onus on governance whereas previously, the focus was on top-down bureaucracies and central 'obedience' (Shamir, 2008). Thus, responsibility is very firmly placed at the doors of those who govern. The actions they take through their powers of autonomy are relied upon as they must be self-determined and self-sustaining (ibid.).

It is suggested by Edwards (2000) that governance represents a shift in power which ultimately manifests its own constraints. If this is examined in terms of academisation, the shift has been from LA control to autonomous control. There seems to be a misnomer in which the constraints on maintained schools through LAs suddenly disappear when schools become academies. This is not the case as most academies join a MAT which would impose its own rules and expect any new academy school to comply with their regulations. Therefore, the initial devolved autonomy for academy schools has been superseded and they now sit firmly with academy Trust Boards or MATs (Academy Act, 2010; Shamir, 2008). This is considered by many to be a form of privatisation (NUT, 2017) and heralded by the government as a flagship of structural reform that is delivered to increase the powers of professionals through

providing a climate in which change can be autonomous (Gibb, 2014). It is contended that the level of teacher autonomy is dependent upon how the leadership team of the school, or within the MAT, view the curriculum development process. Leadership teams can provide guidance on the process with teachers being either fully involved or having a more diminished role due to school leaders wishing to keep the reins tight on curriculum development. This results in teachers having reduced autonomy.

In England, curriculum policy (DfE. 2010) recognises the importance of the involvement of teachers in curriculum development and them acting as agents of change within a school's community. Policy (ibid.) recognises the positive impact teachers can have on the quality of education (Goodson, 2003; DfE, 2010; Priestly, 2011). This is apparent through the diminished presence of government legislation in matters of the curriculum and this has been accomplished through several measures including the disapplication of academies from the NC (Academies Act, 2010), a reduced NC (DfE, 2013a) and non-statutory guidance seen universally in schools. There has been an upsurge in commercial publications by a range of authorities to fill the vacuum that has been left by a lack of government resources for schools to draw upon. On a more positive note, this has provided a springboard for school collaboration and opportunities for teachers to work together to legitimise themselves as agents of change and curriculum developers. By giving teachers autonomy and space to grow as curriculum developers, the richer and more relevant the curriculum is likely to be and to meet the needs of the pupils they serve.

Neo Liberal re-regulation addresses what may be deemed as the less obvious regulations. While the UK government (2010 to present day) are committed to devolved power in relation to academy schools, the autonomy bestowed upon them in respect to curricula proves to be faux autonomy as all schools, including academies,

are bound to national assessment testing in the core subjects (reading, writing and mathematics) in the primary phase of education. This suggests that with the government dictating required outputs, it wants to retain some level of control (Neave, 1988; Whitty, 2006). One example of this is the control they maintain over the content of the curriculum in English and Mathematics through the National Assessment Framework (SATs), assessment tests which are undertaken by pupils in England and the UK. In terms of the juxtaposition of teachers' autonomy and external accountability, it is important to note that these two fundamental tenets clash in a neo-liberal paradigm. This contradicts, and possibly diminishes, the positive way neoliberalism might support teachers' autonomy as curriculum developers as well as their role as agents of change. This contradiction epitomises the free market and a strong state where there is high stakes accountability (Gamble, 1988). Neo-liberal principles lead to free-market competition and prioritisation of the economy. In relation to the educational system in England, the government is keen for society to be able to compete in global markets and as such have produced a culture of performativity and widespread accountability structures (Whitty, 2006; Furlong, 2005). In an era of performativity, (Troman, 2008; Ball, 2003; Lyotard,1984) technology, culture and mode of regulations and judgements are based on rewards and sanctions (Ball, 2003, p. 216).

Ball (2000) argues that surveillance of performativity is a 'technology of power' and takes on a few forms which includes the reporting of pupil's attainment data and rigorous inspection regimes, which are fundamentally supported by quantitative attainment data measures (Priestley et al., 2012). For example, England's national testing and assessment regime is more intensive than in most other countries with outcomes being published. The publication of outcomes strongly influences Ofsted

inspections (Sheerman, 2008, pg. xiii). It can affect any level of autonomy in primary academy schools that they have regarding curriculum choice. An updated inspection framework (Ofsted, 2016) has strengthened the way in which Ofsted has a 'powerful lever on schools' behaviour' (ATL, 2007, p. 2). For example, a clear focus is placed on the whole of a school's curriculum and no longer is focused so intently on core subjects. This has triggered curriculum reviews in many schools. A possible variable arising from this is to what extent does national testing (SATs) have on curriculum development in academy schools (Appendix C p.205).

Publishing both assessment and inspection data in the public domain seems indicative of the government's belief that the spirit of competition is a driver to raise standards (Bew, 2011; Evers and Kneyber, 2016). Around 80% of pupils' SATs data is published in the UK compared to 45% of neighbouring countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2012). As a country, England is obsessed with national testing and as a result, national testing (SATs) may constrain curriculum development in academy schools. Pupils in England are assessed more frequently than most international pupils in the OECD. Counter to this, the opposite effect could occur in neighbouring countries who conduct less national testing within their educational systems, which could mean curriculum development could be less constrained (Appendix C p.205).

Since the inception of national testing, parents are provided with information about how schools are performing in a range of different ways (Gove,2011). These measurements are blunt instruments and do not explain to parents the school's profiles which can be significantly different depending on a school's context. The data produced by the Standards Agency is scrutinised by the government and Ofsted inspectors. This intense scrutiny can pressure schools to focus on achieving national

standards before considering other priorities (apart from safeguarding) (Adnett and Davies, 2003).

There seems to be no real escape from the far-reaching pressures of performativity (Lyotard, 1984) for schools in England (Ball, 2012) which has constrained the autonomy that academy schools have been given in terms of curriculum, particularly in core subjects. There are several ways in which these constraints and requirements for 'performance' have had a powerful impact (Keddie, Mills and Pendergast, 2011; Keddie, 2013; Ball, 2016, cited in Kneyber, 2016). The narrow conservative measures of attainment (Keddie, 2013) have created enormous pressures in schools, and as a result, some schools have reacted to this by narrowing their school's curriculum. This can have a significant negative impact on teachers' becoming effective curriculum developers and agents of change.

Compounding pressures to achieve national standards, Ofsted can generate an unhealthy culture of fear within schools which contributes to teachers' 'lived experiences' and affect their 'I' positions, creating feelings of inhibition in terms of them becoming curriculum developers and innovators (Leat, Livingston and Priestly, 2013, p. 235). Despite the government's school performativity measures, as they are unlikely to go away, teachers need to become confident in the role of agents of change in terms of curriculum development.

The Framework for School Inspection (Ofsted, 2016) focuses mostly on curriculum breadth and balance, pupils' access to it and progress across it. The predisposition to assess schools and teachers at the expense of curriculum development minimises the professional role of teachers and their related curriculum expertise (Young, 2014). Potential for adverse impact in relation to test results can lead to an embedded resistance to curriculum innovation (Ofsted, 2008; Priestley, Biesta and Robinson,

2012). The context in which teachers become involved in curriculum development is within their own school environments which enables them to make the curriculum development pragmatic and more aligned to their schools' context. The next section examines school-based curriculum development and what it means in terms of primary academy schools.

2.4 School-based Curriculum Development

School-based curriculum development is an essential undertaking because it endeavours to reduce the dependency on national curricula and increase the autonomy of the school. The argument behind this idea is that a central curriculum, the NC (2013), does not consider the specific needs of pupils and context (Gopinathan and Deng, 2006, p. 97). School-based curriculum development (SBCD) is defined by one of the early proponents of the concept, namely Schmuck, (1971, p. 1), as a curriculum that is adapted in accordance with the pupils that attend the school. It also reflects the responsiveness and receptiveness to the specific needs of those pupils. According to Skilbeck (1984, p. 21), three tenets guide SBCD: increased autonomy of the school; enhancement of motivation and responsibility transference to teachers by involving them in the process of curriculum development. This allows them to integrate their teaching experiences into the curriculum and meet the particular needs of the school population. In this research, these tenets are reflected in each of the four sample schools. Primary academy schools were provided with greater autonomy when they were given the autonomy to design and develop their own curriculum considering their local needs. The concept of SBCD was more prominent in the 1970s and 1980s educational landscape, but it was later dropped (Gopinathan and Deng, 2006, p. 74) because, without centralised or external planning, it was feared, rightly or wrongly,

that issues around quality and equality would arise. This implies that in different schools, pupils could have curricula that are quite different from each other which could lead to different learning outcomes (Xu and Wong, 2011, p. 44). If this is related to the academisation of schools where greater autonomy is given to curriculum content and development that Gopinathan and Deng (2006) referred to, it could be applied to that of an academy's curriculum. When a school does not have the required guidance, expertise and resources, the resulting curriculum and materials that emerge tend to lack in terms of breadth and depth or they are out-dated or biased (Bolstad, 2004, p. 12). This is problematic as tension is created by the pressures of national testing in core subjects, reading, writing and mathematics. In reflecting on this issue, a possible way of preventing a narrowing of the curriculum is to incorporate core knowledge, where possible, into foundation subjects. This would prevent some subjects being side-lined. A number of schools have adopted this approach to curriculum development through topic work which covers a number of subjects. As a result, this would allow academies to comply with legislation (Academies Act, 2010) and help prevent an academy's curriculum from becoming biased and narrow. In developing a curriculum, MacDonald (2003, p. 141) claims that curricula developed by schools without proper expertise and support are loosely assessed, poorly resourced and not demanding enough. Whilst MacDonald (2003) argues curricula are not demanding enough in the core subjects, reading, writing and mathematics, national assessments are currently undertaken by pupils at age 7 (Year 2) and age 11 (Year 6). This indicates that whilst academies have autonomy over their curricula, they still have to comply with the core subject content of the NC (2013) as national assessments are based on the content. As a result, primary schools are challenged with all pupils undertaking national assessments (SATs) should achieve the expected national attainment for their ages. Outcomes of national tests are currently described in the

following terms 'expected' (age-appropriate) or 'greater depth' (pupils were working beyond what is expected for their age). This narrow assessment in basic skills does not in any way reflect what pupils have achieved in other subjects within the curriculum. Therefore, MacDonald's (2003) claim of loose assessment, poor resourcing and the curriculum not being demanding enough certainly appears to have some credence particularly in foundations subjects where assessment could be underdeveloped in schools.

Schools became acutely aware that due to changes in the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2016), much greater emphasis was put on the whole school curriculum. This is unlike previous frameworks whereby the core subjects of inspection were mainly a focus and as a result some schools narrowed the curriculum (HMCI, Report 2002, p4). This change raised schools' awareness and, in some cases, heightened their concerns as to whether standards within foundation subjects were at or on track to meet at least nationally expected outcomes at the end of Key Stages (*ibid.*). For many schools, this triggered a review of their curriculum, and a consideration was given as to how schools could effectively assess pupils' knowledge and progress in the foundation subjects. No longer is the focus on reading, writing and mathematics (core subjects) but suddenly greater attention is paid to foundation subjects and the wider school curriculum by Ofsted (2016).

One of the fundamental questions that arises from the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2016) is to whether a school's curriculum meets the needs of its pupils (Appendix C p.205). This encompasses a holistic view of pupils in terms of their social, emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing as well as their academic learning needs. Whilst no school should be making changes due to the pressures of Ofsted inspection, it certainly focuses on leaders' and governors' minds, as it quite clearly places

judgements on the quality of education the school offers its pupils. As a result of raising the curriculum profile in the Ofsted Framework (2016), Ofsted inspectors have focused upon monitoring subjects through a deep dive which can be applied to any subject. Judgements by inspectors are made against the school's intent, implementation, and impact on learners. Therefore, as the intensity of the Ofsted inspection framework focused on a school's curriculum, the importance of subject leadership has grown. As a result, school leaders' attitudes towards curriculum development could impact on teacher involvement as curriculum developers at a meso-level, due to the varying degrees senior leaders value their input into the process. This could potentially raise issues around professional relationships which is a key factor in terms of school-based curriculum development (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2013). Therefore, a possible impact in Multi-Academy Trusts is that leaders of the trust may have a corporate view in regard to curriculum development that could limit opportunities for teachers and leaders within each individual academy. The impact of this may prevent teachers' full immersion into the curriculum development process and, in turn, reduce their effectiveness as curriculum developers.

The staffing structure of teaching staff, including headteachers, is integral to curriculum development (Male, 2012; Priestley, Minty and Eager, 2014). It has never been more important in education than in the current climate for primary academy headteachers to be involved in the curriculum development process to capitalise on the government's shift regarding curriculum autonomy to the front line (DfE 2010). Headteachers play a significant role in the rhetoric around curriculum development in schools and can heavily influence the types of discourse which can provide confidence for teachers to break free of the constraints they have become used to in terms of dependence and compliance (Alexander, 2010a, p.225). Equally, there are dynamic

school leaders who tend to share their vision with their teachers (Young, 2014) and impart this through a distributive leadership model which can involve networking opportunities and enable all teachers to actively contribute to the curriculum development process despite staff hierarchy (Leverett, 2000) (Appendix C p.205). This illustrates that headteachers, who believe in a distributive leadership strategy, can engender teacher autonomy and empower teaching staff (South, 2009, p. 94) to access resources that others bring to bear as they work on a central objective, i.e., curriculum development. Many primary schools in England use a distributive leadership approach to school development as it has gained credibility over the past decade in the area of school leadership (Harris and Spillane, 2008; Grint, 2011). It has been recognised that the strategy is pertinent for new models of schooling such as academy schools and academy chains (Chapman, 2010). However, it is acknowledged that sometimes there is a reluctance for headteachers to implement a distributive leadership strategy due to performativity (Ball, 2003) and the relentlessly increasing pressures placed on schools, alongside national accountability measures (Hobby, 2013 cited in Richardson, 2013). Headteachers may also feel reluctant to implement a distributive leadership strategy due to them feeling overly responsible for anything that happens in the school. As a result, they have a problem letting go of control (Southworth, 2009, p. 1) because they see it as abdicating responsibility rather than a strategy for school improvement (NCSL, 2011). It appears that schools which employ a distributive leadership strategy tend to have 'buy in' from teachers when employing new initiatives or addressing areas for improvement (Earley, 2012). The strategy can also make a difference in the pace of change as teachers and leaders become empowered and evolve as effective agents of change. Historical models of leadership (for example, 'heroic'), where power lies totally with the headteacher (Parker, 2014), benefit from this model because it is unsustainable for headteachers to be solely

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responsible for their school's leadership and management. The distributive leadership strategy enables schools to build capacity among the wider staff (Earley, 2012) because, whilst maintaining accountability, it helps to reduce the pressures around it.

Relating this to curriculum development and teachers building their capacities in order to be effective curriculum developers and act as agents of change, means that the discourse may have become teacher-driven and as such curriculum innovation becomes a highly social activity (Bascia, 2014, p. 233). Effective communication underpins this whole-school approach (Edwards, 2001; OFSTED, 2008; Brundrett and Duncan, 2010) and, as such, can support curriculum development (Priestley, Minty and Eager, 2014). Distributive leadership provides a cultural alternative to traditional practice and support's curriculum innovation because it can provide an environment whereby teachers are given a safe space to be creative. Further to this, they are able to trial their creations alongside developing robust monitoring and communication systems (Matthew et al., 2014). The inherent shared responsibilities of the distributive leadership strategy tend to encourage reciprocity between colleagues (Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain, 2011), and collaboration across schools for curriculum development which could be considered advantageous (Coburn and Russell 2008; Brundrett and Duncan, 2010). Furthermore, this can also aid in supporting dialogic engagement between staff so they can understand and make sense of new policy, (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson 2015b p. 33) especially where there are reciprocal working relationships within schools (Priestley, Minty and Eager, 2014). For example, where individuals act independently (teachers) or collectively on an enterprise (curriculum development) as a group (Stevenson and Gilliland, 2016), they can develop their capacities towards becoming effective curriculum developers and agents of change.

Given the issue of curriculum capacity within primary schools (Alexander, 2010a), the widespread dispersal of power given to teachers needs to come with a health warning. Many will need their knowledge of curriculum increased through CPD, so that published schemes of work do not form the basis of curriculum development work without it being thoroughly filtered (Hammersley-Fletcher and Strain, 2011). Without CPD input regarding curriculum development, the work undertaken may be adversely affected and diverted away from key elements that will make the curriculum 'fit for purpose' and able to meet the needs of pupils in a particular context and environmental setting.

Nevertheless, distributive leadership can support curriculum development. However, there are several caveats that need to be considered and that headteachers need to be aware of. Through a distributive leadership strategy, teachers can become empowered to be effective curriculum developers and agents of change as well as being influential in developing other school initiatives. However, headteachers may feel compelled to comply with perceived expectations that both align with their vision and centralised expectations (Male, 2012). Headteachers often take this view because curriculum development and innovation sit central to their professional identity, and they welcome looser central control over it (Burndrett and Duncan, 2010). When headteachers give teachers the power and autonomy to become curriculum developers, teachers have the opportunity to create learning experiences for pupils that excite and engage them (Male, 2012 p. 12). It is then somewhat easier to implement the curriculum. It is suggested that, when teachers are involved in curriculum development, the transition from development to implementation of the curriculum can make a noticeable difference to pupils' enjoyment of learning as well as raising standards of attainment.

2.5 Teachers' Role in the Curriculum Development Process

Teachers have a pivotal role in the process of educating children. Various studies have established a positive correlation between teacher involvement in pupils' learning and their academic achievement (Biddle et al. 2013, p. 45; Harris & Sass 2011, p. 10; Kyriakides et al. 2000, p. 21; Metzler & Woessmann 2012; Rockoff 2004, p. 47). Understanding the role of teachers in curriculum development is a significant focus in this research. From the inception of this literature review, a constant thread of teacher involvement has been identified as significant in curriculum development in primary academy schools given their autonomy in developing their own curricula. However, there is no specific requirement in England for teachers to be involved in the curriculum development process within schools, and schools are able to buy published curriculums that may or may not incorporate the NC (2013). This suggests that there may be missed opportunities for teachers, who work in academies, to become involved in their school's curriculum development given academies autonomy to develop their own curriculums due to leaders opting for a published curriculum. However, many of the published curriculums still require schools to adjust what they have published in order to make the curriculum their own. In principle, one which aligns with what is required by maintained schools when incorporating the NC (2013) into their school's curriculum. Carl (2009, p. 1) asserts that 'curriculum development is not something done to teachers but through and with them' (ibid.). The implications of this are that when teachers are required to be involved in curriculum development, they also need to have the relevant knowledge and skills in regard to curriculum in order to contribute to the process. If they do not have the relevant all-encompassing knowledge and skills, they will be less proficient in their roles as curriculum

developers. For it is this combined with the context in which they work and the pupils they serve that will inform the process and enable a school to provide a curriculum that best serves its pupils. In attempting to assess the role of the teacher as a curriculum developer, it is important to consider how much autonomy they have in order to participate in the activity, for example, whether the schools they serve operate a distributive leadership model. Carl (2009, p. 1) advocates providing empowerment to teachers throughout the entire process of curriculum development. Teachers must be more than mere onlookers or conduits transmitting decisions. Frontline educators must be provided with an active role in the process of relevant curriculum development. The success of the learning plan creation depends on teachers' involvement in the process. Teachers should be positioned at the heart of the process for optimum success (Priestly et al. 2015, p. 187).

Priestly et al. (2015, p. 16) argue that teachers are frequently expected to serve as agents of change. Studies were undertaken by Priestly (2015) and Alsubaie (2016) who promote teacher empowerment in the process of curriculum development. Alsubaie (2016, p. 10) argues that teachers must be empowered systematically in relation to curriculum development to optimise learning events in the classroom. Handler (2010, p. 78) highlights that teacher involvement in the curriculum can bring significant gains in terms of collaboration. Carl (2005, p. 31) asserts that teachers are principal role-players in curriculum development, but their input can fluctuate from school to school. This must be a result of the model of leadership that exists in a particular school. Carl (ibid.) suggests that teachers' opportunities to develop the school's curriculum can be limited and that it is dependent on school leaders, namely headteachers and their approaches to it. In school-based curriculum development, teachers play an essential role (Skilbeck 2005, p. 17). They have a greater opportunity

to develop teacher ecological agency through working together within their school environments as curriculum developers. In summary, authorities drawn upon to consider teacher involvement in the curriculum development process have acknowledged the importance of teachers being agents of change and the vehicles through which change in schools occurs. Therefore, it is vital to involve them in the development of a school's curriculum, as teachers are the ones who plan and implement the learning plan from its inception right through to its delivery within the classroom. The following section explores how teachers' thinking and personal perceptions can impact on curriculum development. The relevance of this is to gain an in-depth understanding as to how thinking can become misplaced and act as a barrier to ensuring a school's curriculum is broad and balanced. For example, limitations placed on diversity.

2.5.1 Influences on Teachers' Thinking Impacting on their Perceptions within Curriculum Development

As part of establishing the importance of teacher involvement in curriculum development, it is necessary to consider teachers' thinking and how it is influenced by sociocultural contexts (Moje and Wade, 1997). These emerge as 'individual voices which are deeply penetrated by the culture of institutions, groups, and communities in which they participate' (Hermans, 2008, p. 192). Priestly, Biesta and Robinson's (2015) research supports this view and suggests that numerous beliefs seem to stem from and echo both policies and trends (ibid. p. 57). This may be due to the internalisation of the discourse that has taken place and the elevation of others' voices forming part of structural thinking and reasoning then becoming part of who teachers

are (Akkerman and Mejer (2011, p. 314). It forms part of Hermans' (1996, 2008, 2013) conceptualisation of the dialogical self that promotes the idea of 'voices in a landscape of the mind' (Hermans, 2013 p. 83), resulting in a dynamic diversity of self-governing 'I-positions'. This results in a dialogical self, which departs from the idea that it (the 'self') is focused around one core (Hermans, 2008, p. 188). It suggests that the 'self' comprises of several internal I-positions (for example, I was a teacher) and external I-positions (for example, my children). These 'I' positions do not operate in isolation but instead flexibly interact with each other according to how the self-interacts with the environment (Hermans, 2013).

The I-positions are dialogical because the dialogue between them can result in one position being appropriated and one being rejected. The internal I-positions between personal and social internal positions can lead to a more productive outcome. There is the possibility of the notion of a 'third position.' Assuming acceptance of this, the notion of the 'third position' allows for a constructive outcome where there may be two conflicting positions, thus creating a new position (Hermans, 2013). Hermans' theory brings to the fore the crucial discourses within teachers' environments, shaping an individual's sense-making. Attention is paid to such influences throughout the following sections of this thesis as various elements of teachers' professional environments are considered. It is suggested that 'I' positions may be affected by stereotypical thinking concerning pupils' backgrounds for example, pupils coming from impoverished backgrounds with little home support. This could, therefore, contribute to a lack of success within the school environment. Fortunately, much of that stereotypical thinking in regard to disadvantaged pupils has been much reduced over the years due to the government raising the profile of disadvantaged pupils. This has resulted in a shift in some teachers' thinking (Hermans, 2015). This is so important because prejudiced thinking impacts subvertly or overtly on the curriculum

development process, resulting in narrowed approaches covertly impacting on the process. By ensuring teachers are coming from a place of professionalism with voices that echo equality and opportunity for all pupils then the curriculum is likely to be better matched to the needs of pupils. There has been a raising of awareness in society, in terms of polarised thinking, which has seen a seed change in curriculum content in the NC (2013). Diversity, for example, has helped to ensure teachers' thinking is not tainted by prejudices or historical perceptions placed on pupils. The outcome of which has seen an improvement in the learning outcomes for pupils (Standard Assessment Test results).

While professionalism is always expected when undertaking this type of work, it is appreciated through the work of Hermans (2008) et al., that teachers 'I' positions impact on the process of curriculum development and may need to be carefully managed. The following section considers teachers' personal capacities and knowledge in terms of curriculum development in order to highlight the expertise they need to undertake the role of curriculum developer.

2.5.2 Teachers' Personal Capacities, Knowledge, Identity and Self-Efficacy in Relation to Curriculum Development

Teachers' personal capacities and knowledge in relation to curriculum development provide a platform from which teachers act and colour their decision making. Teachers' personal capacities interplay with their abilities to be effective curriculum developers in each of their school contexts. One of the crucial personal capacities is in-depth teacher knowledge in regard to the school's curriculum, as this would aid them in becoming proficient curriculum developers and facilitators in the classroom.

Curriculum development is a process in which (ideally) both leaders and teachers consider what subjects and what content the school's curriculum should contain. It is suggested that a well-designed curriculum could help narrow the gap for disadvantaged and low attaining pupils. These pupils could especially benefit from 'powerful knowledge' which provides 'the best understanding of the natural and social worlds and helps us go beyond our individual experiences, building cultural awareness, and wider understanding,' (Young, 2013, p 196).

Therefore, teachers' knowledge needs to be strong on several levels. Firstly, a teacher's in-depth subject knowledge is essential to enable a broad and balanced curriculum to be developed. This helps pupils to make progress in their learning, so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. Further to this, teachers' beliefs, values, and attributes are internal factors that have the potential to affect their perceptions of the factors that influence curriculum development (Priestly, Edward, Priestly, Miller, 2015 pp. 191-214). Therefore, it is important for teachers to know what internal factors would impact them in terms of their ability to act as curriculum developers.

Exploring teacher knowledge and their personal capacities ought to reveal what type of curriculum expertise may be required to support teachers' curriculum development. Curriculum theory (for example, the development and enactment of the curriculum) can inform the way teachers think about curriculum, otherwise, they are left to their own thoughts and opinions or adopt others (Young, 2014, p. 48). Concerns around teachers' inability to discuss the curriculum in an informed and knowledgeable way have been raised by Alexander (2010a). The importance of being able to do so and indeed given the autonomy to do so is that teachers are then able to critically examine and evaluate the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs (emotional,

physical, and academic) of the pupils the school serves, (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). These actions help to empower teachers to act as agents of change and develop agency (ref. p. 64). For teachers to become effective curriculum agents of change it is important to consider their self-efficacy. Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, (2013) concur that self-efficacy is the interplay of teachers' personal capacities with their ecological conditions, which affect their achievement in the role of becoming effective curriculum agents of change. By focusing on teachers' personal capacities, this section begins by addressing teacher identity, which is closely intertwined with who and what teachers stand for both as professionals and on a personal level that affects their individual agency (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

Teacher identity is not something that is static but evolves in response to an era where there are pressures on performativity (Troman, 2008) but also changes when tensions arise from and within their personal lives. This, along with the emerging dynamics between political, professional, and personal experiences influence teachers' thinking and start to represent who they are in terms of their teacher identity (Millar Marsh, 2002; Troman, 2008; Mockler, 2011). Archer's (2000) theory on teacher agency, espouses that personal identity is seen as something that is produced through internal conversation with a person's circumstances. It emerges from individuals' emotional commentaries about their concerns, originating from the natural, practical, and social orders of 'reality'. This is assigned to the self rather than assigned by others like social identity is, with this there may be discord (Woods and Jeffrey, 2004). Notwithstanding, teacher identity is proposed to be a tacit construct which is best explored through its representations, including self-efficacy (Canrinus et al., 2012), which is a measure of how people judge their capabilities to successfully affect a particular course of action (Bandura, 1977). However, if teacher self-efficacy is weak,

this is likely to have a strong negative impact on their effectiveness as agents of change.

Conversely, high self-efficacy relates to teachers being highly effective and able to develop ecological agency which is essential in curriculum development (Bandura, 1977; Eteläpelto et al., 2013). In this research, self-efficacy appeared to be variable but was causally linked to teacher confidence and professional knowledge.

Efficacy expectations are a major determinant of teachers' choice of activities, (Bandura, 1977, p. 194) and their behaviour (Archer, 2007) which includes their capacity to 'choose between different options in any given situation', (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015, p. 141), i.e., a choice of models to adopt in curriculum development. It is important to acknowledge that the notion of teachers having a choice between different options in any given situation is not to be taken as read. It may be difficult for teachers to exercise any type of choice if they are indoctrinated in existing systems or if the predominant leadership style in a school is not distributive. If one or both are in evidence in a school, teachers 'may not recognise an obvious need for transformation' (Lanas and Kiilowski, 2013, p. 356).

If teachers have some level of autonomy and exercise some level of choice, those with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be better planners (Bandura, 1977).
Indeed, collective efficacy is most desirable, that is when a group of teachers in a school believe that together they can inspire growth and change in their pupils. It is important to achieve high levels of efficacy because it affects effort levels and how long effort is 'sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences' (Bandura, 1977, p. 191) (Appendix C p.205). For teachers to become effective agents of change their experiences must lie in concrete situations (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015, p. 35) and, as previously discussed, the primary sector of education is a pressured,

demanding environment for teachers. Despite the government advocating reductions in excessive teacher workload, characterised by unnecessary levels of duplication, bureaucracy, and detail (Clegg and Morgan, 2015), curriculum development can be extremely time-consuming. Many schools found implementing the NC (2013) a considerable task (NUT, 2014). However, when comparing it to academies that have the opportunity to plan and implement their own curriculum, due to their being able to exercise curriculum autonomy, it is unquestionably a far larger task. Curriculum development sits within a set of accountability measures which could be interpreted as promoting adherence to input regulation that disincentivise innovation. It could be argued that for teachers to be effective curriculum developers and agents of change, it takes substantial self-efficacy. Conversely, if substantial self-efficacy is not achieved and low self-efficacy exists, teachers and leaders may be accepting of the status quo and continue to make either limited modifications to the curriculum or no modifications at all and use existing documentation (Priestley, Minty and Eager, 2014). This can affect performative achievements for teachers (Bandura, 1977, p. 191) and reinforce the central idea of the EATA that past experiences and teachers' working environments exert an influence on the achievement of becoming successful agents of change (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). It has been important to examine teachers' personal capacities, knowledge, identity, and self-efficacy as it is evident that each act as a bedrock and as significant factors in contributing to the ability of a teacher becoming proficient in the role of curriculum developer. The following section considers the role of teacher's becoming agents of change in terms of curriculum development.

2.5.3 Teachers as Agents of Change

It is important to acknowledge that one of the possible by-products of teachers being involved in curriculum development is ecological agency. This can be achieved through teachers being empowered to become agents of change in terms of curriculum development. It is through the dialogic discourse, involving decision making regarding curriculum structure and content, taking into account external and internal factors that may impact on the curriculum development process (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015).

However, as referred to earlier, it is vital to consider teachers' knowledge base so they may act effectively in their role as agents of change. Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, (2013) make it clear that it is the interplay of teachers' personal capacities with their ecological conditions that affect their achievement of agency. The achievement of ecological agency is important as this enables teachers to make the most of the autonomy, they are afforded through the Academies Act, (2010) in developing their schools' curriculum. However, Alexander (2010a) identifies a possible issue arising from this in education; teachers' inability to talk about curriculum knowledgeably and analytically. Priestley, Biesta and Robinson (2015) suggest that ways of thinking, understanding, and talking about educational issues are an important resource which can support teachers as curriculum developers and ultimately as agents of change.

Priestley et al. (2013) performed extensive research regarding teacher agency, which focused on whether teachers had opportunities to contribute to the curriculum development process and whether through this process, they were able to develop agency. Although neo-liberalism has been discussed in this chapter, it is pertinent to

briefly make mention of it here in relation to teacher agency. The tensions that neo-liberal reforms bring to education have raised expectations of curriculum outcomes. The changes in legislation, namely the Academies Act (2010), regarding curriculum development, has enabled academy schools to gain greater autonomy over the content of the school's curriculum (DfE 2010; DfE 2016a). This suggests the possibility of increased teacher agency in relation to curriculum development that may enable teachers to develop their own personal capital, in relation to an academy school's development of their curriculum. Neo-liberal educational reforms have in the past tended to reduce the opportunities for teachers to develop teacher agency (DfE 2010; DfE 2016a). The legislation is directed towards school leaders to develop personal capacity with agency.

The opportunity for teachers to become involved in developing their academy school's curriculum may help their teacher agency but as discussed earlier, it is dependent on the degree of their involvement in the process, (Priestley et al. 2015, p. 1) (ref. Appendix C p.205). This may be due to leaders' views and control in relation to the curriculum development process. In investigating teachers' perceptions of the factors that influence curriculum development process, this research recognises the profound impact teachers may have in terms of developing their school's curriculum. It is here that teacher ecological agency would be created because of the extensive knowledge the teachers had about the context in which their respective school operated, and their understanding of pupils' needs within the school.

Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, (2015) recognise teacher ecological agency can occur through the curriculum development process, so whilst this research does not focus on teacher agency per se, it deserves serious consideration because for teachers to become effective curriculum developers and agents of change, ecological agency can

be achieved through the collective actions and decisions teachers take. If ecological teacher agency is likely to be achieved through the curriculum development process, it would be due to the contextual conditions' teachers find themselves working in. This may also be something of a by-product (agency being achieved by teachers working together and making decisions about the curriculum) of the development of a school's curriculum. (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2013). In considering the benefits of teachers as agents of change in the role of curriculum developers, it is suggested that their perceptions of the process and the factors that influence it are important to capture as this can add to the growing knowledge that affects curriculum development. It is now pertinent to move from a point of teacher involvement in the process, to a point in which the complexities surrounding knowledge are examined, as these highlight areas teachers need to be aware of when developing the curriculum.

2.6 Elements of a Curriculum and the Complexities Surrounding Knowledge

This section principally focuses on curriculum aims, ways of learning, complexities surrounding the question of knowledge and the positioning of knowledge within a curriculum. At this juncture, it is important to note that the term 'knowledge' is often used in an arbitrary sense and with no clear definition of what is meant by it. It is suggested that its arbitrariness may be a good thing because it allows flexibility in curriculum planning and development. However, it must be acknowledged that taken to an extreme, arbitrariness and autonomy can cause muddle and chaos.

A curriculum framework denoting what children are expected to learn in each stage of education is necessary, for example, the NC (2013) which sets out the main aims and the knowledge to be taught at each Key Stage. It is well documented that the NC for maintained schools has changed since its inception in 1988, as different political parties, cultural and social influences have impacted on education in England, for example, SEAL, the social, emotional, aspects of learning (DfE, 2010). Therefore, the aims of a curriculum are an important element in its planning and development (Dillon, 2009) as they underpin and justify its contents (Scott, 2014; Young, 2014). They are a 'means to an end in education as they are internally and intrinsically connected' (Biesta, 2012, p. 39). That is not to say, that curricula should have predetermined goals which direct all decisions (Pinar, 1980). However, it is suggested that the aims of a curriculum are 'the most central and fundamental educational question' in the development of a curriculum (Biesta, 2012, p. 38). Alexander (2012, p. 1) goes further and contends that a curriculum should be 'in pursuit of relevant and properly argued educational aims' (Alexander, 2012, p.1). Kelly (2009) concurs with these views but further warns that without curriculum aims, a limited concept of the curriculum can result; a curriculum which may limit, for example, pupils' scope and ambitions. Ideally, teachers should play a 'central role in engaging with the question, what is educationally desirable' in terms of curriculum aims (Biesta, 2012, p. 39). Hence, teachers grasp of 'a well-articulated educational philosophy related to the wider purposes of education is necessary, but this alone does not necessarily mean there is sufficient challenge in teachers' official discourse to enrich a school's curriculum,' (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 209) (ref. Appendix C p.205). It is suggested that critical thinking in relation to the aims of a curriculum tends to be on a more pragmatic level and governed by policy and national outcomes for pupils. Therefore, echoing the dichotomy previously referred to (p.15), when reflecting upon academy

school autonomy over curriculum development, they still remain constrained by nationally expected outcomes in terms of core subject areas. Therefore, these constraints tie them to government agendas, just as they do with any maintained primary school.

Young (1998) uses the phrase 'curriculum as practice' to represent a sociocultural view of learning. He writes that learning is situated in social practice and occurs through communities of practice and joint action as well as all participants contributing to an ongoing construction and reconstruction of knowledge (Cox, 2011). 'Curriculum as practice' fundamentally arises from a belief that 'knowledge is produced by people acting collectively' (Young, 1998, p. 27) and is concerned with the learner making sense of their individual experiences and their various worlds of 'exploration, discovery and inquiry, all drivers for learning and development' (Wood and Hedges, 2016, p. 389). The curriculum is underpinned by a constructivist epistemology which essentially holds that when learning, humans are actively engaged in the process of constructing meaning and that their intent and the context are both influential factors (Benson, 1989). From this perspective, a curriculum might be 'construed as the social practices that have cultural significance in generating knowledge' (Cox, 2011, p.151). This can resonate with pupils' social and cultural knowledge and may determine how curriculum knowledge may be implemented so that it resonates with pupils' levels of understanding.

Bernstein (1977) suggests that such an 'integrated curriculum' focuses on ways of knowing, rather than states of knowledge and consequently privileges the status and perspective of the pupil. Bernstein's (1977) ways of knowing are the mechanisms which human beings use to make sense of their knowledge. Therefore, the integrated curriculum enables pupils to make sense of the world around them through mimicking

real life. As a 'process driven' curriculum, it gives more discretion over pupils' learning and consequently less to individual teachers because there is a lessening of a transmission style of teaching (Appendix C p.205). Teachers are required to collaborate with colleagues in other disciplines because there is little strength in the boundaries separating categories of discourse, meaning such a curriculum has a weak classification (Westbrook et al., 2013). For most primary schools, the effect of this on teachers would be negligible because one teacher is responsible for one class and the whole curriculum of that class. The key feature of permeable divisions between subjects could suggest that curriculum as practice links to one of the DfE's (2013a, p. 5) main aims, that a curriculum should 'prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' (ibid.). Such a sociocultural view, with its emphasis on structure and pedagogy, suggests issues beyond the remit of the planned curriculum (Au, 2007) although it could be contended that this is not necessarily the case because curriculum planning is the foundation for the enacted curriculum.

In contrast to 'curriculum as practice' (Young, 1998), sits 'curriculum as fact', which is 'a structure of socially prescribed knowledge'… 'external to the knower, there to be mastered' (Greene, 1971, p. 1). The notion of 'curriculum as fact' relies upon a commitment to a scientific orientation of developmental research, based on normative ways of understanding children (Wood and Hedges, 2016). It is certainly linked to Hirst's (1974) rationalist view which holds that there are a limited number of distinctive forms of knowledge and a curriculum's aim is to seek out the 'truth' through different processes. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, such an unyielding view of knowledge, where the principal aim was to discover and identify 'truths', held an uncompromising sway within education theory (Kelly, 2009).

However, far-reaching objections to this standpoint merged in the postmodernism movement, which gained wide currency from 1970 onwards (Efland, Freedman and Stuhr, 1996; Hargreaves, 2000).

A postmodern view of knowledge manifests in a shift of focus. Focus shifts to developing pupils' awareness of the existence of many layers of interpretation, as well as creative thought (Efland, Freedman and Stuhr, 1996). This seems to have unsettled politicians. Gove (2013a), when in post as Secretary of State for Education, clearly stated his belief in the importance of a cannon of knowledge forming the basis for the curriculum; one of the DfE's (2013a, p. 5) main aims is that a curriculum should be 'an introduction to the essential knowledge that children need', a phrase that seems rather nebulous. The interpretation of this term lends itself to the autonomy afforded to primary academy schools as they are allowed to develop their own curricula.

The question of knowledge has received a high profile (Wheelahan, 2010; Young et al. 2014) and has been linked to teachers' curriculum capacity, as it is suggested by Alexander (2010a) that their discourse around knowledge is 'muddled and reductive' with knowledge completely parodied as searching for obsolete facts' (p. 493). In reflecting on Alexander (2010a) remarks, it seems somewhat dismissive of teachers or is it that he is being extremely perceptive about teachers and their limitations in terms of their knowledge to be able to have wide-ranging discussions about curriculum? (Appendix C p.205). Whether he is being dismissive of teachers or not, his comment serves to underline shortcomings in Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and/or CPD and what is glaringly apparent from the literature – that is, the difficulty in defining what knowledge is and what would constitute 'essential knowledge' for pupils.

The very existence of a NC (2013), as an embodiment of the knowledge deemed to be of 'most worth' (Marsh, 2009, p. 3) assumes that there is 'universal' or 'better'

knowledge for all pupils, regardless of their differing social and cultural experiences beyond school (Young et al., 2014). Again, it fails to address what worthwhile knowledge may look like. It seems to nullify ideological questions concerning what is legitimate knowledge and who defines it (Beyer and Apple, 1998) and 'whose knowledge is worth the most?' (Apple, 2004, p. 28). Instead, it is through such means that the dominant group imposes its ideology on society (Kelly, 2009), leading to consent from the masses which Gramsci (cited in Bates, 1975) terms as supremacy, (hegemony in relation to this research being authority).

An education system does not stand apart from either society or the economy (Rothstein, 2004; Anyon, 2005) and a curriculum can be conceptualised as a mirror reflecting the 'competing interests and value systems found in a modern society' (Young, 1998, p. 9). Education and politics are inextricably linked (Ball, 2004) and 'politics of every sort and at every level of society affect the processes of curriculum development' (Longstreet and Shane, 1993, p. 93) and what knowledge should form a curriculum. For example, academisation and the Academies Act, (2010) where neo-liberal reforms take place regarding curriculum, learning is placed firmly at the door of academies due to the autonomy they are given. However, the government ultimately retains control, as they are the experts in what curriculum knowledge needs to be taught in core subjects by creating legislation that affects all schools in terms of national assessment (SATs).

It appears that the political regime which embraces an arbitrary view of knowledge is veering towards a totalitarian form of governance, and as a consequence moves away from a democratic form of governance (Kelly, 2009). This is a fair summary of the way in which the DfE controls the education sector, through both input and output regulation, for example. The way in which its actions jar with the public image which

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it promotes through its rhetoric of the importance of teachers and their autonomy (DfE, 2010) may simply be evidence of efforts to veil sinister practises which must not become too apparent (Kelly, 2009).

The influence of dominant groups who have political control and the most leverage over the content of the curriculum, for example the government, affect the identification of 'high-status knowledge' (knowledge deemed as being of the highest importance), or 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2014 p. 74), (pupils being able to think beyond their own experience as opposed to 'profane knowledge' (non-religious). This classification suggests that knowledge is never neutral, but its circulation forms part of the social non-of power (Fiske, 1989) and the maintenance of a culturally conservative principle will be to the possible disadvantage of wider social mobility (Legg, 2012). In relation to this research, the neo-liberal policy relating to academies and the development of their curriculum enables academy schools to include any subject matter they feel is essential, providing the academy develops a curriculum that is broad and balanced. In terms of schools' locations, the knowledge gained by pupils in academies would not necessarily align with another school's curriculum as the location and context would impact on curriculum development.

Young et al. (2014, p. 20) suggests that promoting social justice and greater educational equality must begin with the knowledge to enable pupils to 'access, engage with and influence society' (ibid.). By maintaining the central role of knowledge that promotes social justice and greater educational equality, it may be argued that disadvantaged pupils who are living in poverty are more likely to have access to knowledge which has previously been the sole domain of dominant groups (Wheelahan, 2010; Young et al., 2014). For example, disadvantaged pupils will understand levels of impoverishment that advantaged pupils would not. This could

include impoverishment of toys and resources that would support their childhood development, such as appropriately aged reading books being available in their homes. Given access to the type of knowledge Young et al. (2020) refer to, suggests that a curriculum should help pupils develop the key skills of being able to 'test and demonstrate objectivity and truthfulness' (Wheelahan, 2010, p. 39). This is somewhat of an unrealistic demand of pupils as 'objectivity and truthfulness' are complex notions and would need support in undertaking such deeds. A narrow view of knowledge which equates curriculum with facts is a misapprehension and disregards its potential as a way of inquiring, making sense and understanding the flow of information (Alexander, 2010a). Undoubtedly, there is value in the knowledge which can be applied, rather than simply reproduced (Westbrook et al., 2013). In this sense, 'curriculum change often reflects social change' (Paechter, 2000, p. 5). However, in Young's (1971) earlier work, he suggests that such a process is likely to be contested and resisted if the changes are 'perceived to undermine the values, relative power and privileges of the dominant group involved' (Young 1971, p. 34). In considering the complexities of developing a curriculum it is evident there are a number of factors that contribute to its fruition. The way in which curriculum development could be undertaken in schools is explored in the next section in terms of models to support the gathering of information to support the curriculum development process.

2.6.1 The Curriculum – Definition and Models

Having addressed the location of this research, I now turn to a discussion of the curriculum and curriculum models. This section considers how a curriculum may be defined, and some of the key curriculum models used in planning and developing a curriculum. There is some merit in teachers having a definition of the curriculum

because of the clarity evoked from coming to grips with what is a complex concept, as well as the platform a definition provides for answering pertinent questions about what a curriculum may look like, thus enabling further conceptual progress.

Curriculum is a broad-based term that refers to a guide or plan used in education to allow aspects of teaching to take place; it has a function of directing teaching. However, it is not an easy term to define as Soltis (1978) comments - those who seek a definition of a curriculum are sincere in their quest but misguided as it is difficult to determine precisely what it means as it can refer to either all or only some of the component parts of a school's academic program or courses (Soltis, 1978, p. 7). Such futility may result from either the lack of consensus amongst specialists (Jackson, 1992; Marsh, 2009; Au, 2011b; Young, 2014), or 'the celebrated contested of the curriculum field' (Dillon, 2009, p. 354), and it adds to the complexity of considering the essence of the curriculum. Although the curriculum is a contested concept set within a complex field, there is mostly agreement about the distinction between the planned, enacted, and experienced curriculum (Marsh and Willis, (2007). Alexander, (2010a) and Au (2007) assert this trilogy and acknowledge the importance of three key components of curriculum; the subject matter content, the structure and form of how knowledge is organised (Apple, 1995), and the pedagogy which represents how the selected knowledge is communicated. For some, the curriculum is an enabling structure, a form of cultural capital (Apple, 2004), through which schools can move children beyond their experiences to date and support their acquisition of knowledge that is not tied to that experience (Young, 2014). It is positively 'a feast of experiences that excites their imaginations and nourishes their intellectual development' (Male, 2012, p. 204). For others, the curriculum is viewed as a tool with which education reproduces society's inequalities (Apple, 2004) and reinforces the ideology of

dominant groups (Kelly, 2004), oppressing those disadvantaged by class, race, and gender (Giroux, 1990).

A number of factors that can impact the curriculum development process have been explored in the literature, it is now important to consider models that have been used to determine information gathered for the process. Using a particular model can be useful when developing a curriculum, but it may not always be obvious in a school as to which model, they have adopted to achieve curriculum development. However, it can be beneficial to a school as it can provide a structure and save time (Oliva, 2009). A result of two decades of centralised direction controlling the content of the curriculum, teachers have become deskilled in the craft and knowledge necessary for school-based curriculum development. There has now been a distinct shift in curriculum policy (Academies Act, 2010) for teachers working in academy schools, to one of curricular models which emphasise local flexibility in curriculum making. One in which teachers are positioned as autonomous developers of the curriculum (Kuiper & Berkvens, 2013; Kneyber & Evers, 2015). In strengthening teachers' involvement in curriculum development various models can act as a framework to support the process.

Whilst there are a number of well-known models to support curriculum development, such as Hilda Taba (1962), Gerald Weinstein and Mario Fantini (1970), and Elliott Eisner (1970). Tyler (1949) and Taba's (1962) curriculum models have influenced the subsequent development of curriculum models post the work of Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962). Due to the importance of Tyler's (1949) and Taba's (1962) models in curriculum development, they merit further discussion. Tyler proposed four fundamental areas to examine in terms of curriculum development: the school's

purpose(s), educational experiences linked to those goals, experience organisation and assessment.

Steps in the Process
1.Stating Objectives
2.Selecting Learning Experiences
3.Organising Learning Experiences
4.Evaluation

Tyler's Model for curriculum development

Later, Taba (1962) produced a more sophisticated model based on Tyler's understanding of successful curriculum development. Taba promoted that those who use curriculum should be the curriculum creators as well. She believed that teachers should generate specific teaching-learning situations for their pupils and that they should adopt an inductive approach to teaching i.e., from specific to general rather than the traditional deductive approach which is starting from general and building to the specifics. Taba's grassroots model has seven steps as listed below, advocating a major role for teachers.

Steps in the Process	Actions
Diagnosis of Needs characteristics.	Identify needs of students for whom curriculum is to be planned
Formulation of Objectives	Specify the objectives by which needs will be fulfilled
Selection of content	Select subject matter based on objectives and determine the validity of the chosen content
Organisation of the content	Arrange the content in a particular sequence keeping in mind the maturity of learners, academic achievement, interests etc.
Selection of learning experiences	Facilitate interaction of learners with content through appropriate instructional methodology.

Organisation of learning activities	The learning activities be organised in a sequence depending both on content sequence and learner
Evaluation	To assess the achievement of learning objectives, evaluation procedures needed to be devised

Taba (1962) Curriculum Development Model

The first of these is to determine pupils' needs for whom the curriculum is being created. This means teachers need to be knowledgeable about the school's context and the pupils which they serve. Taba's (1962) curriculum model promotes the following process for curriculum development, firstly identifies certain groups of pupils in order to ascertain their learning needs. For example, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEND, EAL pupils. Secondly, to determine the educational goals, which are built upon previous learning in a systematic way, taking into account the cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains. The next stage is to select the subject's scope of the content. Teachers at this point need to decide on the subject matter, or content, of the curriculum once the goals have been defined, along with their learning end points, for example end of key stages. Once the knowledge is organised in a systematic way, then the structure of the curriculum needs to be put in place in accordance with the academic standards and interests of the intended pupils. Teachers then need to convey the intended curriculum to all stakeholders. This is followed by creating appropriate formative and summative assessments which forms an important part of the process. Assessing pupils' learning against specified goals yields data that can be used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the curriculum design and implementation along with pupil outcomes. Taba (1962) guidance in curriculum development recommends a series of formative assessments which should be performed before adopting a new curriculum to identify any flaws in the proposed curriculum and to correct them if

necessary. This then provides an opportunity which enables teachers involved in the development of the school's curriculum to adapt the content to improve pupils' overall performance.

In applying this to curriculum development within academies, instead of creating a broad plan for the school programme, in the tradition of deductive models do (e.g., Tyler (1949), et al., companion), Hilda Taba (1962) suggested that it would be more beneficial to begin with the design of teaching-learning units which would serve as the foundation for curriculum creation in such a system.

Taba (1962) further suggests that external factors which may have an impact on the model's structural components need to be considered. For example, a) the essence of the community in which the school is situated (location), pressures (contextual information), values, and resources; b) the school policies inc. LA Government; c) the context of a specific school—its goals, resources, and administrative strategies; d) the individual ideas and attributes of the teachers involved; and e) the essence of the pupil population are all examples of such variables. Taba's (1962) model supports the factors identified in the literature examined. In comparing both Tyler's and Taba's models of curriculum development, Tyler's model is somewhat administrative and to an extent is about a means to an end. However, although Tyler's (1949) model may have been over-prescriptive, it was valuable in developing clarity of thinking through four questions that act as a guide to the model and for communicating transparent outcomes (evaluation) resulting from the learning goals and learning experiences. By way of contrast, Taba's (1962) curriculum model keenly focused on how teachers should play an integral role in curriculum development, which is clearly seen in her seven steps of curriculum development. Taba's (1962) focus on teachers' role in curriculum development is echoed in the work of Young (1998) and Alexander

(2009). Both Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962) include many of the same components in their curriculum models, for example, organisational aspects, selection of specific learning experiences and the importance of evaluation. Taba (1962) however, puts far more emphasis on the *process* of the seven steps and, to reiterate, the importance of teacher input than Tyler (1949) because it is teachers who have the daily face-to-face contact with pupils. Therefore, Taba's (1962) inductive approach involving teachers in curriculum development from the very start of the process provides them with an opportunity to develop ecological agency (ecological agency is developed through working with colleagues and making collective decisions) (Biesta 2012). This allows teachers who are involved in curriculum development, to become aware of the factors that influence curriculum design and content. This will be discussed further in the findings (see p. 146). Following on from the work of Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962), there emerged further curriculum models that grew out of different educational contexts and were based on, for example, subject centred designs, learner-centred designs, spiral, integrated, inquiry/problem-based, experiential frameworks.

In considering both the product and process models for curriculum development, a tension exists between the two models, as the product model focuses on the 'finished product' far more than the learning experience, whilst conversely, the process model looks at how learning happens, what pupils are thinking and how the learning will impact on their future learning development. Therefore, it is suggested that no single model of curriculum development is ideal and would suit all schools. Further to this, it is contended that curriculum models are not to be regarded as some type of recipe to be followed. However, the advantages of working with a curriculum model can enable cohesion and clarity in the process of curriculum development. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009), concur with Taba (1962) and suggest that the technical usefulness of curriculum models may overlook factors such as the values and personal attitudes and

knowledge of the pupils for whom the curriculum is intended. Further to this, the way in which some curricular models benefit adults' purposes over pupils' needs, may be indicative of an educational system that is linked to the contemporary demand for outcomes-driven evidence (Wood and Hedges, 2016). Therefore, demonstrating that a curriculum is affected by the context within which it sits, it is indicative of the adage, it is not what a school can do for a child, but what a child can do for a school. The common thread is that all curriculum models embody a position on a range of highly pertinent considerations which include aims, links between subjects and the relative positioning of pupils and teachers. In considering curriculum models and the pros and cons of them, either are highly focused on government standards or take more of a child centred approach to curriculum development. Clearly, there is a dichotomy that exists between the two models. Each section of this literature review leads us towards considering where this leaves schools and how it relates to this research. The next section reflects on what it means for academy schools.

2.7 Where Does This Leave Academy Schools?

When contemplating the approaches to curriculum development in primary academy schools, it is necessary to reflect on the exposure to an open marketplace where parents/carers can choose which school they want their child to attend. These decisions generally involve considering performativity measures. Therefore, some school leaders analyse the best approaches to curriculum development which can lead to a route of 'factory line principles,' an approach encouraged by some leaders who have identified it as the most productive process for staff to use in order to achieve high stakes outcomes (Noble, 1977). When schools use this type of approach, they ultimately achieve what the government desires (Ball, 2012). When a top-down model

is employed, the power and autonomy that teachers have at classroom level starts to transfer to a system that is controlling and bureaucratic (Mc Neil, 2000), one which positions teachers at the bottom of a long line of authority due to their accountability against measurable outcomes (Sachs, 2003). This can create a situation whereby teachers may feel demoralised and less inclined to freely use their creativity and intellectual curiosity when it comes to curriculum development. By simply relying on performance indicators to know whether teachers are doing the right thing creates an 'ontology of insecurity' (Ball, 2013). Performativity focuses teachers on ensuring pupils' progress and attainment are on track because they are no longer required to have a rationale for their practice (Ball, 2003) apart from reaching those performance targets. Since the changes in the inspection framework (Ofsted) in 2016, there has been a resurgence in curriculum development with a rationale as to its contents and structure. It is contended that since this time many schools have been compelled to review their curricula to ensure it is compliant with inspection (Ofsted) expectations. However, it is suggested that it is good practice to review a school's curriculum on a regular basis to ensure it is real and relevant to the pupils it serves. The consideration teachers and leaders have to make in regard to the decision regarding content and design in terms of developing the school's curriculum is complex as they need to decide what knowledge is supposed to be taught. This is a considerable responsibility deciding what is the 'most worthy' knowledge to be taught as Beyer and Apple (1998) have expressed (see p. 79). Therefore, it is apparent from the reviewed literature, that the most likely choice of content for a primary academy school curriculum is heavily dominated by generally the most dominant group imposed by society. Bearing this in mind, it is no surprise that academies are heavily influenced by government initiatives, such as the NC (2013), identified as high-stakes knowledge by Fisk, (1998). For

schools it is important for schools to consider when social changes occur, curriculum changes also need to occur (Young, 1971).

The autonomy afforded to academy schools through legislation (Academies Act, 2010) in relation to writing their own curricula, provides an opportunity to meld the convictions of the school to meet pupils' 'needs' through the school's curriculum. Through the Academies Act (2010), the government has expected academy schools' standards to rise in core subjects, as this was one of the fundamental aims of the academisation programme (Brundrett and Duncan, 2010).

Curriculum development and innovation may enable teachers to have increased feelings of worth through the development of ecological agency because teachers are central to curriculum development, its intent, its implementation, and the impact it has on improving pupils' knowledge. From the literature, it seems that the role of curriculum developer enables teachers to carve out new intellectual identities which can have enormous benefits when it comes to day-to-day planning, delivery and indeed to teacher morale.

The government is often blamed by school leaders and teachers for its policies, but a blame culture is not helpful or productive. Alexander (2010a) suggests that it is all too easy for teachers and schools to blame the government for issues around professional behaviours such as their expertise and resourcefulness (p. 255). Alexander makes a pressing case for less central prescription, and micromanagement (Alexander, 2010a) and that accountability systems are adjusted, so curriculum innovation is encouraged (Brundrett and Duncan, 2010, p. 5).

It appears that there has been a shift to re-regulate the education system, which has resulted in less obvious regulation (Ball, 2013). This is a type of control de-control

(Du Gay, 1996). The DfE's (2010, p. 40) admits NC (2014) could potentially limit and academy schools will need to innovate if they use the NC. However, despite a school's designation, the NC (2014) provides teachers with an opportunity to innovate part of their curricula. This has not been included in previous national frameworks. Upon reflection, it may be the case that neoliberalism simply serves to advance conservative politics rather than act as part of a democratic process in education (Au, 2011a, p. 40).

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review has focused on a number of themes identified in the introduction of this chapter, with the aim of situating and justifying the importance of this research. From the identified themes, factors have been discussed that could impact on school-based curriculum development. This includes the influences teachers bring to the role as curriculum developers. Within each of the themes at the start of this chapter, a range of variables were identified and formed into sub-questions (see below). In the literature review, several authorities such as Priestly and Biesta (2015) have advocated teacher involvement in the curriculum development process in primary academy schools. Therefore, it has become increasingly important to gain teachers' perceptions from their first-hand experience of the factors that influence the curriculum development process particularly as the government's agenda is to convert all remaining maintained schools to academies over the next few years. The autonomy afforded to academy schools raises the likelihood of teachers becoming involved in the curriculum development process. The sub-questions that have arisen through the literature review form part of the methodology chapter which discusses their synthesis

into the interview questions (ref. Appendix E for interview schedule p. 208) and enabled the formulation of the research question. The variables identified in this literature review have provided a conceptual framework for this research.

Sub-questions arising from the variables in the literature review:

1. Do primary academy schools take advantage of the Academies Act, (2010) in relation to curriculum autonomy?

2. What factors influence teachers' perceptions when involved in curriculum development? (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)

3. Does the location and context affect curriculum development in primary academy schools? (Fotheringham et al. 2012)

4. How has government policy affected the development of the school's curriculum? (Sheerman, 2008)

5. Has testing (SATs) constrained the development of the school's curriculum? (OECD, 2012)

6. Do all teaching staff have the opportunity to become involved in curriculum development? (Leverett, 2000)

7. Is the academy's curriculum personalised for children? (Priestly, Minty and Eager, 2014)

8. Do the teachers work with each other teachers and leaders to develop their school's curriculum? (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)

9. Does the headteacher/leaders support teacher involvement in curriculum development? (Male 2012)

10. What documentation has been used to guide curriculum development? (Male 2012; Priestly, Minty, and Eager 2014)

11. Do teachers feel responsible for the curriculum they are developing? (Priestly, 2011)

12. What other contributory factors affect curriculum development?

13. Do you feel that accountability measures affect the curriculum? (Male 2012, Priestly, 2011; Priestly et al., 2012; Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012

14. Does the academy follow the N.C.?

15. Do you think teachers' influencing the development of the curriculum is important? (Male, 2012, Brundrett and Duncan, 2010)

16. Do teachers feel confident about their expertise in terms of curriculum design? (Alexander, 2010)

The following chapter examines the methodology used to undertake this research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question and aims, the philosophical, methodological, and ethical considerations applicable to the research, and the data collection research strategy and method used.

3.1 Research Question and Aims

This research seeks to respond to the following investigation into, 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in developing their respective school's curriculum?'

My interest in this research arose through working with maintained schools undertaking a curriculum review project in 2015. Whilst involved in the project, an increasing interest developed as to the factors that would influence how primary academy schools developed their curricula in the light of changes in government legislation (Academies Act, 2010), given their curriculum autonomy. In order to conduct the research, four primary academy coastal schools serving areas of high deprivation were chosen. The location of the schools became important for this research as this acted as a variable in terms of school context. This is because studies such as Ovenden-Hope and Passy's in 2015 have shown that coastal schools do not generally do as well as non-coastal schools in terms of standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The demographics of the schools being coastal schools and the issues that arise from this classification suggests that there are additional considerations for these schools when developing their curricula. Particularly as the

schools in the research sample serve areas of high deprivation and as such inequality is prevalent due to a significant number of pupils being socially disadvantaged within each school. Therefore, through the themes identified in the literature review a number of variables arose which created sub-questions that were relevant to this research (see below). The references to the authorities indicated at the end of some of the sub-questions serve the purpose of identifying the source for these particular questions which informs the data gathering process (Yin, 2014). The sub-questions shown below are related to the main research question and also determined the formulation of the questions used in the interview schedule. The sub-questions are as follows:

1. Do primary academy schools take advantage of the Academies Act, (2010) in relation to curriculum autonomy?

2. What factors influence teachers' perceptions when involved in curriculum development? (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)

3. Does the location and context affect curriculum development in primary academy schools? (Fotheringham et al. 2012)

4. How has government policy affected the development of the school's curriculum? (Sheerman, 2008)

5. Has testing (SATs) constrained the development of the school's curriculum. (OECD, 2012)

6. Do all teaching staff have the opportunity to become involved in curriculum development?

7. Is the academy's curriculum personalised for children? (Priestly, Minty and Eager, 2014)

8. Do the teachers work with each other teachers and leaders to develop their school's curriculum? (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)

9. Does the headteacher/leaders support teacher involvement in curriculum development? (Male 2012)

10. What documentation has been used to guide curriculum development? (Male 2012; Priestly, Minty, and Eager 2014)

11. Do teachers feel responsible for the curriculum they are developing? (Priestly, 2011)

12. What other contributory factors affect curriculum development?

13. Do teachers feel that accountability measures affect the curriculum? (Male 2012, Priestly, 2011; Priestly et al., 2012; Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012

14. Do the academies follow the N.C.?

15. Do you think teachers influencing the development of the curriculum is important? (Male, 2012, Brundrett and Duncan, 2010)

16. Do teachers feel confident about their expertise in terms of curriculum design? (Alexander, 2010)

The sub-questions enabled identification of three broad themes, the most prominent being the factors that influenced curriculum development. The least prominent theme was meeting the educational needs of pupils. This is not to say it wasn't a key factor in the research. Therefore, it was retained as a key theme because it is central to the core purpose of schooling. The prominent theme relating to factors that influenced curriculum development led to the formulation of the research question: 'What are the factors that teachers in our primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum?'

Three broad themes in their own right formulated the interview schedule (ref. Appendix E p.208)

Theme 1: Factors influencing curriculum development
What factors influence teachers' perceptions when involved in curriculum development? (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)   Does the location and context affect curriculum development in primary academy schools? (Fotheringham et al. 2012)   How has government policy affected the development of the school's curriculum? (Sheerman, 2008)   Has testing (SATs) constrained the development of the school's curriculum. (OECD, 2012)   What documentation has been used to guide curriculum development? (Male 2012; Priestly, Minty, and Eager 2014)   What other contributory factors affect curriculum development?   Do you feel that accountability measures affect the curriculum? (Male 2012, Priestly, 2011; Priestly et al., 2012; Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012   Does the academy follow the N.C.?   Do you think teachers influencing the development of the curriculum is important? (Male, 2012, Brundrett and Duncan, 2010)

Theme 2: Teacher involvement in curriculum development
Do all teaching staff have the opportunity to become involved in curriculum development? (Leverett, 2000)   Do the teachers work with each other teachers and leaders to develop their school's curriculum?   (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012)   Does the headteacher/leaders support teacher involvement in curriculum development? (Male 2012)   Do teachers feel responsible for the curriculum they are developing? (Priestly, 2011)   Do teachers feel confident about their expertise in terms of curriculum design? (Alexander, 2010)

Theme 3: Meeting pupils curriculum needs
Is the academy's curriculum personalised for children? (Priestly, Minty and Eager, 2014)

The sub-questions identified from the literature review were synthesised into three broad and open interview questions. They were as follows:

Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?

Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?

Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?

In formulating the interview questions the work of Baxter and Jack (1994) was drawn upon for consideration in terms of their comments that the questions they posed themselves about their work was whether their research 'was about the individual, the programme or the process, or the differences between each primary school?' (ibid. p. 546). Taking their questions into consideration for this research the focus of this research involved individual teachers in each of the sample schools. In establishing the interview questions posed to the teachers who were involved in the curriculum development process, the intention was that teachers could reflect upon their own personal experiences to identify the factors that influenced the development of the curriculum in their respective schools. In ascertaining teachers' perceptions, I had to acknowledge that those perceptions would to some extent be affected by, for example, their experience, social and cultural conditioning (personal assumptions) or indeed filtering (human beings often accept only that which is understandable or of interest). In terms of this research, the teachers were all employed in coastal schools serving areas of high deprivation. Having conducted the literature review, I was keen to take the opportunity to examine teachers as agents of change in relation to curriculum

development in their schools (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2013). Additionally, I wanted to augment some of Reay's (2017) findings regarding education inequalities and Biesta's (2015) work on educational systems and teacher agency concerning curriculum development. The next section explores research methodology and the methods I adopted in my work.

3.2 Qualitative Research

In determining a coherent research design that exemplifies both the ontological and epistemological research commitments, a qualitative approach 'affords detailed and deep understandings to be developed' (Amos, 2014, p. 93). It also preserves the integrity of the research for which it is employed' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 20). A qualitative approach was selected for this research because the nature of the evidence to be gained through human social interaction was utilised to obtain participants' perceptions on the factors that influenced curriculum development in four schools. As opposed to a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach was preferred for this research using interpretivism to focus on causal processes and for understanding how things occur. A qualitative approach is committed to analysing a range of data rather than relying upon a disjointed evidence base (Newby, 2010).

In considering the research to be undertaken, I focused upon the type of data collection that would provide the information I would need to answer the research question (Mahoney and Vincent, 2014). This supports the premise that 'particular choices should depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it' (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). Such pragmatism is essential and aligns with the fundamental understanding that 'quality in research practice has more to do with

choosing the right research tools for the task than with methods confined to specific traditions' (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 22).

3.3 Philosophical and Methodological Considerations

When reviewing the ontological nature or reality of the social phenomena being investigated in this research, the philosophical stance lying behind the methodology (Crotty, 1998, p. 66) played a crucial role in informing the theoretical standpoint of the research. An interpretivist methodological approach was adopted because it enabled the social, collaborative process of bringing about meaning and knowledge (Kell, in Allen, 2004) from the participants' data within the four sample schools. Interpretivist research methods considered included focus groups, interviews, and research diaries. All these methods permit the recording of several possible variables. Given this, I chose interviews to be the best fit for the research I undertook. The case study strategy allowed for the desired flexibility in exploring the factors that influenced curriculum development in the four sample schools. Interviews were deemed the most appropriate method for collecting the research data as they allowed for flexibility in the discussion whilst capturing evidence from the participants regarding their schools.

Both meaning and knowledge were gained from the participants in relation to the research question. They were able to provide data as they were able to interpret their school environment because, ontologically, the participants possess both reason and choice-making abilities (Hammersley, 2012). In this research, it is acknowledged that the participants' 'values' and what they deemed 'facts' were integral to the outcomes and would inevitably affect how the participants understood and responded to the

interview questions. It was important for me to consider two crucial points when using interviews as a research method. Firstly, that participant interpretation could lead to bias because it is located in both the event and the individual (Cousin, 2006; Elliott and Lukes, 2008). Secondly, there was also a likelihood that understanding could be biased because 'interpretivism, by its nature, promotes the value of qualitative data in pursuit of knowledge' (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). Returning to the question of interpretivist methodology, there are drawbacks to using it that must be highlighted. The main disadvantage of interpretivism is related to its largely subjective nature that is open to researcher bias. Primary data generated by an interpretivist approach cannot be generalised since it is heavily impacted by the personal perceptions and values held by those involved in the research. Given this, the trustworthiness or reliability of the data is, to some extent, undermined. Nevertheless, despite the drawbacks of an interpretivist approach to this research, it is reasonable to assume that it can be associated with a high level of validity because the data generated tends to be authentic.

3.4 Research Methods

A qualitative approach was chosen to this research, a case study strategy, employing interviewing as the research data gathering method. This section explains and justifies the case study research strategy and the interview research method used in this research which informed its philosophical underpinning.

3.5 Case Study Strategy

An interpretivist case study approach was deemed desirable due to its flexible research approach. For example, a case study strategy was chosen for the investigation because it could be applied to the four sample schools where individual interviews were held with the participant teachers. The strategy would be useful because it worked well with individual participants that would enable a clear understanding of the subjective world of human experience (Stake, 1995; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Yin, 2014), whilst not searching for general truths (Newby, 2010). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest that case studies are suited to interpretive methodologies. According to these authors, the way case studies focus on participants' perceptions of events means they excel at allowing researchers to investigate and understand the subject being explored (Newton, 2010). Therefore, it was essential that as the researcher, case study participants felt empowered to tell their stories by developing a positive relationship with the researcher (Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Hence, it was important for me to establish a rapport with each of the teachers so that they were at ease and able to share their stories. With this in mind, introductions and the preamble to the questions being asked were important. This helped to dispel any nervousness the participants may have had about the interview process. By listening to participants' versions of their 'realities', the participants' actions were better understood (Robottom and Hart, 1993).

Undeniably, being a novice as a social world researcher, case study helped support the facilitation of a detailed and intensive piece of research (Hagan, 2006). Case studies facilitate exploration of a complex current social phenomenon within its context (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014), creating a 'case' while maintaining a holistic and real-world perspective on a real-world problem involving contextual conditions. These

were evident in this case study research (Yin and Davies, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Yin, 2014). I found this particularly appropriate when scrutinising participants' association with the development process of their school's curriculum. I acknowledge that such an association is understood within this study to be affected by contextualised working conditions (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2013). As an example of this, through my professional experience, I have worked with teachers who worked in coastal schools serving areas of high deprivation. They strive to provide at least a good education for the pupils they serve by looking at a range of curriculum experiences they may never encounter in their young lives.

One of the sample schools took the whole school to a London theatre because most of their pupils would never have had that kind of experience. Although funding can be an issue for these types of experiences, the Pupil Premium grant can support some of the costs. The quality of pupils' work, especially in writing, improved due to the first-hand curriculum experiences they had been given through the theatre visit. However, whilst this type of experience is pleasurable for most involved (staff and pupils), there can be another side to life in school, particularly in schools serving areas of high deprivation, where, if not careful, a price can be paid on a more personal level for teachers/staff. There is a need for staff to develop resilient attitudes to deal with some of the pupils' socio-economic circumstances, alongside a range of complex needs that may affect their pupils' learning on a daily basis. Dealing with a variety of challenging situations could have an adverse effect on staff well-being. I have found working as an L.A. adviser that the more collaborative school teams are, the stronger they tend to support vulnerable pupils and their families in terms of their well-being and education. One of the key components that help schools provide a good education is a curriculum

that the schools have developed. Schools can weave their curriculum like a tapestry to incorporate learning experiences that pupils may never encounter in their young lives. It is suggested that a curriculum filled with rich experiences can address some of the social inequalities in their lives within an inequitable education system. The following section explores the 'case' as a research strategy.

3.6 The Case

Case study is a flexible research strategy (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013), defined by an interest in an individual case (Stake, 2008). Defining 'a case' is challenging because a wide range of foci can qualify from accounts of a broader range of experiences. For example, teachers working together in groups (Armstrong, 1980), to one specific interaction (Woods, 1993). However, Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 58) suggest that 'a case study' is a detailed examination of one setting, one single subject, one single depository of documents or one particular event. Arguably, the size of the case is perhaps not fundamentally significant. Instead, the bounded, specific, and unique focus is fundamental to its definition as a 'case' (Stake, 2008). Within this research, both the case and the unit of analysis are primary academy coastal school teachers. This clear delineation binds the case, which is important to determine as a reasonable scope of data collection (Baxter and Jack, 2008) and distinguishes the subject from the context (Yin, 2014). This research aligns with Yin's (2014) model of a multiple case design with embedded units of analysis because it utilises the sample schools as participant sources; each academy school provided four participants. Using multiple case studies from multiple sites offers stronger evidence to support the findings (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Similarly, it allows documentation

of multiple perspectives and, as such, the evidence is considered to be both robust and reliable (Herriott and Firestone, 1983; Baxter and Jack, 2008).

The case study informed the approach to my research. It was instrumental in gaining insight from the participants' perceptions of the factors that affected their school curriculum development processes. Interviews enabled me to gain insight and facilitate understanding of this central issue (Stake,2008).

The case must illuminate the research question, which is specific and indicates that it is more likely that the case study will stay within feasible limits (Yin, 2014). In this research, the case illuminated the question by making the topic (curriculum development) explicit. The research question should not be considered without knowing each school's context (Baxter and Jack, 2008) as it is within each of the sample school settings, that teachers' decision-making skills were developed and utilised. The case study strategy applied to this research built decisively upon existing concerns of theorists and researchers (Reay, 2017; Biesta, 2010, Alexander, 2010) and differed from an intrinsic design that would aim to develop a 'thick description' (see Denzin, 1989, p. 33) of the case's issues, contexts, and interpretations (Stake, 2008). Ultimately, this research constitutes an explanatory case study (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013) because it intends to explore the variables that influenced curriculum development in the sample schools. Additionally, the research examines teachers' perceptions regarding the factors that affect the curriculum development process, their personal involvement in it, and whether they consider the developed curriculum meets the needs of its pupils, which arises from the interplay between participants' individual capacities and contextualised working conditions (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013).

3.7 Data Collection

This section details and justifies the interview process as a data-gathering method in the research. I used a digital tape-recorder to record the interviews after participants had given their permission for data to be captured using this tool. This proved useful for data analysis because it helped me to garner a 'complete and accurate account' (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013, p. 351) of the participants' perceptions. Supplementary notes complemented the interview transcripts. The sixteen participants were each interviewed once, and the average length of each interview was thirty minutes. Nevertheless, the solitary interviews conducted could be considered a possible weakness of this research because of the way in which the evidence emerged and varied according to individual participants and the respective school's context. However, the semi-structured questions were designed to gather evidence that had occurred over time in relation to each school's curriculum development process. The optimum conditions for this to occur were the schools' chosen environments. Such questioning also meant that participants were presented with an opportunity to self-reflect on teacher agency.

Although a pilot study was not implemented, the discussion around the interview questions took place with two headteachers who were not involved in the research. This ensured an appropriately high standard of questioning (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, the interview questions were then crafted to guarantee they targeted the research question but with enough flexibility for teachers to share their wider perceptions. The opportunity to discuss the questions with experienced professionals who had undertaken the curriculum development process in their own schools gave me confidence in terms of the robustness of the interview questions. As a single researcher, I was aware of potential bias throughout (Bell, 2010). Counter to this,

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semi-structured questioning assisted in providing the participants with additional opportunities to share their perceptions. A recommended method suggested by theorists, such as Yin (2014) and Carse (2015, p. 313), is to use prompts during interviews that can help stimulate recall and limit inaccuracies. In this research, participants shared some of their medium-term planning and photographs during the interviews to supplement their commentary. This introduced insights into the implicit beliefs of the participants and the relationship between their opinions and the actions taken as they went about the process of curriculum development (Meade and McMenamin, 1992). It is acknowledged that participants' production of such resources/documentation would be subject to 'biased selectivity' (Yin, 2014, p. 106), since the participants may have only supplied planning, they were confident with and ultimately presented a specific and perhaps limited 'reality' (Ritchie et al., 2014). However, it is reasonable to assume that the non-judgemental nature of the interview process meant that the participants could limit any concerns they may have had about the interviews so that the impact of biased selectivity proved negligible. Essentially, as there are many variables operating in a single case (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), using a variety of data sources permitted me to explore multiple issues through several lenses. This allowed for 'multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood' (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p. 544). For example, in this research, it is teachers' perceptions that have identified what factors influenced the curriculum development process in each of their schools. Baxter and Jack (2008) concur, when data strands are interwoven, the resulting convergence strengthens the findings. Thus, the findings within each sample school had the potential of identifying some factors, similar to each other, that affected curriculum development. However, the convergence of results could only provide findings in relation to the sample schools because each school was treated as a separate case. To avoid being overwhelmed by

the sheer volume of data, I established a systematic and carefully managed process of data collection.

I wanted the participants to feel at ease during the interviews, so I decided that a brief, general conversation before addressing the interview questions would be a good way of achieving this. The conversation between myself and the participants prior to asking semi-structured questions helped to create an atmosphere where they felt comfortable to share their perceptions. The interviews were relatively informal, as the process was introduced in a manner that encouraged participants to share their perceptions on the factors that affect curriculum development in their own schools. The interviews remained flexible enough to allow for a natural conversation to occur (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013) to elicit the participants' stories, i.e., participants' understanding of the curriculum process and the factors that influenced that process. This approach enabled me to gather a deep insight into participants' perceptions that other methods, questionnaires for example, would not have done (Wellington 2006, p. 1). However, an inherent risk of relying upon the participants' self-reported stories and experiences was that they could be 'filtered' in a way that matched perceived interview expectations (Newby, 2010). Clandinin and Connelly (1996) suggest that teachers' lived stories are somehow secret and that 'cover stories' are needed to meet those interview expectations. To mitigate this I adopted, insofar as possible, a 'neutral and non-judgemental' interviewing style (Hagger et al., 2008, p. 160) to enable an atmosphere conducive to gathering reliable data. Interviews were carried out in participants' professional environments, so they were in familiar surroundings where they could feel at ease (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013). Throughout the interview process, the participants seemed comfortable and could

voice anything they considered relevant. This was integral to the interview process and replaced a final sweeper question at the end of it (Drever, 2006, p. 27).

3.8 Sampling

The type of primary schools best suited to the research was of prime consideration. I decided that primary academy coastal schools were the most representative because they would provide a rich seam of contextual data (Newby, 2010, p. 59). The disapplication from the NC via the Academies Act (2010) for the sample schools contextualisation was an important factor for the research when compared to state-maintained schools that are legally obliged to address the NC (DfE, 2013a), albeit within the context of a wider school curriculum of their discretion. As discussed in Chapter 1, the sample schools were selected for this research because the participants were part of a rapidly growing sector (DfE, 2016b), which was at the heart of the DfE's priority of developing, self-improving, and sustaining schools, and was evidenced by the threat of forced academisation for 'underperforming' schools (DfE, 2016b). As the participants' contextual working conditions were a significant factor in this research, it was considered prudent to gather a range of data from a number of them working within the same context because this data would illuminate the same contextual working conditions from varied perceptions/perspectives. The contextual working conditions were relatively stable within each school, which helped to isolate and reduce the influence of other possible factors, such as high teacher turnover.

The approach that I took to the research constituted a purposeful sampling which was 'deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 157). This is because the sample school headteachers acted as gatekeepers

and thus identified teachers agreeing to be involved in the research. An additional element to the research was that primary academy schools were chosen for the investigation due to changes in government legislation and because they were coastal schools that tended not to perform as well as non-coastal schools. Schools that had developed their curriculum within 9-12 months prior to the research were selected because of the recent legislative development and the piloting of their curriculum.

Initially each sample school was systematically approached to participate in this research either by email or letter. Both mediums outlined the research, aims, the participants' involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time (Appendix B p.204). Contact details were given for my supervisor and for me if any of the schools had any queries or further questions about the nature of the research. The initial approach to each school was followed up after a few days to gauge interest, answer any questions, and make a discussion appointment if appropriate. All four participating schools presented no issues or concerns with initiating the research. Headteachers were the gatekeepers and were central to the success of the process. They did not obstruct the research and demonstrated a keen interest to endorse it (Hennick, Hutter and Bailey, 2011; Savin-Baden and Howell-Major, 2013).

Four sample schools and sixteen participant teachers were considered an appropriate sample size to enable exploration and analysis in depth appropriate for an interpretivist approach (Hennick, Hutter and Bailey, 2011). I did not choose the teacher sample. Instead, each headteacher selected the teacher participants. Given that, the possibility of headteacher bias in their selection of the participating teachers is acknowledged as a significant variable in the data obtained in this research. The sample size and choice of participant teachers within each school meant possible disruption to the school's general teaching and learning activities when participants

were removed from class to be interviewed. Indeed, there were sufficient teacher participants to subsume any individuals' idiosyncrasies, and it was feasible for me as researcher acting alone to undertake the interviews. Given the processes I had undertaken to organise the research sample, my supervisor and I deemed it 'fit for purpose' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 161). All four sample schools had held academy status for varying lengths of time, ranging from approximately two years to over five years. Additionally, the participant teachers were a diverse sample who had the potential to produce rich data sets and to enable me to research detailed responses to the interview questions.

3.9 Primary Academy Coastal School Profiles

All participants were fully qualified and had taught pupils in either Key Stage (KS)1 (ages 5-7 years) or KS2 (ages 7-11 years) classrooms. All had previously been involved in curriculum development. However due to changes in government legislation regarding the curriculum for academies and the implementation of the NC for England (2014), each participant had reviewed their school's curriculum to ensure they were meeting the needs of the pupils in their schools. Parents' views were not sought for this research due to time limitations.

3.9.1 Academy School 1

The academy was larger than an average primary school and was sponsored by a Multi-Academy Trust. The school intake was primary age children aged 5-11 years and was non-selective. The school was located approximately two kilometres from the sea on the edge of a coastal town. It was a two-form entry primary school and served

the local population. There was a large proportion of pupils who had English as an Additional Language (EAL) above the national average. The school had approximately 503 pupils on roll. The annexed nursery took children from 2 years of age, thus benefiting local children and families. Most children transferred within the school when they were due to access full-time education. The school served a community with high deprivation levels, and so a breakfast club and after school wrap-around care were provided. There were a significant number of pupils who had free school meals.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils was well above average. Just under half of the pupils were from White British backgrounds. A quarter of the pupils were from other White backgrounds, and a quarter had White Roma heritage. The Ofsted Report (2018) stated: 'The proportion of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language is well above average,' and, 'The proportion of pupils who have SEN and disabilities is above the national average.' Many of these pupils were at a very early stage of English learning when they joined the school. A much-higher than-average proportion of pupils left the school during each school year. Mobility was high in school. For example, in the 2016/17 academic year, around 100 pupils left the school, which was countered by a similar number of new entrants. The school received a 'Good' inspection judgement on the 27th of April 2018.

3.9.2 Headteacher Profile

The school's headteacher was originally employed at this school as a class teacher. Over the years, the headteacher had been promoted within the leadership team and had undertaken various roles, such as the school's deputy headteacher, the Key Stage 2

manager, and class teacher. The appointment to the post of headteacher was made after the school became an academy.

3.9.3 Participant Profiles

The class teachers (participants) who were involved in the research possessed a range of experience.

Participant 1 had six years teaching experience in Key Stage 1. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching Year 2. The participant was responsible for Art teaching across the school.

Participant 2 had eight years teaching experience in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the time of this research, the participant was teaching in Year 4. The participant was responsible for History teaching across the school.

Participant 3 had one and a half years teaching experience and had completed their NQT year at the school. At the time of the research, this participant was teaching in Year 5. The participant was responsible for science teaching across the school.

Participant 4 had nine years' teaching experience and led on Mathematics for the school. At the time of the research, this participant was teaching in Year 5.

The interviews were conducted three weeks after teachers had completed a review of the school's curriculum. The interviews took place in a room adjacent to the headteacher's office. The environment was conducive for interviewing. Each candidate was asked if they were comfortable about sharing their perceptions. The headteacher was not present at any of the interviews. The participants shared medium-

term plans and photographs with me that helped them reflect on their curriculum development process.

3.9.4 Academy School 2

The academy was a larger-than-average mixed primary school sponsored by a Multi-Academy Trust. The school educated pupils from age 4-11 years and was non-selective. Most of the pupils were of White British heritage. The school was located on the edge of a coastal town approximately 3 kilometres from the sea. It was a two-form entry primary school except for Year 4, where there were three classes. The school served the local population. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils with special educational needs and disabilities was well above the national average. There were approximately 391 pupils on roll. The school served a community where there were high deprivation levels and provided a breakfast club and after school clubs. The school received a 'Good' inspection judgement on the 18th of May 2017.

3.9.5 Headteacher Profile

The headteacher of the school had been appointed by the Academy Trust from a non-coastal school. The headteacher had been in the post for three years at the time of the research.

3.9.6 Participant Profiles

The class teachers (participants) who were involved in the research possessed a range of experience.

Participant 1 had five years teaching experience in Key Stage 2. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 4. The participant was responsible for Music teaching across the school.

Participant 2 had fifteen years teaching experience in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At the time of this research, the participant was teaching in Year 3. The participant was responsible for Geography teaching across the school.

Participant 3 had twelve years teaching experience. At the time of research, the participant was teaching in Year 5. The participant was responsible for English teaching across the school.

Participant 4 had three years teaching experience and had joined the school as an NQT. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 1. The participant was responsible for Phonics teaching in Key Stage 1.

The interviews were conducted in an available meeting room. The interview environment was light and airy and conducive to interviewing. Each participant was asked if they were comfortable about sharing their perspectives on curriculum development in the school. The headteacher was not present at any of the interviews. The participants shared some photographs with me that helped them to reflect on the curriculum development process. The school had completed a curriculum review two months before the interviews took place.

3.9.7 Academy School 3

The academy was a larger-than-average mixed primary school sponsored by a Multi-Academy Trust. The school's location was on the edge of a coastal town

approximately 2.5 kilometres from the sea. There were approximately 343 pupils on roll. The school educated pupils from age 4-11 years and was non-selective. The school was two-form entry and served a local population where there was high deprivation. There were slightly more boys than girls at the school. There was an above-national-average number of pupils who came from ethnic minority households. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils had SEN and disabilities. EAL was above the national average. The mobility of pupils was also well above average. The school received an inspection judgement of 'Requires Improvement' on the 10th of November 2017.

3.9.8 Headteacher Profile

The school's headteacher had been appointed by the Academy Trust from another school, which was a coastal school. The headteacher had been in the post for three and a half years at the time of the research.

3.9.9 Participant Profiles

The class teachers (participants) who were involved in the research had a range of experience.

Participant 1 had five years teaching experience in Key Stage 2. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 6. The participant led on Art across the school.

Participant 2 had four years teaching experience in Key Stage 1. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 2. The participant was responsible for Religious Education teaching across the school.

Participant 3 had ten years teaching experience. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 5. The participant was responsible for science teaching across the school.

Participant 4 had sixteen years teaching experience. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 4. The participant was responsible for Mathematics teaching across the school.

The interviews were conducted in the headteacher's office. The headteacher was not present at any of the interviews. The environment was conducive to interviewing, but upon reflection, the researcher realised this might have subconsciously inhibited some participants, even though they had agreed to the interview location. Each participant was asked if they were comfortable about sharing their perspectives on curriculum development in the school. The participants brought some planning to share with me, which helped them reflect on the curriculum development process. The school had completed a curriculum review three months before the interviews took place.

3.9.10 Academy School 4

The academy was a larger-than-average mixed primary school sponsored by a Multi-Academy Trust. The school's location was on the edge of a coastal town approximately 2 kilometres from the sea. There were approximately 483 pupils on roll. There were two classes in Reception and two classes in Years 1 and 2. There were three classes in each of the Key Stage 2-year groups. The school had a Nursery

that provided morning and afternoon sessions. The minimum age of admission was three years. Most pupils were of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils were supported through pupil premium funding, and pupils receiving this funding were above the national average. The proportion of pupils who had SEN and disabilities was above the national average, as was the proportion of pupils with an education, health, and care plan (EHCP). The school served a highly deprived local population. The school received a 'Good' inspection judgement on the 3rd of October 2018.

3.9.11 Headteacher Profile

The school's headteacher had been appointed by the Academy Trust from another school, which was a coastal school. The headteacher had been in post for three years at the time of the research.

3.9.12 Participant Profiles

The class teachers (participants) who were involved in the research had a range of experience.

Participant 1 had three years teaching experience in Key Stage 2. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 3. The participant was responsible for Geography teaching across the school.

Participant 2 had four years teaching experience in Key Stage 2. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 5. The participant was responsible for History teaching across the school.

Participant 3 had seven years teaching experience. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 3. The participant was responsible for the teaching of reading across the school.

Participant 4 had ten years teaching experience. At the time of the research, the participant was teaching in Year 2. The participant was responsible for phonics teaching at Key Stage 1.

The interviews were conducted in the deputy headteacher's (DHT) office. Once again, whilst the interviews were conducted in the DHT office, I realise this could subconsciously have affected the way participants answered the semi-structured questions even though the participants said they were happy with the environment. Neither the deputy headteacher nor the headteacher was present at any of the interviews. The participants bought some planning and photographs to share with me, which helped them reflect on the school's curriculum development process. The school had completed a curriculum review two months before the interviews took place.

3.10 Contextual Summary

The four sample schools' profiles revealed that each school served an area of high deprivation where SEND and disadvantaged pupils were well above national average. The schools were situated in areas of excessive unemployment and limited opportunities for high paid work. Every one of the sample schools had high levels of external agency support for their vulnerable pupils and families. The sample schools involved in the research were confronted with attendance challenges, all of which were below national expectations and, as a result, had introduced several strategies

which included working with the LA attendance officers to try and remedy persistent absence. One headteacher remarked that non-resilient staff affected teacher turnover. Staff training was given in all schools so that staff could deal with the challenges most faced on a daily basis, for example, techniques for volatile situations that involved pupils. It was apparent in the sample schools that staff and pupils' wellbeing was of high importance and contributed to the calm atmospheres found in each of the schools at the time of the research. All the sample schools employed robust management systems and a consistent school development approach. Headteachers and teachers' profiles varied from school to school, which was recognised as having a direct effect on the curriculum development process along with the schools' contexts. The schools' headteachers had varied experience in their role. The sample schools were comparatively local to one another.

3.11 Validity and Trustworthiness of this Research

The validity and trustworthiness of quantitative research have been debated and criticised as lacking in quality. Firstly, quality research is a narrative outline of personal perceptions, which are highly susceptible to researchers' prejudices and secondly, it has no reproductive ability therefore another researcher may arrive at a different conclusion (Mays and Pope, 1995). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Mays and Pope (1992) have explored various methods to guarantee quality in qualitative research (Mays and Pope, 2000). A researcher's influence on a study's findings or a researcher's neutrality are among the four criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (how much the researcher has influenced the results or a researcher's neutrality) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In relation to this, criteria were used to guarantee the rigour and quality of this research

project to ensure that my claims were credible. A variety of triangulation techniques were used as part of the validation process. I collected data from teachers (participants) interviews in the four primary academy coastal schools by using a tape recorder. Although additional notes were made in regard to context, background, and teachers' roles. This information was purely used to provide a background on the teachers (participants) involved in the research but played no part in the data analysis. As a result of evaluating data at an early stage of my fieldwork to produce preliminary results, I achieved "referential adequacy" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In order to confirm my early results, I used the data gathered and analysed findings over time, which allowed themes to emerge from the data. This allowed some levels of comparability to ensure questions were providing a platform from which the teachers (participants) could share their experiences and professional knowledge (Mays and Pope, 1995; Barbour, 2001). The sample of participants were chosen by the headteachers of each primary academy school to take part in the research which prevented any bias from myself as the researcher, but potentially incur bias from the headteachers. To overcome this possibility, as the researcher I requested that the sample of participants chosen for the investigation should be a random sample (Mays and Pope, 1995; Barbour, 2001). Transparency in the process was essential for it to be considered as high quality (Mays and Pope, 2000; Mays and Pope, 1995; Given, 2008). In order to guarantee the trustworthiness of the analyses, this research provides a clear and explicit explanation of the techniques and processes utilised to gather the data as well as the manner in which interpretations and conclusions were reached. In this context, 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba,1985) was used to provide a comprehensive account of the fieldwork that explains how this research was undertaken in a particular environment, along with the research method (Waitzkin, 1990). Reflectivity makes less sense in a superficial explanation (without

transparency), but in return, reflexivity successfully promotes transparency (Hiles, and Ermák 2007). By carefully choosing and utilising data collecting and analysis techniques then critically reflecting on my own position as a researcher, every attempt was made to mitigate any potential issues that may have arisen. As a last step, "member checking" or "respondent validation" method was utilised in order to maximise the validity and reliability of my research results (Barbour, 2001). As previously mentioned, I sent the results of my research to the participants via the headteachers allowing them to compare the results to what they had said in the interviews (Harper, and Cole, 2012) and critically reflect on what they had shared. Participants responded via their headteachers who confirmed through a telephone call that both the commentary and results were genuine (Creswell, and Poth, 2016). There was positive feedback which aided in supporting the validity of this research.

Transferability

In the case of this study, transferability could be applied, and external validity could be achieved through another school using the findings, given a particular setting, or set of circumstances or individuals. Yet, as there are only four sample schools involved in this research and sixteen research participants, this would make generalisations challenging. (Barbour, 2001; Given, 2008). Via purposive sampling, one is able to consider the limitations and delimitations of these results and the characteristics that can be controlled to define the scope of this research. For example, research questions or population, while taking into account the selection of participants. This allows readers to assess the research's transferability to the real world (Given, 2008). The use of purposive sampling and comprehensive explanations of techniques and data processing have provided a platform from which elements of this research can be transferred, given a particular set of circumstances. Counter to

this critics' claim that in the absence of statistical methods used in case studies, it is impossible to generalise results from a single case study research to other settings (Kennedy, 1979). As an example, when Galileo selected metal and feathers for acceleration in free fall to eliminate the weight of the items, Flyvbjerg (2006) addressed this misconception and explained that in order to generalise, it is necessary to make very smart selections when sampling for case studies (e.g., Galileo's smart choice of feather and metal as opposed to a wide variety of materials for his experiment is noteworthy (Flyvbjerg, 2006). To maximise the transferability of this research, headteachers from each school chose a random sample of teachers who had a variety of disciplines. The sample schools' contexts were chosen to fit the location identified in the research question (coastal schools). The logical consequence to this is that while many instances allow for data analysis across cases, it does not allow for the same detailed description of a rare occurrence, and as such contribute to investigations of single cases which can add to knowledge (Cavaye, 1996; Yin, 2009).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

This section addresses how adherence to an ethical approach contributed to the quality of this research. In Spring 2015, Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) granted ethics clearance prior to data collection for this research. The guidance was provided by the University and aided the development of an ethical framework for the research, essentially summarised in the University's policy on ethical research that stipulated guidance when undertaking research with human participants (Canterbury Christ Church University: CCCU, 2006). In summary, the principles were that research be conducted within an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values and quality of educational research and academic freedom.

Ethical principles are important in any research that involves human beings. Regarding this research there are two key reasons why adherence to ethical research principles is important to note. Qualitative researchers will inevitably encounter some ethical dilemmas because of close contact with their participants (Robson, 2002; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). For similar reasons, interviews are considered potentially to present a greater proportion of ethical dilemmas than other research tools (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Consequently, steps were taken in this research prior to contact with the participants to ensure that their dignity, integrity, and safety were maintained. These included adhering to informed consent's fundamental principles (Robson, 2002; Ruane, 2005), thus avoiding undue duress (Flick, 2011). Flick (2011) strongly argues that informed consent is 'a precondition for participation' (2011, p. 49) and is achieved when participants understand and agree to their participation without any level of undue pressure imposed. For this research, a comprehensive letter and email detailing the research and the type of data collection processes required was distributed to the headteachers of the four sample schools. This established the initial contact with the sample schools (ref. Appendix A p.203). As such, the headteacher and participants would understand the nature of the research and their roles (Flick 2011). My contact details and those of my supervisor were shared in the event of further questions or concerns raised by the participants. In line with CCCU's recommendations, a clear statement about the participants' right to withdraw at any given time was prominent, together with the fact that pseudonyms would protect anonymity (Delamont, 2012). All participants were assured that their data would be stored securely and potential risks pertaining to breach of confidentiality or data loss were minimised because data was held on a private, password-secured computer and backed up in a password-secured cloud account. In the interests of maintaining a transparent process, participants were

informed about the subsequent participant validation to preserve the accuracy of their data (Drever, 2006).

Ethical considerations are also significant to this research owing to the challenging period for primary academies within which the data collection occurred. Many of the participants' schools had recently acquired academy status and the intrinsic disapplication from the NC (2014) alongside pervasive and high stakes accountability exerted pressure. Further a new NC (DfE, 2013a) had been published. This contributed politically to the research. Ethically, I aimed to maintain a delicate balance between avoiding adding to the pressure on the participants by enquiring into areas which they had possibly not considered, such as their academy's disapplication from the NC (2014) whilst simultaneously aiming to develop a deep understanding of their situation regarding factors that affected their school's curriculum development. Despite my concerns about potential blurring of the boundary between ethical and unethical procedures within social research (Bryman, 2008), it was clear that these issues did not apply to this research. Firstly, in-depth consideration had been given to a range of relevant issues prior to the data collection. Secondly, the research was ethically conducted according to its stated aims, purpose, and procedures and was not detrimental to its participants. Through foregrounding a future discussion about teachers' perspectives on the factors that affect curriculum development in these school types, this research had the potential to catalyse improved future practice.

3.13 Data Analysis Process

In this section, the research data process is addressed and how it is substantiated by drawing connections to the philosophical and methodological underpinning of this

research. A substantive approach was taken to data analysis (Spencer et al., 2014) that treats 'data as windows on participants' social worlds (ibid., p.272). This complies with the ontological and epistemological underpinnings in that social reality is a subjective perspective on the external world. Utilising interview recordings/transcripts opened a window into the construction of the curriculum development process (O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014) in each of the four sample schools. The use of interview recordings/transcripts guarded against potential misunderstandings from inevitable differences between the described and the interpretation of the gathered data (Pauwels, 2010). Transcribing and interpreting interviews on a continuous basis enabled me to reflect on subsequent interviews and questions whilst searching for divergent or adverse cases to maintain the study's robustness (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Having completed the participants' interviews at each of the four sample schools, I employed inductive analysis (Ormston et al., 2014) to examine the data that had been gathered, rather than deductive analysis, as this starts with a theory or hypothesis which works towards some type of prediction/logical conclusion. Using inductive analysis, the participants' responses to the interview questions and documentation were examined and broad generalisations from specific data observations were made. Manual coding was employed to accurately analyse the data and ensure any possible errors were minimised (Bryman, 2008). Common themes were derived from the manual coding, for example, internal and external factors that affected curriculum development in each of the four schools. In addition, uncommon themes from the data, for example awe and wonder arising from social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) aspects of the curriculum were included by using 'best fit'. Therefore, there were no factors identified by participants that could not be used in the data set (see

Appendix G p.245). The next section of this research addresses the analytical steps

taken in the process of coding and the subsequent formulation of themes.

3.14 Analytical steps

The analytical steps taken were drawn from the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) who

provided an outline guide that involved six stages of analysis. These were applied to

this research in the following sections below:

Familiarisation of the data

Generating initial codes

Searching for themes

Reviewing themes

Defining and naming themes

Producing the report – this is not discussed as Chapter 4 and 5 covers this

section

In this context, it's essential to highlight that the qualitative analysis standards aren't

set in stone and that the phases identified above have been adapted to suit the

evaluation of this research. This is not a straightforward task but a recursive one, as it

involves going back and forth between phases as needed, in order to provide enough

data analysis.

3.14.1 Familiarisation with the data

Interviews were recorded onto tape and field notes in terms of teachers' professional

backgrounds were gathered. Thereby, I was able to get an idea from the recordings

and notes as to what to expect from the data. Initially, the transcriptions were

examined and themes emerged linked to the variables in the literature review. The analysis of the data was arduous, but it allowed me to gain a thorough understanding of the gathered data and it enabled me to make connections, in terms of drawing out themes. This occurred throughout the transcribing step as well as the active reading of the transcripts. This allowed me to generate codes inductively.

3.14.2 Generating initial codes

Having transcribed the interviews, basic codes were developed. As this process transpired, main themes started to emerge from the internal and external factors which were colour coded and these were categorised into a framework which enabled further analysis of the data to take place (ref. Appendix F p.208) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Whilst colour coding was used to separate out the internal and external data, I kept the surrounding data intact in order to maintain the context. As a result of this, single data extractions were also tagged with multiple codes/depicted by colours.

3.14.3 Searching for themes

In order to find themes in the large number of various codes (numerical), I categorised them. A number of codes (numerical) were collected and merged to create a number of overarching categories which were then collected and merged to create overall themes and sub-themes. Having checked the data that did not fit into any theme these were placed to one side in case they may be of use later in the analysis process. For example, awe and wonder. It would have been easier to discard this coded data, but I decided to keep it, since it may prove useful at a later date. As the process progressed, I began to see the importance of certain themes that emerged from the colour coded data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.14.4 Reviewing themes

During this step, I honed the ideas that had developed in the internal homogeneity and outward heterogeneity where the two levels at which topics were reviewed and refined (p.115). I wanted to ensure that each topic was homogeneous. I went through all the categories that had been compiled for each subject and attempted to determine if the themes needed to be re-designated in their codes, in order for them to be more cohesive. This involved returning to interpreting the initial coded data extracts. Using the recursive method, I was able to reorganise my categories, either by combining them or removing them as they did not fit into themes or if there was insufficient data. At this point I felt satisfied that the coded data had been organised in a meaningful way (Clarke and Braun, 2016). Coding had been an organic process that evolved through searching for themes and other significant data that should be taken into account (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In order to code any new information within themes that had been missed in earlier coding stages, the dataset was read a second time. Braun and Clarke, (2006) warns against getting carried away with the continuous re-coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006). However, coding was only concluded when I realised there was nothing else, I could use.

Finally, in determining the themes I avoided over complicating the coding and making the themes too diverse in their content (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In examining each theme's content, sub-themes were identified which were combined to create broader, coherent, and factually accurate themes that offered a helpful structure and hierarchy of meanings within the data. It was found that by defining the themes it aided coherence which resulted in precise headings under which to report.

As part of the validation process of the research, triangulation of the findings was essential. It also aids in minimising bias. Triangulation has been defined as cross-checking the existence of certain phenomena and the veracity of individual accounts by gathering data from several informants and sources then subsequently comparing and contrasting one account with another to produce as full and balanced study as possible (Open University, 1988, cited in Bell, 1999, p. 102). Jupp, (2011, pp. 305-306) identifies four different forms of triangulation: triangulation of data, investigator triangulation, triangulation of theories, and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation was the most appropriate for this research because it enabled the same method, interviews, to be used on different occasions within the four primary academy coastal schools. Having gathered the data and then compared it across the four sample schools, the application of triangulation produced an integral and authentic analysis.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the research aims and has addressed the philosophical, methodological, and ethical considerations for the qualitative research that was undertaken in this research, into 'What are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in south-east England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum?' It builds on the conceptual framework discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2) by considering its impact on the development of the methodology (O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2014). Chapter 4 addresses the research findings.

Chapter 4

The Results

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the empirical data to address the research question: An investigation into, 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their school's curriculum?' The interview questions used in this research may be found on page 98. In terms of addressing the research question it must be acknowledged that, whilst participants' responses to the questions varied from school to school and individually, much of what they identified as factors, both internal and external, were common amongst the sample schools. Arising from the analysis were a number of emergent factors, for example the lack of formal training in curriculum development. The emergent factors will be discussed see p150 onwards.

This chapter is divided into two main sections to address the research question. The first section reports the key factors that influenced curriculum development in the four schools at the empirical level. These factors have been divided into two areas, external and internal school factors (identified in Appendices F and G). At this juncture, it is important to state that participants' answers to the interview questions highlighted similar factors. It became evident that certain factors were reinforced by a number of participants. It was deemed that the frequency of the key factors identified by the participants was significant because they were uppermost in their thinking. The key factors and their frequency were coded in a table which may be found in Appendix G p.245. The frequency of responses helped to determine the key factors as identified by the participants. This research has taken the key factors and the emergent factors in

the context of the literature review and discussed the findings in relation to the research question.

The external and internal factors have each been further divided into sub-sections. Firstly, the identified overarching external factors from the participants' interviews that they felt influenced the curriculum development process in all four primary academy coastal schools were as follows: government expectations/accountability measures, political intent/legislation, society's expectations (which include both international and global comparisons and expectations), secondary readiness, and finally the school's context and community which sits both within both external and internal factors. The section on internal school factors explores a number of themes which are (i) linked to the sub-questions identified in the literature review and (ii) related to the participants' interview responses.

The literature review identified certain factors that would influence curriculum development in schools which echoed those mentioned by participants. These are as follows: government policy, NC (2013), society (including international and global), teachers/leader involvement in working together to develop the curriculum, pupils voice, parental expectations, curriculum planning, assessment, teaching skills, the school's context and local community, curriculum implementation, and poverty/disadvantaged pupils along with teacher training. However, certain factors that were identified by the participants were not mentioned in the reviewed literature. These are, governance, school values, learning environments, pre-school education and secondary readiness. One of the reasons for this may be intentional or unintentional bias by those authorities whose studies were referred to in the literature review or it could be that these factors have been at the forefront of teachers' thinking. Therefore, it is expected that factors could differ due to the context of each school

(Ref. Appendix G p.245). Alongside the factors identified by participants, a number of factors, as already stated, emerged that were not directly linked to the interview questions but arose apparent through the analysis of the data. These are, teacher training in curriculum development, teachers becoming agents of change, teacher autonomy, pupil involvement in curriculum development.

It is important to note that whilst the results have been divided into two main sections, internal and external factors that influence curriculum development in the schools, the factors are not mutually exclusive. Some factors have been grouped as they fit naturally together, due to some level of overlap that was evident in the analysis.

4.1 Curriculum Development at an Empirical Level

This section provides an analysis of the results obtained from research undertaken in four sample schools in South-East England. Four teachers participated in the research within each sample school, ranging from class teachers to subject leaders. The case study approach aimed to develop a rich understanding (Newby, 2010) of a social phenomenon within its context (Baxter and Jack, 2008 p554-559; Yin, 2014). Qualitative data was gathered from individual, semi-structured interview questions (see p.89). The data suggested that teachers began the curriculum development process with various levels of professional experience which had impacted on the process. These professional experiences ranged from those with relatively limited experience in curriculum development to those who had previously had greater involvement in developing a school's curriculum. Therefore, it is pertinent to reflect on the fact that their understanding of curriculum development is necessary, so they

are able to determine educationally desirable curriculum aims which is an essential part of the curriculum development process (Biesta, 2012 et. al) (see p.69).

As noted earlier in this thesis, references to 'teachers' and 'participants' have been separated in this research. It is important to reiterate this separation in this chapter to emphasise that its function is to enable clarity in writing and understanding. In this thesis, the term 'teachers' refers to the teaching staff who were not directly interviewed as part of the research but may have been referred to by the 'participants' who were interviewed and whose voices are quoted in this chapter.

As referred to earlier, the teachers and participants involved in curriculum development from the sample schools had a variety of professional experiences in reviewing and developing part of their respective school's curriculum. While all the participants were subject leads, their knowledge of curriculum development tended to be limited to small scale curriculum development projects rather than complete curriculum reviews and evaluations. Overall, teachers' involvement varied in their experience and participation in curriculum planning and development at three different levels, namely, macro, meso and micro-level (long, medium, and short-term planning).

4.2 External Factors that Affected Internal Discourse and Decision Making in Curriculum Development – External Factor

In considering external factors that affect teachers' internal discourse and decision making in curriculum development. It became evident that all of the external factors at various levels of development would impact on the process even prior to the process starting, such as Government Legislation the Academies Act (2010), national assessments (SATs), along with the school context and community. The following demonstrates external factors impacting on the internal discourse of teachers involved in the curriculum development process.

Participant 2 from Academy 1, Participant 1 from Academy 2, Participant 1 and Participant 2 from Academy 3 all alluded to the initial discourse teachers undertook in their schools during the curriculum development process (CDP) and that the internal factors identified, had been taken into consideration throughout the process of curriculum development. However, they also recognised that the CDP was influenced by external school factors and were mindful of the external factors such as the school context and the community it served. To this end, participants commented that at the forefront of the curriculum development process, the teachers' intentions were to 'meet the needs of their pupils' - be they 'academic' or 'pragmatic' needs - for example, from a pragmatic point of view, offering after school clubs so that parents were able to work longer hours. Pragmatic concerns voiced by the participants as illustrated below, included cognisance of the pupils' family situations and the possible influence that parents may have had on the process. This was verified through the research analysis, as the frequency of this statement was referred to twenty-eight times, and when added to the importance of comments related to curriculum planning matching the needs of pupils (twenty responses), this far out wayed other responses

from participants in this research. The example below, in terms of pragmatic concerns, was shared by Participant 2 from Academy 2.

"...each school is different; we must consider our children. We have a large number of children that come from poor backgrounds and, as a result, have free school meals. Some parents have to access food banks. We try and help with school uniform, and we have a breakfast club and after school clubs so that parents can work." (Participant 2, Academy 2)

To reiterate, whilst external factors were considered in terms of how they affect the CDP, it became integral to participants' thinking and did not overpower their discourse. The research analysis demonstrated that the uppermost thought in teachers' minds was to be able to 'meet the needs of pupils' both on an academic and pragmatic level. The next section addresses to what extent the curriculum development process was influenced by parents.

4.3 Parental Influence on the Curriculum Development Process – External Factor/Internal Factor

One of the factors identified by participants was parental influence, which straddles both internal and external factors because of the influence they can have on how a school operates, through parental governance, through being a parent and through influencing government e.g., in parent surveys. However, within the research analysis, seven comments were made by participants as a factor that could influence the CDP. This was surprising, as it is suggested that most schools would be wanting feedback from parents given significant curriculum developments. It may be that participants

involved in this research were not involved in collating the feedback from parents/carers. Examples of parental influence are shared below from the research analysis.

Participant 1 from Academy 2 and Participant 2 from Academy 3 referred to and reinforced the importance of parents as potentially important contributors in the process of curriculum development. The research analysis indicated that curriculum developers considered parental expectations in the process of working on the curriculum. For example, Participants commented:

"... Parental expectations need to be considered when planning a new curriculum or when the children undertake various projects. You just cannot ignore parents as they are important and should feel informed about what we teach." (Participant 1, Academy 2)

"...When we first started to think about the curriculum, we thought about what parents expected, so we have kept them informed about what we were doing and asked them to tell us if there was anything they wanted us to consider'." (Participant 1, Academy 3)

"...It is important that the parents feel comfortable and satisfaction what we are doing with their children at the school in relation to learning."
(Participant 2, Academy 3)

Whilst the sample schools served pupils from a variety of backgrounds, there was a significant number of pupils in each of the schools that participated in the research that came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some pupils came from families where there had been several generations of unemployed adults (which may not be of their

own making) relying on benefits and pupils were caught up in a dependency culture. Unfortunately, a dependency culture can create generations of families with low aspirations in terms of contributing to society and the economy. Therefore, it is essential that both leaders and teachers, in their decision-making, try to address the potential aspirations of these pupils and their families through the school's curriculum. From the statistical evidence this evoked a further issue in that a number of these pupils had attendance issues (persistently absent) in the research sample schools (attendance data p.31). Attendance issues have been raised at this juncture because low attendance impacts upon standards achieved by pupils, but also often signals the low value placed on learning by parents/carers. An example of this can be the relatively small response from parents/carers when they were informed by the school (Academy 3) that they were undertaking curriculum development and asked for their input. The sample schools had a significant percentage of pupils who came from impoverished backgrounds which is linked to poor academic achievement (evidenced in SATs results for core subjects). It is therefore imperative that schools provide a curriculum that begins to address the systemic issues around learning gaps for disadvantaged pupils who come from impoverished backgrounds.

Examples below demonstrate participants' thinking on the subject.

Participant 1 from Academy 2, Participant 1 from Academy 3 and Participant 2 from Academy 4 evidenced this in their responses:

"... parents and society expect children to learn certain things at a certain age and to be able to remember what they have learnt. ... When we were in the initial stages of curriculum development, there were also discussions about what parents would want to see what we could provide in terms of the school's curriculum."

(Participant 1, Academy 2)

"... When we first started to think about the curriculum, we thought about what parents expected, so we have kept them informed with what they wanted us to consider'... we didn't get much of a response from parents. I think it is because our parents think it is something the school should just get on and deal with." (Participant 1, Academy 3)

"...We were thinking about children's life experiences. Some of our children live on the estate near the school and get very little chance to travel out of the area and for some pupils their world around them is very local to where they live. We thought about how we could give them experiences that would allow them to feel motivated and passionate and take some of our pupils beyond their narrow world by providing experiences that teach them about the wider world. It is hard when many of our children come from families with problems...like unemployment. We have to try and balance the books for them and give them a good education."

(Participant 2, Academy 4)

Participant 1 from Academy 2, Participant 1 from Academy 3 and Participant 2 from Academy 4 were focused on taking into consideration pupils' backgrounds and parental views in the process of curriculum development. Given that each of the sample schools served areas of high deprivation, with significant numbers of pupils coming from impoverished backgrounds, teachers' curriculum development discourse focused on the needs of their pupils where education could help pupils escape the poverty trap. Therefore, curriculum developers were mindful that these pupils could end up trapped within a class system that made it exceedingly difficult for them to escape from. In reflecting upon the work of Reay (2017), who expressed strong concerns over an inequitable education system that exists within England, it was

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evident from the comments made by the participants across all four sample schools involved in this research, that the schools were focused on trying to provide a curriculum that started to address some of the inequality, especially those who came from impoverished backgrounds by providing wider life opportunities. For example, school visits to the theatre. The next section considers government legislation and the influence of the NC (2013) on curriculum development in the four sample schools.

4.4 Government Legislation and the influence of the National Curriculum (2013) and the Academies Act (2010) on the Development of the Primary Academy Curriculum – An External Factor

The external factors of government legislation and the NC (2013) from the research analysis had a strong influence on the CDP of each school. Twenty-eight responses were recorded, the second most significant factor identified by the participants. This was also identified as a variable as to whether the school took advantage of the legislation afforded to them in terms of curriculum development.

In all four sample schools, teachers' discourse did not seem to have been consciously influenced by the Academies Act (2010), where the statutory nature of the NC (2013) for LA schools does not apply. This at no point was referred to in the responses teachers gave in the interview questions. However, teachers' mediation of curriculum guidance documentation such as the NC (2013) was extremely influential in curriculum development in the sample schools. It is important to note that the DfE's developed curriculum, the NC (2013) for LA schools, stipulates what pupils need to know but this is only part of what the NC (2013) advises. The additional information it shares with schools, be it academy or LA, is that the NC (2013) forms only part of the school's curriculum and, as such, provides flexibility for schools to add

themes/topics or subjects that sit outside of it. This flexibility enables teachers and leaders to create a curriculum that serves its pupils taking into account each respective school's catchment area. Whilst this can narrow teacher's capacities in becoming effective curriculum developers, it is possible for leaders and teachers to develop a curriculum that retains some level of autonomy whereby they can make the necessary changes required in order to meet the specific needs of their pupils.

However, the research found that the sample schools' approach to using guidance documents was not necessarily consistent and used in several different ways, including noting progression in learning and skill development in relation to knowledge. Participant 3 from Academy 4 commented that teachers' planning discourse was influenced by the NC (2013) alongside other publications which were not named. The response given below provides an example of this.

"…When we plan, we have to make sure we think about reading, writing and mathematics as we develop the curriculum as these subjects are not always at a consistent standard when seen in children's topic work compared to what is seen in their English and maths books… This is a bit of a problem for our school… the children's topics seem good at first glance, but when looking at them, the writing in quite a few cases is of a lesser standard. When we developed the foundation subjects, we needed to check that progression within each subject was evident. We referred to the national curriculum for this as well as other publications." (Participant 3, Academy 4)

External factors, for example publications such as the NC (2013), added information to teachers' repertoires of curriculum knowledge and tended to support the choice of content. With the NC (2013) being so prominent in the response from Participant 3 from Academy 4, this also emerged to some extent from the responses of other

participants. The research analysis suggested that teachers' thinking about developing a curriculum may have become too convergent because their thinking was so influenced by the content of the NC (2013). Subsequently the impact of this may have limited their thinking, rather than opening their minds to other possibilities. This encouraged divergent thinking with the possibility of developing a curriculum that could meet their pupils' needs even more effectively. Factors in the research analysis highlighted that rich curriculum discourse tended to occur when teachers were working collaboratively and thinking things through together, at a macro, meso and micro level. The research analysis identified nineteen responses in relation to collaborative working, which was significant in comparison to other factors the participants thought influenced CDP. It appeared that collaborative working in some of the sample schools had enabled teachers to be at their most creative, bouncing ideas off each other and formulating them in terms of what a potential curriculum for their school might look like (Alsubaie, 2016, p. 106-107). However, it was very evident from the participants' comments on teachers' discourse that core standards were at the forefront of their minds throughout the curriculum development process, even when they were involved in the development of the foundation subjects. For example, comments from Participant 1, from Academy 3, from Participant 2 from Academy 4 and from Participant 2 from Academy 1 reinforced several participants' views about governmental impact on curriculum development and standards (for example, Participant 1 from Academy 2 and Participant 2 from Academy 3).

"...I think the thing that influences curriculum development the most, is that the curriculum is influenced by the government's standards" (Participant 1, Academy 2)

"...The guidelines of government legislation for the curriculum development framework also supports the role of teachers. We follow the guidelines of government legislation ...". (Participant 2, Academy 3)

"...Well, there are many factors that impact on the process but when I see my school; I think the standards that have been set so far by the government and by the national curriculum, have had a lot of impact." (Participant 4, Academy 3)

4.5 Government Accountability Measures: Assessment and Standards – External Factor

The interview analysis found that achievement and eventual judgement of standards were issues for all four sample schools. The frequency of responses from participants, in regard to this external factor, was significant. Achievement of national standards, as already expressed, were at the forefront of most teachers' minds and as well as the impact on the school's Ofsted inspection outcomes if standards failed to reach at least the national minimum level. This was illustrated by comments from Participant 2 from Academy 1 and Participant 3 from Academy 4.

"...when a child moves from one-year group to another, he or she should be proficient in specific areas of the curriculum, so this is what we should be focusing on. The quality of the education the academy provides is what it will be eventually judged on." (Participant 2, Academy 1)

"...It is kept in consideration by the developing body that the curriculum has to be matched with indicators for each year group. These can be as targets that need to be achieved when the curriculum is implemented." (Participant 2, Academy 4)

Participant 2 from Academy 1, expressed awareness of not only the achievement of standards by the pupils but that ultimately,

 "*…the quality of the education the academy provides is what it will be eventually judged on.' (ibid .)"* (Participant 2, Academy 1)

It is suggested that an Ofsted inspection may have influenced this participant's comment. It was evident from the comments participants have made that schools are well aware of poor performance and a lowering of standards. When this is linked to national accountability measures, it can have far reaching consequences. Therefore, in many schools the core standards have taken precedence in developing a school's curriculum, with a possible danger of schools narrowing their foundation subject content if national standards are not reached. Ultimately if schools narrowed their curriculum it would lead to an impoverished curriculum and affect all pupils, especially those coming from impoverished backgrounds (disadvantaged pupils). This is not something educationalists wish to see, but it is an understandable pragmatic approach that a school may wish to take to avoid falling into a category when it is inspected e.g., special measures. However, that may have been the case under previous inspection frameworks but is unlikely to occur under the changes made to the 2016 inspection framework whereby the whole of a school's curriculum is examined alongside several subjects being inspected in-depth (deep dives). The 2016 Ofsted Inspection Framework, along with the National Curriculum (2013) triggered the four primary academy schools reviewing their school's curriculum. This research found that these, amongst other publications, provided guidance to the four sample schools and supported teachers, as curriculum developers, in the planning of their school's curriculum. However there appeared to be a dichotomy between teacher autonomy in determining what the curriculum should be and the guidance provided by the NC

(2013), which is well established in English schools. The analysis of this research suggests that this was mainly due to the overwhelming use of the NC (2013) being used as a baseline as to what should be included in the respective school's curriculum versus the knowledge and experiences that the school deemed that pupils needed. Especially in relation to providing enriched experiences to enable pupils to have enhanced knowledge so they could be even more aware of the world they lived in. As an example, this was expressed by one participant who said,

"...our children need us to provide a curriculum that meets their needs so, they can be successful in life, which means although we follow the NC (2013), we need to give them a range of broader experiences that they may not necessarily get, such as life skills." (Participant 4, Academy 1)

The research analysis indicated evidence to suggest that the impact of government legislation surrounding assessment was very evident in most of the participants' responses. For example, Participant 2 from Academy 1, was very aware of how curriculum development was overshadowed by government standards in the core subjects.

"...The government has standards set that we have to follow for reading and mathematics, and then there are also assessments that our pupils must take at the end of Key Stages. so, we have to develop pupils earning in these areas anyway. We have to teach them in a way that they can remember." (ibid.)

Participant 2 from Academy 1, was not only referring to the core subjects reading, writing and mathematics, but also to the national assessments (SATs) that take place in Year 2 and Year 6. These assessments act as part of the government's accountability measures for schools which, in turn, reduce school autonomy in developing their own curriculum. Returning briefly to the notion of teacher autonomy, it is couched in the neo-liberal reforms such as the Academies Act (2010) which indicate the autonomy a school could gain over its curriculum. This can act as one of the lures for schools to convert to academy status when there is only limited autonomy given in foundation subjects. The NC (2013) content in reading, writing, and mathematics must be taught because pupils' SATs are based on this knowledge.

4.6 Autonomy and Agency for Pupils and Pupils' Eventual Career and Employment Prospects – Internal Factor

The research analysis highlighted pupil voice and choice (autonomy), which was considered an important internal factor that influenced participants in each school's curriculum development process. Seventeen responses linked to pupil 'voice and choice' were made by participants. While there was no direct interview question that linked pupil voice and choice (autonomy), clearly participants felt strongly that their voices should be included into the schools' considerations in terms of curriculum development. This was evidenced in Question 3 in the research analysis. (Appendices E, F and G). Equally, this factor was not identified through the variables identified in the literature review and presented as sub-questions (Appendix C p.205).

Participants were keen to see pupils involved in a variety of activities to reduce passivity in learning, as well as promoting critical thinking in relation to their learning. By providing opportunities for pupils' voices to be heard, co-construction of

the school's curriculum can take place and therefore contribute to meeting pupils' needs in an effective way.

"...in the learning, teaching and assessment activity that pupils but rather that they should be engaged and make contributions towards the of learning (teaching and assessment)" (Participant 3, Academy 1)

Although somewhat of an aside, the comment from Participant 3 from Academy 1 is interesting to highlight,

'...that pupils should not be viewed as the passive recipients of knowledge but rather that they should be engaged and make contributions towards the processes of learning' (teaching and assessment)." (ibid.)

Participant 3 from Academy 1 raised the issue of to what extent pupils can become involved in the planning of their learning, which is to say, teachers providing a level of autonomy and agency for pupils. Some schools have toyed with the issue of pupil autonomy in terms of their learning, for example by introducing mind-mapping topic work which teachers include as part of their development of pupils' knowledge. This is often undertaken in tandem with pupils' self-assessing what they may already know about a particular topic and exploring what they need to know to further their learning. This dyad of functionality between exploring the known and unknown in a theme or topic along with pupils self-assessing their knowledge, requires some level of training for pupils so they are confident in undertaking this process. Pupils' involvement in teachers' planning of learning for their pupils could be undertaken in stages. For example, teachers would need to consider what was appropriate for the age of the pupil, along with their level of knowledge and understanding. The 'plan do, and review' process is instilled in the youngest pupils (Foundation Stage) in English

schools, but this becomes masked by the NC (2013) coverage and content which the majority of schools (both inside and outside of the schools in this research) incorporate into their curricula.

Participant 4 from Academy 2 and Participant 4 from Academy 3 were concerned with pupils in the longer term, their contribution to society, their career prospects and consequent contribution to the economy, which is pupils '*have(ing) a purpose in life*' because '*ultimately (they) will make the society we have in the future.*' (Participant 4 Academy 3). Participant 4 from Academy 3 commented on the importance of pupils being able to successfully function in society. There were sixteen responses made by participants linking the necessity for pupils to have a high-quality education, so they can successfully move onto the next phase of education, eventually being able to positively contribute to society. This was highlighted by Martin (2017) in the literature review

> "*…They will join different industries and businesses, so they need to get the basics here for that…the basic skills, the basic concepts, the basic knowledge……… It's a primary academy, so it is here that their foundations will be established.*" (Participant 4, Academy 3).

Participant 4 from Academy 2 went further and said that the function of a curriculum.

> "*… can make them (pupils) aware of expectations and how to move out of the poverty trap by having a good education.* (ibid.)"

Participant 4 from Academy 3 explicitly raised the importance of pupils learning about different types of careers which could interest them and start to raise their aspirations,

*"...In my school's case, learning about careers is really important for the children as there is a large number of parents out of work." (*Participant 4, Academy 3).

This would enable pupils to see that in their future lives they had the potential of having choice in terms of work providing that they had the necessary qualifications and/or experience. This is so important for impoverished pupils who often come from households with low aspirations. Unless children are introduced to the opportunities (both employment and personal) in life, they are not going to know what they may be missing, which seems to be the implied sentiments of Participant 3 from Academy 2.

"... society sets certain benchmarks of what the parents expect their children to achieve in school, so we had to identify what parents expect from the school and what will enable children to achieve at a certain age. Once these expectations or local needs of society and parents are identified, we can then set the curriculum. A curriculum that can make them aware of expectations and how to move out of the poverty trap by having a good education." (Participant 3, Academy 2)

As part of the preliminary work undertaken prior to the commencement of the curriculum development process, Academy 2 researched parents' expectations through a questionnaire (at the time of the research the findings were not available). Much of the employment in coastal towns is seasonal in the area where Academy 2 was located. This can become an issue for businesses and families because they are reliant upon revenue from visitors bumping up trade throughout the summer months. The much-needed revenue from visitors enables the coastal towns to survive during the winter months when the trade is much reduced. For some families living on the breadline, their incomes almost completely disappear through the winter months. Participant 3 from Academy 2 recognised the cycle that can occur for families and

their children living in impoverished conditions. The opportunities for young people are considerably reduced in most coastal areas (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2015) (see p 28-30), so for many of them, it is important to get an education that can provide opportunities for them outside of the coastal environment.

Section 2

4.7 Factors Affecting Teachers' Decision Making about Curriculum Development at a Macro, Meso and Micro Level – Emergent Factor

A factor arose from the interviews in regard to formal training for teachers involved in the curriculum development process. Although this was not directly identified in their responses to the interview questions it was implicit within some of their answers. It was decided that it was significant enough to be included in this research as an emergent factor because formal training may have enabled the curriculum development process to be undertaken more efficiently and effectively. (See p.68-69 Alexander, 2010a, Kelly, 2009)

As already noted, although the teachers did not directly identify the need for formal training in curriculum development, some of their answers implied that there was a need for a more formalised approach to support them in the process. For example, Participant 2 from Academy 2 said,

"...Some of our newest teachers didn't feel confident going into developing our school's curriculum, even some of our more experienced teachers felt somewhat unprepared for the job."

Participant 3 from Academy 3 intimated the teachers involved in curriculum development had not received any specific training for developing the school's curriculum. Participant 3 from Academy 3 said that in Academy 3, those taking part in developing the curriculum were guided by the school leaders that organised the process. There appeared to be an expectation in Academy 3 that because Participant 3 and those involved in the curriculum development process in Academy 3 were trained and experienced teachers, they would automatically have the skills and knowledge required to review and develop the school's curriculum.

Although there was a sense of collaborative working between teachers in the sample schools, Participant 3 from Academy 3 intimated that the curriculum development process tended to be ad hock. On the other hand, Participant 4 from Academy 3 noted that curriculum development was organised into groups to undertake the process. This organisation into groups may have been due to inexperience in curriculum development. Organisation into groups also took place in Academy 3, where the curriculum developers reviewed subjects in groups and then suggested possible changes in content.

"Many of us developing the curriculum have had different professional experiences and life experiences, I suppose, which is a good thing because we can all bring different knowledge to the process." (Participant 3, Academy 2)

"..., we worked together in groups reviewing what we had asa curriculum already. This helped us to think about what was working and what needed to be changed. We all had different teaching experiences, so we worked in groups of 3's and 4's. The subject leader was with us, so when we started to review a subject, we had someone with us who was familiar with what was being taught across the school."

(Participant 2, Academy 1)

"*...As a school, we decided to look at a curriculum subject together, so each of us teaching in specific year groups could contribute to what was working well in the subject and what wasn't. This was more linked to topics and foundation subjects.*"
(Participant 4, Academy 3)

A disadvantage with this type of small group organisation is that one subject is being reviewed and evaluated by a small number of teachers within a group, which limits the contributions of others. It is suggested that the dynamic between teachers working in small groups as curriculum developers can result in inconsistencies in teachers' 'thinking'. As referred to in the preceding chapter, the word 'think' or 'thinking' is a speculative term, and its definition in this research needs to be reiterated. By using the word 'think' or 'thinking' regarding teachers involved in the curriculum development process, I refer to teachers' considering their tasks as curriculum developers and the opinions they hold about those tasks (see p. 65-66 in the literature review).

Returning to the subject of curriculum developers being organised into small groups, if teachers work in small groups of two or three, they are in danger of a relatively narrow discourse which may result in an impoverished curriculum when compared to a larger group of teachers involved in the curriculum development process. It is recognised that small schools, because of their size, would most likely be affected by 'narrow' thinking unless they were able to work with other schools who may be developing their curriculum, for example, a MAT. It is suggested that the larger the number of teachers working as a collective involved in reviewing the content of a curriculum subject, the more likely it is to ensure that the school's curriculum is

critically thought through, thereby resulting in a curriculum that will serve more fully and effectively the needs of the pupils in the respective school.

Another factor that is likely to impact on the curriculum development process is the level of a teacher's professional experience and life experience, as stated by one participant. This will affect teachers 'I' positions (Herman, 2008) in their decision making. It is suggested that by embracing a curriculum development process somewhat similar to Taba's (1962) curriculum development process model, a more consistent approach would lead to more significant in-depth critical thinking (see p, _). Teachers use their curriculum knowledge and theory to develop a curriculum that serves a range of purposes, for example, meeting pupils' learning needs (physical, academic, and social and emotional) and developing powerful knowledge (Young, 2013).

What should a 'developed' curriculum look like? Participant 2 from Academy 2 reflected on what the curriculum should look like in terms of pupils engaging with what needs to be taught, and in principle, the type of activities that may motivate them. It appeared from the data that it would be beneficial for pupils to provide opportunities for teachers to plan activities that helped to address some pupils' impoverished life experiences, thereby giving them further insight into the world around them. This demonstrated that Participant 2 from Academy 2s thinking moved with relative ease from a macro level (long term planning) to a meso-level (medium-term planning) and finally to a micro-level (short term planning), thereby making logical links between each level of planning.

The following section examines responses regarding teachers' involvement in curriculum development to a greater or lesser extent. It highlights areas of how the process benefits from teacher involvement as well as some aspects where teachers felt

inadequate in their subject knowledge and content in different year groups and in terms of the curriculum development process.

4.8 Teachers' Involvement in the Process of Curriculum Development –Internal Factor

Much of the evidence for teacher involvement in the curriculum development process has been expressed through participants' responses to Question 2. There was a high frequency of responses by participants in relation to this area which combined several sub-themes, curriculum planning, working together in teams and their comments linked to their own training. Below is a number of responses linked to this factor. The work of Albusaie, (2016) (ref. p. 13).

Some of the participants from the four sample schools expressed the trepidation that some teachers had in terms of becoming too heavily involved in curriculum development. Participant 2 from Academy 2 said,

"…Some of our newest teachers didn't feel confident going into developing our school's curriculum, even some of our more experienced teachers felt somewhat unprepared for the job." (ibid.)

It appeared that where the school had provided time for teachers' discourse, teachers developed a greater understanding of the curriculum development process and gained confidence in what they were undertaking. However, there was variance in the amount of participation that teachers had experienced. An example of this was illustrated by a comment from Participant 3 from Academy 1.

"...In the curriculum development process that was undertaken in our school, we were given a lot of opportunities for sharing our thoughts and views ...what we wanted and how we wanted pupils to learn...some also shared ideas on the basis of the experience they had in the classroom... some teachers here have years of teaching experience, so they know a great deal about the issues and outcomes. I think the team considered whatever we shared, and when I got to look at the curriculum, there was a lot of things that we had suggested in it." (ibid.)

Counter to this higher level of involvement, the participants from Academies 1, 2 and 4 expressed less involvement in the process.

"...I do not say that we do not have a voice in the curriculum process, but we do not have a direct role. It is in the hands of our leaders, whether they take into account what we share with them or not. But when we go into the class, we have more autonomy and freedom. We can select and prepare suitable resources for the learners and also pace learning according to the needs of our pupils...so here our role can be seen as a more active one." (Participant 3, Academy 2)

"...I know we are still in the process of developing our curriculum but still, I feel teachers should be more involved, and they should be given more voice...and I think it is in the initial stages when their opinions should be sought about what they (leadership team) want us to do in the classroom. We can share what we go through in the classroom, we can also carry out some research about what could work best and report to them...there should be more collaboration and more teacher involvement." (Participant 4, Academy 4)

In summary, the research data indicated a wide variance in teachers' involvement in the curriculum development process. Participants noted that some teachers were

proactive in the process of developing their school's curriculum whilst others, often a lot less experienced teachers, seemed to lack confidence in their role as curriculum developers and felt unprepared for the task. A thread that ran through the participants' comments alluded to school leaders having it within their gift to enable teacher autonomy in curriculum development.

4.9 Aspects in which Participants Regard their Respective School's Developed Curriculum as Highly Effective – An Emergent Factor

The research findings for this factor emerged through Question 1. Participants shared their views on whether their school's curriculum was highly effective. (Ref. Appendix F p.208)

By an 'effective curriculum', I mean a curriculum that is successful in producing desired or intended outcomes. This includes academic, social/personal, and physical outcomes. This question is illuminating in that it required the participants to think about what a curriculum is and what is meant by a curriculum. Young (2014) identified that the definition of curriculum is not a simple one; he likens curricula to 'specialised' institutions – families and businesses, for example - they have particular purposes' (Young 2014, p. 7-13). Burris (2007, p. 24) states that an effective curriculum is not just one version of a curriculum that can be implemented in various institutions because each school has its own learning standards. In this research, the participants from the sample schools provided several different personal definitions of curriculum when asked for their opinions on what constituted a highly effective curriculum for their pupils. The research data found commonalities in their views. The following are participants' responses in relation to what they perceived an effective curriculum to be.

"…When I think of a really effective curriculum, the first thing that comes to my mind is learners' needs." (Participant 1, Academy 2)

"… learners are central to our decisions…discussions have been carried out with us too about what we think learners need." (Participant 1, Academy 1)

"…I believe for a curriculum to be highly effective; it has to be learner-centred…their needs are important and should be included in the curriculum." (Participant 2, Academy 2)

"…This aspect is really important for a highly effective curriculum…it is for learners that the curriculum is designed…we implement it, but it is pupils who are the recipients of it. So, the curriculum developers also need to focus on the learners' needs. I think this is an aspect that makes our curriculum a highly effective curriculum." (Participant 2, Academy 1)

Participants 1 and 2 from Academy 1 and Participants 1 and 2 from Academy 2 commented about learners' needs being an essential factor in a 'really effective curriculum', but the answers failed to provide examples of specific needs and to explain how the curriculum should be developed to address them. However, Participant 3 from Academy 4 said that,

"… an effective curriculum to be one that is the best…it should be best in the approach to teaching it provides…it should be best in terms of the outcomes it brings…it could also be one that produces learners that have all the competencies needed for living in the world." (Participant 3, Academy 4).

Participant 3 from Academy 4 extended the views of Participant 1 from Academy and Participants 2 from Academy 2 about the constituents of a highly effective curriculum.

Participant 3 from Academy 4 included the development of pupils' competencies to enable pupils to live 'in the world' (Participant 3, Academy 4), by which I think Participant 3 from Academy 4 may have been referring to preparation for adult life and employment. Participant 3 from Academy 4 recognised that pupils would eventually be living in the wider world and need knowledge, skills and understanding for 'living in the world' (Participant 3, Academy 4). Participant 4 from Academy 2 echoed the importance of teaching competencies made specifically by Participant 3 from Academy 4 and included the importance of teaching literacy and numeracy in primary schools and preparing pupils for transition as constituents of a highly effective curriculum.

"...In primary school, I think the curriculum should teach pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be able to move to their next school. It is important that they are literate and numerate." (Participant 4, Academy 2)

Participant 2 from Academy 4 felt strongly about how knowledge (n.b. the participant does not state what type of knowledge) is valued and how skills and talents are developed. Furthermore, independence in learning that promotes critical thinking was also highlighted by Participant 2 from Academy 4.

"... knowledge is not the only thing that is valued in a highly effective curriculum, but the development of skills should also be focused on. I also think a highly effective curriculum should encourage learners to explore and understand independently, make

them creative….and to become critical thinkers and develop their talents, skills, and abilities." (Participant 2, Academy 4)

"…An effective curriculum, I understand, is one in which the varying interests of the learners are accommodated…for example, some pupils like science but there are others who love art and have got really good talent…so if it is to be a highly effective curriculum, it has to take into account not just the scientific mind but also the artistic mind." (Participant 3, Academy 2)

Participant 3 from Academy 2 was passionate that a highly effective curriculum should address pupils' interests and passions whilst at the same time alluding to ensuring the curriculum is broad and balanced in terms of sciences and arts.

"…so, if it is to be a highly effective curriculum, it has to take into account not just the scientific mind but also the artistic mind." (Participant 3, Academy 2).

In addition to this, Participant 1 from Academy 4 commented that a highly effective curriculum comprises creativity, independence, and critical thinking.

"… I think the aspect that makes our curriculum highly effective is that it encourages creativity and independence, stimulates their imagination and develops critical thinking skills in the learners… these are some of the valuable aspects of our curriculum…for the learners these things can help pupils go a long way in life…" (Participant 1, Academy 4).

The notion of a highly effective curriculum being broad and balanced was also brought out in the response from Participant 3 from Academy 1.

"...There is a lot of attention and importance given to some subjects such as Maths or science or English...this does not make a curriculum highly effective. It should encourage pursuing any subject that the child is interested in..." (ibid.)

Participant 3 from Academy 3 commented that a highly effective curriculum should instil values and principles, so pupils develop skills that will enable them to cope with the wider world. For example, pupils learning to become resilient so they do not give up the first time they have to deal with an issue that they cannot immediately answer or find a solution to.

"...Our curriculum not only focuses on developing knowledge and skills, but it helps to instil fundamental educational values and principles among the learners but also modalities that help to create a visionary mindset amongst the learners. It is in my opinion that a highly effective curriculum tries to development all-round competencies. A rich content of knowledge which makes pupils more fully equipped for the world." (Participant 3, Academy 3)

Participant 3 from Academy 4 confirmed Participant 3 from Academy 3's comment about a curriculum having the function of developing 'values and principles among the learners' (Participant 3, Academy 3) but also highlighted the need for pupils to have examples of people who have come from a disadvantaged background but managed to aspire in life.

"...Our curriculum focuses on imparting values and ideologies of life that foster confidence and self-growth in the learner's mind. The school curriculum helps the pupils broaden their horizons. Our children really need examples of people who have aspired in life from poor backgrounds." (Participant 3, Academy 4)

To summarise, the Participants from the four sample schools referred to in this section demonstrated a range of views regarding what they considered made their respective school's curriculum highly effective. Not surprisingly, pupils came out as being central to teachers' thinking when developing their school curriculum. The other aspects that made a school's developed curriculum a highly effective curriculum focused upon pupils becoming 'rounded' human beings, fostering values, and helping pupils to have the ability to cope with their current lives and their lives in the future. The comments made by the Participants showed a variance in opinion and perception about their school curriculum whilst giving some insight into their beliefs and passions. These in turn were a reflection on their experiences as human beings and as teachers.

Whilst there was some diversity in approach to curriculum development in the sample schools, in terms of organising teachers into groups to work on curriculum development. Each of the sample schools, whilst not explicitly adopting a specific approach, undertook an approach that was organic and in the main aligned to a Taba's (1962) seven-step inductive approach to curriculum development. Mbakmen (2009) suggests that curriculum approaches can be interchangeable and are generally aligned to curriculum models (see p. 77-79). Nevertheless, an inductive approach to curriculum development was evident in the sample schools which became evident in their responses to the interview questions. Participants developed strong views about their school's curriculum and its effectiveness because they were immersed in the development of it from the initial stages. Participants also spoke passionately about what made the curriculum in their respective school highly effective – its breadth, development of skills and preparation for adult life. It seemed for those teachers who felt inadequate in terms of their knowledge and experience in the curriculum

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development process, they appeared to have benefited by developing their knowledge and understanding in terms of curriculum content across year groups and an expectation of what pupils should know by a certain age. The research indicated that the teachers' immersion in the process of curriculum developed had delivered some level of on-the-job CPD.

4.10 Teacher Autonomy – An Emergent Factor

This section examines the notion of teacher autonomy in relation to the research. The notion of teacher autonomy relates to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to pupils and how they teach it in the classroom setting. Advocates of greater teacher autonomy such as Biesta (2015) and Robinson (2015), argue for teacher autonomy because teachers are in the best position to make informed decisions about pupils' education. It is viewed by some, for example Albusaie (2016), that teachers 'should be given as much autonomy as possible when it comes to choosing instructional strategies, designing lessons, and providing academic support' (Albusaie 2016, pp. 106-107) This was confirmed by Participant 1 from Academy 3. Participant 1 from Academy 3 noted

"...I feel I have the autonomy to design the tasks that pupils are going to learn through. We are not told how to teach. ... ." (ibid.)

Participant 3 from Academy 3 clearly intimated that it is within the confines of the classroom that a high level of autonomy exists.

"...I plan the lessons for my children. This is taken from our medium-term planning which is on our shared drive. No-one tells me how to teach. (ibid.)"

As a by-product of autonomy, teachers may develop ecological agency through independence in their decision making. As noted earlier, it is at the classroom level that teachers are afforded a high level of autonomy as to how they implement the curriculum in their own classroom setting. However, when it comes to developing a whole school curriculum, there are greater constraints upon teachers than in the classroom because developing a whole school curriculum demands the provision of overarching aims and objectives of what is to be taught.

It is evident from some of the participants' remarks that a limited amount of autonomy in curriculum development was afforded to the teachers in the respective sample schools. This was as a result of national assessment (SATS) (DfE, 2016) legislation that had shackled them to the NC (2014) particularly for core subjects, because testing was based on the knowledge within it. Participant 1 from Academy 3 commented,

"...I think I had less autonomy when we were developing the school's curriculum together as we used the NC (2013) to base our curriculum on. We have not strayed far from the contents..." (Participant 1, Academy 3)

The research results indicated that teacher autonomy appeared to narrow at a macro level because it was heavily influenced by government legislation; for example, the NC (2014). At a meso-level, there seemed to be an increase in autonomy linked to medium-term planning. It appeared that the greatest level of autonomy for teachers was at a micro-level, which involved daily planning and choice in resources and methods of delivery of the curriculum.

Where does this leave us with the notion of autonomy? This research argues that the notion of autonomy for schools is a smokescreen provided by the government to entice schools to convert to academy status. Autonomy for academy schools was

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designed to strip away the level of support and challenge provided by the LA and reimburse schools monies that paid the LA to support schools. As time has moved on from the early days of academisation, the 'reality' surrounding the notion of curriculum autonomy has been affected by government legislation (DfE, 2016 Standard Testing Agency) regarding assessment. The smoke and mirrors tactic used by the government in giving curriculum autonomy to academy schools on the one hand, whilst keeping schools tied to legislation on the other, creates a tension that reduces not only a school's autonomy but also the teachers' autonomy as curriculum developers. However, most teachers in the sample schools, although not oblivious to the autonomy their school was afforded in practice, ignored it, certainly at the macro level of curriculum development planning.

Depending on the systems, methods, and criteria used in the job-performance evaluations of teachers, evaluation policies may potentially affect teacher autonomy. If evaluation processes, expectations, and requirements are more stringent or burdensome, they can influence the way that teachers instruct pupils. Overall, the research evidence indicated that the notion of teacher autonomy could not be explained as an exclusive psychological, technical, or political notion. The research evidence also showed that teacher autonomy was not as static - that some teachers possessed, and others did not. Teacher autonomy seemed to be something that occurred at different stages through the curriculum development process and was variable due to the level of restrictions leaders placed on it.

4.11 An Inductive Approach to Curriculum Development and the Development of Ecological Agency *(An Emergent Factor)*

Whilst the NC (2013) guidance was highly influential in how the four sample schools went about planning their curriculum development work, there was no prominent *curriculum framework* employed to support curriculum development in any of the sample schools.

The research found that a framework for curriculum development seemed to have emerged throughout the process. The framework that evolved in each school tended to emulate Taba's (1962) seven step model (discussed in the literature review see p.84-86) for developing a school's curriculum, which is an inductive approach where teachers played a central role in curriculum development.

"...Keeping in mind the key features of the curriculum development at aims and what our children need, as well as considering government legislation, as a school we strongly believe in teachers being part of curriculum development and not be passive in the role." (Participant 4, Academy 2)

The (inductive) approach to curriculum development was supported by leaders and enabled teachers to undertake the curriculum development process. The research findings indicated that due to the teachers from the sample schools being so immersed in their respective school's culture, they knew almost instinctively the overarching needs of their pupils and as such reviewed and developed their school's curriculum subjectively, while also being mindful of the NC (2014) content. In terms of their knowledge and skills as curriculum developers, it is highly likely that teachers were already skilled in undertaking the 'plan do and review' process for curriculum

delivery because it was something they did in their everyday working lives. When it came to developing their school's curriculum, they initially drew upon their existing experiences and knowledge and subsequently built on their knowledge and experience regarding the curriculum development process which also inadvertently provided CPD.

"...Teachers have a lot of knowledge, and they are the ones who have first-hand experience of how the pupils react to or learn certain things...so, they can play an important role...they can be a good source to get information from...I think when teachers' input is sought, the developed curriculum is better." (Participant 4, Academy 4)

Further to this, it emerged from the research data that a possible by-product of teachers being involved in the curriculum development process was teacher's development of ecological agency. In some instances, this occurred dependent upon leaders' control over the process and was created by teachers working together and making independent decisions about their school's curriculum.

4.12 Conclusion

Chapter 4 has addressed the results of the research which have been divided into two areas, internal school factors and external school factors that influenced curriculum development in the four sample schools. Internal school factors that contributed to curriculum development in the four schools have been discussed in this chapter including, the factors teachers identified as influencing the development of their school's curriculum. These could be meeting the needs of the children, pupil voice, teacher voice (ref. Appendix G p.245). However, additional factors emerged linked to

the literature regarding the notion of autonomy, formulation of teachers' beliefs, teacher knowledge base, capacity in developing a primary school curriculum for schools in a coastal setting and what the participants felt were the constituents of a highly effective curriculum in their respective schools. The research data has provided a picture of what the participants' perceptions were of the factors that influenced curriculum development in their respective schools. In preparation for this research question, a number of areas were explored which underpinned teachers' capacities to become effective curriculum developers and, as such, how participants' perceptions may be affected by them when answering the interview questions.

External factors that influenced curriculum development in the four sample schools have also been discussed. These include the coastal context of the schools and pupil intake, governmental expectations and political intent, accountability measures (standards) and potential parental influences on curriculum development. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, clarity of writing demanded that the results be divided into the two main sections (internal and external school factors that influenced curriculum development in the sample schools), but the factors were not mutually exclusive. There was a level of overlap that was evidenced in the participants' responses and was reflected in the writing of this thesis. In terms of government legislation in education, this can be subject to change depending on which party is in power, despite this, publicly funded schools (academies and LA maintained schools) need a level playing field in terms of legislation in order to bring about more equality for the pupils living in England.

It was evident from the research analysis that comments participants made, that teachers in their respective schools had been involved in the curriculum development process and had thought about a range of ideas which involved both internal and

external factors that impacted on their decision-making process (Flick, 2009, p. 635). The NC (2013) had acted as central guidance for development of their school's curriculum in all four sample schools and as a result heavily influenced the curriculum development process and outcome. However, in all four sample schools, teachers' discourse was not consciously influenced by the Academies Act (2010).

Participants from the four sample schools reported that teachers involved in the curriculum development process initially focused upon the context of their respective schools. The teachers' immersion in school life allowed them to gain insight into what they needed to include in their curricula, for example pupils' learning how to cook. *"...our children need to learn life skills such as cooking..."* (Participant 2, Academy 3)

Due to the dialogic nature of curriculum development, the 'voices' which teachers are exposed to in the interplay were an important part of the process of curriculum development and as such was one of the main factors that affected it. The research found that teachers were mainly able to engage in a free flow of sharing ideas which was extremely important in the sample schools because vocabularies and discourse was the data set teachers had used in their thinking (Priestley, Biesta, Robinson, 2015, p. 59).

The context of each of the sample schools required teachers to look at the various groups of pupils they served, for example EAL and disadvantaged pupils with SEND, to ensure the developed curriculum could meet their needs. Participants commented that where there were gaps in pupils' learning, teachers could modify and adapt the curriculum for them at a personal level and on a daily basis.

An interesting finding was that the four sample schools involved in the research had developed a cross-curricular model for foundation subjects which linked topics and learning to 'real life' whilst maintaining discreet lessons in reading, writing and mathematics. This cross-curricular approach occurred because of the issues each of the schools had in reaching national attainment standards in each of the core subjects at the time of the research. Therefore, the core subjects remained discreetly taught. Equally, whilst the schools had designed foundation subject learning though topics, they felt it was important to link the learning to 'real life' in order to broaden many of the pupils' life experiences.

In terms of referring to a range of publications to support the curriculum development process these resources were narrow as they tended to rely upon, and were influenced by, the NC (2013). The sample schools had failed to consider a range of other publications that may have served them just as well or supplemented the NC (2013). One possible reason for becoming overly reliant on the NC (2013) as the primary form of guidance in the curriculum development process, the four sample schools were using a document was because they were familiar with it and knew the contents would dovetail to the secondary phase KS3 curriculum. This was understandable because using the NC (2013) gave teachers confidence in providing, insofar as possible, a seamless transition between KS2 and KS3 therefore ensuring that pupils would experience fewer 'academic' subject difficulties as they transitioned into the secondary phase of schooling. Participants displayed an inherent trust in the NC (2013): reliance on it was not questioned at any point throughout the interviews. Perhaps teachers' thinking had been somehow influenced by years of NC curriculum knowledge to ensure there were safety mechanisms (via the guidance of the NC (2013)) in place, so that pupils achieved a broad and balanced range of knowledge

through their curriculum. There is, however, a wider discourse that must be referred to here. By maintaining the status quo, risk is reduced and failure is avoided (Edwards and Blake, 2007). It is teachers who ultimately have the responsibility to deliver the curriculum (Trowler, 2003) and ensure that pupils learn and reach the standards required of them.

The research found that the few criticisms that did arise about the NC (2013) were that it was firstly, not detailed enough and that secondly, that it had too much content.

 For example, Participant 2 from Academy 4 commented that.

"...Our curriculum has to be able to be built upon by secondary school teachers, so if we do not teach our children the right knowledge then we are going to do them a disservice. If we mainly teach knowledge that sits outside of the NC, our pupils are going to find it very difficult at secondary school. Our children will end up being behind in their knowledge as secondary schools teach a traditional curriculum. They will end up playing catch up." (Participant 2, Academy 4)

From the evidence provided from the interview results, teachers found it difficult to move away from the NC (2013) and step into the role of curriculum developers, perhaps fearful of too much change. This suggested some level of ontological uncertainty whereby teachers were unsure as to whether they were doing the 'right thing' - perhaps due to the factors of performativity being brought into question (Ball, 2003).

Participants' comments about the curriculum development process in all the sample schools were reflective of their own personal capacities and the capacities of other teachers as curriculum developers. Participants reported that some teachers lacked

confidence when determining what should be included within their respective school's curriculum and how it was to be developed.

"...some teachers are more confident than others. Those who were more confident had more to offer in regard to curriculum development." (Participant 1, Academy 2)

However, Participants also recognised that whilst many teachers found the process of curriculum development challenging, there was a sea change for many of them involved in the process because the process itself acted as professional development for them.

"A number of teachers felt they had learnt quite a lot through the process" (Participant 4, Academy 4)

In terms of the notion of teacher autonomy regarding curriculum development, this seemed to be somewhat limited because external guidance through publications may have skewed teacher's thinking. With teachers thinking seemingly dominated by the NC (2014) because all four sample schools embraced it in the development of their school's curriculum, it is suggested that an intrinsic tension was created between what the pupils' needs were in terms social, emotional, physical, and academic needs and government curriculum legislation and the range of resources available to them. This ultimately impacted on teacher autonomy. Although the notion of leader autonomy was not specifically explored in this research, the research indicated that leader autonomy was also limited. Unsurprisingly, leaders within the sample schools were heavily influenced by government legislation and expectations along with the demands of Ofsted inspections. Although leaders have to be mindful of legislation and what inspection demands of a school, over preoccupation with legislation and inspection can stifle teachers' creativity when undertaking curriculum development. It

was evident from the interview data that Participants felt under pressure to conform with government guidance.

The empirical data from the research suggested that, for teachers to become proficient in curriculum development, they would benefit from having the necessary professional training required to undertake such an enormous task. As an aside, this may have implications for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) because it is a skill that teachers require in schools today. This is significant because if teachers are to become more heavily involved in developing their school's curriculum, they can become central figures for increasing the life chances of their pupils. In reflecting upon Reay's (2017) views in the literature review, in regard to inequalities in education within the English schools, the development of curricula that provides enriched opportunities for pupils to thrive will start to counter some of the effects of being raised in impoverished circumstances.

Whilst this research had flagged a number of factors both internal and external factors identified by participants, three key factors emerged as pivotal to the curriculum development process. Firstly, teachers knowing and understanding the needs of their pupils so that they are able to design a curriculum that meets their needs. One that is very reflective of pupils' needs and living conditions. Secondly, that academy schools need to make the most of the legislation afforded to them in regard to curriculum development (autonomy). Thirdly, teacher training around curriculum development, which will provide the necessary experience to become proficient curriculum developers who can critically examine and evaluate the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs (emotional, physical, and academic) of the pupils. (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2015). These three key findings are discussed in Chapter 5 alongside reflections in terms of the research and recommendations.

Chapter 5

Reflections and Recommendations

Introduction

The interpretivist analysis of participants' interviews enabled me to gain insights into the factors that influenced how four sample primary academy coastal schools developed their curricula. Each of the four sample schools that took part in the research provided contextual information about the school and community it served. The evidence provided by the participants referred to the school profile and therefore raised the level of importance as this being a key factor for each coastal academy school when developing their curriculums. For example, the geographical location and the socio-economic landscape in the communities that they served. Although the school's context was not a direct interview question, participants referred to it as a key factor as it needed to be considered when developing the school's curriculum. Therefore, it was beneficial to this research to be able to examine the profiles of each school. The Methodology Chapter (see p.98) refers to the school profiles which helps to put participants' responses into context. The schools' contexts identified that each school served an area of high deprivation. Therefore, each sample school needed to take into account the social imbalances that were prevalent in each of these schools, such as disadvantaged pupils compared to pupils from more affluent backgrounds. This highlights Reay's (2017) concerns in terms of the inequality in education in schools in England (see p.16-18).

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

Three significant key findings emerged from the research data. The school context/profile influenced the development of each of the respective schools' curriculum intent throughout the process of curriculum development. The profiles of each of the four schools were located in coastal areas and, as such, previous studies undertaken by Ovenden-Hope and Passy (2015) and Stoke (2017) highlighted that there was increased underperformance in schools in coastal areas due to a number of factors (see p.28, Chapter 1). Therefore, it became imperative that teachers involved in curriculum development should take the school's context/profile into account when developing their school's curriculum. It could possibly be said of any school but in terms of this study the findings concurred with the factors highlighted in previous studies. The evidence provided by the participants showed that teachers used their knowledge and understanding of the school's context and its pupils to consider how to formulate a curriculum that would best serve their pupils. The participants' evidence suggested that they were best placed to be involved in the curriculum development process as they knew their respective schools' contexts/profiles as well as their pupils and as such could design a curriculum that would meet their needs. Further evidence from participants' interviews demonstrated that teachers' thinking was influenced by internal and external factors which affected their attitudes and approach to curriculum development. For example, their knowledge base in regard to the curriculum development process, their capacity to build a school's curriculum, along with government legislation that could affect the curriculum development process. Both internal and external factors impacted on their professional experiences and potentially on their work as curriculum developers.

Further research evidence shared by the participants demonstrated the importance of school leaders affording teachers' autonomy in the curriculum development process in order to be effective curriculum developers (see p.52.) A possible by-product of this is teachers developing ecological agency which can only occur when teachers are working collectively together to make informed decisions (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2013) (see p.64-68). The impact of this is that the autonomy afforded them would allow school leaders and teachers to design and develop a curriculum that is able to meet the needs of their pupils.

5.2 A Discussion of the Summary of Key Findings, the Location and the Coastal Context of the Four Primary Academy Coastal Schools

The location and coastal context of the four sample schools influenced the development of each of the respective schools' curriculum intent throughout the process of curriculum development. Each of the schools' curriculum intent was established by the teachers' knowledge of the context and the pupils they served. In this research, the sample schools served areas of deprivation located in coastal regions in the South-East of England. (As discussed in Chapter 1p.26), each of the sample schools were situated on the edge of coastal towns. The government's statistical information revealed that a significant number of schools that serve coastal areas tended to underperform against National Standards, which are measured through SATs tests at the end of Key Stage 2 (see p. 203). This was replicated in each of the sample schools. To rectify this situation, each sample school undertook a curriculum review to improve core standards, which was further prompted by the introduction of a new NC (2013). Although academies are exempt from having to follow the NC (2013), it was clear from its contents that the government was raising its expectations on what pupils should know by the end of a key stage. As a result, pupils core

knowledge was nationally tested under framework in 2016. The raising of

expectations of what pupils should know not only covered the core subjects but

foundation subjects as well (2013). The evidence provided by the participant showed

that there was a reluctance for primary academy schools to embrace full autonomy of

curriculum development as they were nervous of new national inspection regimes

which came into place in 2016.

The government did not arrange any national training for teachers in terms of the

implementation of the new curriculum (NC, 2013). Schools were just given a year to

prepare for its commencement in September 2014. A consequence of this was that

schools needed to work together to provide teachers with the new knowledge-based

curriculum. An increased expectation of what pupils should know by a certain age set

out in the NC (2013) contents presented a challenge for schools in general. Whilst

causing a reluctance for academies to move away from the NC (2013) contents, which

is evidenced in participants interviews (see p.143). Hence, most schools were

reviewing their curricula to align with the NC (2013). The whole curriculum review

process had a domino effect on the contents of the National Standard Assessment

Tests (SATs), which were reflected in the rise in expectations set out in the NC

(2013). Testing for the new standards of knowledge linked to the NC (2013) began in

2016 (Key Stage 2). Test results are published by the Standard Testing Agency (STA).

Each of the sample schools that participated in this research found the challenge of

curriculum review demanding, as indeed did numerous other schools of different

designations. A significant number of schools did not reach national expectations

(65% combined) in 2016 compared to SATS outcomes in 2015. The Participants in

the sample schools commented that the schools causally linked reading, writing and

mathematics to the NC (2013) and felt compelled to adhere to it due to pressure to do well in the SATs (ref. p.143-145, Appendix C, p.205).

The research found that the personal capacities of the teachers involved in each of the sample schools' curriculum development process appeared to increase, and this was evidenced in their responses. This then enabled some of the teachers to develop a level of ecological agency through the process, dependent upon the autonomy afforded them by leaders. This raised levels of awareness for both leaders and teachers and, as a result, moved the curriculum development process into a new trajectory of learning for both parties. This was illustrated when one participant remarked that teachers who were not aware of how the curriculum was developed would benefit from being involved in the curriculum development process, so they learnt about the process through first-hand experience.

The Impact of Contextual Factors on Curriculum Development

The table below illustrates the number of disadvantaged pupils within each of the sample schools that came from impoverished backgrounds.

Academy	No. on School Roll	No. Disadvantaged Pupils
1	432 (inc. Nursery)	220
2	359	205
3	386	175
4	426 (inc. Nursery)	184

Table 2: Disadvantage Data per Primary Academy Coastal School

With each of the sample schools having a significant number of pupils coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, some Participants involved in this research commented that for many of the pupils, the additional learning experiences they had in schools

were sometimes the only opportunities they had in life to look at the wider world and make sense of it. One Participant remarked, … *'our children lack experiences in life, we live by the sea, but some have not even been down to the beach'*. Reay (2017) highlighted the inequalities in education within schools in England. The raising of expectations and levels of knowledge in the NC (2013), especially for many disadvantaged pupils, could create even greater gaps in learning as they struggled to keep up with pupils from schools in more advantaged areas. For many of the impoverished pupils within the sample schools, the government had provided funding (Pupil Premium Grant) (P.P.G) for schools working within those contexts. The purpose of the funding was to try and address the inequities in experiences disadvantaged pupils had in order to close learning gaps between them and non-disadvantaged pupils.

Social changes are slowly being made to the education system in England including the introduction of disadvantaged pupil funding (PPG), but the funding, as it stands, is still inadequate. Funding needs to increase to provide the resources for disadvantaged pupils to be put on a more even footing with their peers. As Reay (2017) asserts, the English educational system is split between those who are affluent and can afford private education and those that are impoverished and do not have the benefit of choice where they may receive their education.

This research found that in each of the sample schools, teachers focused on pupils' learning needs and particular attention paid to impoverished pupils. This was to ensure they were providing them with the kinds of learning experience and opportunities that would start to level up the lack of positive experiences and opportunities they had had so far in their young lives (Skipp, Higgins, Sharp, MaCleod, Bernardinilli, 2015 p.12) and to help them have the best possible life chances. Hypothetically, this could

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potentially increase their chances to escape impoverishment in the longer term however that is not to negate other groups of pupils such as SEND. Instead, it provides an opportunity to investigate pupils' needs and aid them with more rounded experiences so they can move forward with confidence to the next stage in their school lives.

From the evidence accumulated in this research, a curriculum must meet the majority of pupils' needs and therefore must take into consideration the location and the community that it serves. Once the school's curriculum has been developed, it must become a living document that is not put on a staffroom shelf to gather dust, but a document that is frequently referred to and systematically reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. For the school's curriculum to be fit for purpose, it must be sensitive to changes within the immediate educational community and also to national changes in education.

This research found evidence to suggest that as part of the curriculum development journey, collaboration and feedback are important (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2013, p. 293). In the research findings, teachers and school leaders had worked together at various stages throughout the curriculum development process to gather relevant information for discussion so that they were able to make informed decisions. Working in groups allowed them to focus tightly on each step of the process. The evidence for this is drawn from participants' interviews (ref. Appendix C p.205).

What emerged from the research data in all four schools was that both teachers and leaders had the capacity to develop curriculums that matched pupils' needs in their respective primary academy coastal schools, all of which have challenging context/profiles. Teachers have worked together in groups in all of the schools which

has benefited the curriculum development process. They have, in the main, had no formal training in whole curriculum development but have benefited from working in groups. In addition, it is suggested further changes in the national education system need to be addressed in order to compensate for the impoverished positive learning opportunities and experiences disadvantaged pupils have. For example, the government needs to redress the imbalances in government legislation particularly in terms of curricula relating to both maintained and academy schools (publicly funded). This would, at least, put disadvantaged pupils on a more equitable playing field in terms of the curricula offered.

5.3 Internal and External Factors that Influenced Teachers' Approach to the Curriculum Development Process

The evidence provided by participants in this research has demonstrated that teachers' thinking, in regard to the curriculum development process, was influenced by internal and external factors which affected their attitudes and approach (see p.65). The internal factors were teacher involvement and autonomy, formulation of teachers' beliefs, teacher curriculum knowledge base, capacity in developing a primary school curriculum for schools in a coastal setting as many schools working in coastal setting are serve areas of high deprivation (Ovenden- Hope and Passy, 2015 see p.30). The participants' perceptions of the external factors that affect curriculum development are the sample schools' context/profiles, pupil intake, governmental expectations and political intent, accountability measures (standards) and potential parental influences on curriculum development.

What emerged from the research data was that the internal and external factors strongly influenced teachers' beliefs and discourse as they went about the process of developing the curriculum in their respective schools. Their beliefs and discourse were evolving properties at an ontological level. The participants reported that teachers employed various tools to enable them to formulate their thinking and establish ways of working together, capturing their ideas from their dialogue in a written form. Initially, teachers worked together in groups to review the existing curriculum and then went on to develop a new offering for their school. This approach was common in each of the sample schools. Whilst there were certain 'instruments' such as frameworks, processes, and products (Acedo, (2013), UNESCO, IBE,2013) accessible to teachers in connection with their sociocultural settings, there was a lack of evidence from any of the four sample schools using a curriculum model which suggests the curriculum development process (CPD) had become somewhat of an organic process based on teachers own professional knowledge.

In reflecting on the evidence provided by the participants, teachers enact certain beliefs, values and norms in their working and training environments which can affect the way they think and learn about their roles (Moje and Wade, 1997) which can ultimately impact on the curriculum development process. This is reinforced by Herman (2008, p. 192) and Wertsch (1991) who suggest that teacher voices are affected by the culture of the institutions they penetrate either on an individual or group level. From the research, there is evidence of a further influencing factor: the prominence of government documents used by the respective sample schools in particular the NC (2013). This may have been a result of the internalisation of policy discourse (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson 2015, p 57) which had been entrenched in teachers' thinking. The research indicated that the degree to which this entrenchment

occurred varied from school to school. However, each of the sample schools involved in the research referred to the NC (2013) as a key document and, in essence, teachers followed the knowledge content within it to develop their own curricula. This document, alongside performativity and the national inspection framework, strongly influenced teachers' thinking about curriculum development. It is important to note that there is a danger with such adherence to the NC (2013) that an impoverished curriculum offer could be developed and not necessarily the type of curriculum pupils may truly need to overcome barriers in learning and their young lives (see p.16-17). However, whilst the sample schools used the NC (2013) as the primary document for their curriculum development work, they were able to exercise a broader conception of the curriculum by enriching the pupils' learning through a range of activities, such as theatre visits and going to the zoo.

This research found that teachers' 'I' positions influenced their thinking which enabled them to develop a curriculum suitable for their respective school. Working as part of a team allowed a culture of curriculum development to be realised, which was integral to the way the schools operated throughout the curriculum development process either at macro, meso or micro level. The research suggested that whilst a framework for curriculum development is beneficial, each teacher or leaders' personal and professional experiences brought something different (and additional) to the process. These personal and professional experiences would ultimately help to shape each of the sample school's curricula. However, some of the Participants acknowledged a strong steer from leaders in the curriculum development process (see p. 203). Despite evidence of a strong steer in the process of curriculum development in some of the sample schools, overall, the Participants remained clear in their ability to work in groups and act as change agents. Evidence from the research found that the

ecological conditions in the respective sample schools' environment indicated that they felt buoyed-up as a curriculum development team and were able to gain some level of ecological autonomy through the curriculum development process (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2013 (see p.64-71). The research indicated that this resulted from their dialogic discourse, which was given some level of power through the creation of a topic linked to the NC (2013). This research showed that teachers developed professional learning experiences beyond the knowledge contained in the NC (2013) and ultimately had a level of autonomy to plan pupils' actual learning experiences. The research data showed that the levels of autonomy that were given to teachers in the development of their school's curriculum was afforded to them through leaders being prepared to allow teachers independence within the curriculum development process. Research evidence suggested that the ebb and flow of school life and the structures and systems that existed within each sample school, including those imposed by the government, were determined not only by the senior leaders of each school but also the teachers involved in the construction of those structures and systems and the curriculum being one of them. The curriculum development team in each sample school considered the school's context and pupils' needs before implementing structures and systems. The research also highlighted the importance for leaders to bring clarity to teachers' roles and responsibilities particularly when they are leaders of subjects. This is mainly aimed at foundation subject leaders rather than core subject leaders because core subjects tend to be given high profiles in primary schools. The reason for this is that external bodies such as Ofsted and parents, need to be provided with clarity of how subject knowledge is being taught within the school. The Ofsted Inspection Framework (2016) inspects a school's curriculum in totality and at a much greater depth than in previous frameworks. For example, the 'deep dive' approach to examining curriculum subjects by investing the quality of

provision in the subject by questioning pupils, teachers, subject leader, and governors

about the subject and by looking at workbooks and observing lessons. The quality of

education is determined by evaluating the extent of the intent, implementation, and the

impact the curriculum has on learners (The Education Inspection Framework, 2016, p.

9-10, section 26). Ultimately Ofsted inspectors have the same expectations of a

school's curriculum despite its designation: each of the sample schools were inspected

under the same framework (The Education Inspection Framework 2016).

The research evidence found that the effect of the Academies Act (2010) on

curriculum development had little impact. This was most likely due to the sample

schools' concern about the standard of educational provision they were providing and,

as such, they continued to hold the NC (2013) as their primary document for

curriculum development for fear of failure when it came to an Ofsted inspection.

However, inspectors make judgements about whether a school's curriculum is broad

and balanced and fit for purpose, not whether an academy school's curriculum is

aligned to the NC (2013). The advantages for schools being judged on the same

inspection framework should mean schools all start from a level playing field, but

unfortunately, school inspections can sometimes be detrimentally affected by

inspector bias.

This research highlighted that the NC (2013) had acted as the central guidance for

curriculum development undertaken in each of the four respective sample schools.

Ironically, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the development of each sample

school's curricula was not consciously influenced by the Academies Act (2010),

although it did afford schools a level of autonomy in the development of their

curricula. Whilst each of the sample schools were influenced by the NC (2013), the

research indicated that the schools had failed to consider a range of other publications

that may have served them well, for example, extending teachers' thinking and acting as exemplars alongside NC (2013) guidance or the sample schools may have consulted with other primary academy coastal schools which would have helped to broaden both teachers discourse and thinking. This could have provided some level of inspiration and guidance, which would have assisted the sample schools in broadening teachers' thinking.

The question that arose from the research was why the NC (2013) was so influential in the four sample schools' work on curriculum development. It is my contention that by using the NC (2013) as principal guidance in the curriculum development process, the sample schools were using a document with which they were familiar, were confident with and knew would dovetail to the secondary phase KS3 curriculum. Evidence from the research indicated that teachers' thinking had been engineered over the years through statutory compliance to the NC (2013) and prior to conversion to academy status. Research findings also indicated that teachers' knowledge of the NC (2013) provided safety mechanisms (via the guidance of the NC (2013)), enabling pupils to achieve a broad and balanced range of knowledge through the school's curriculum. There is also a wider discourse that must be referred to, which I have alluded to in Chapter 4 (see p. 101). As referred to by Edwards and Blake (2007), using the NC (2013) as the primary source document for curriculum development enabled the teachers in the sample schools to reduce a level of risk regarding their (revised) curriculum, that is, a curriculum that was not broad and balanced. The NC (2013) had kept the sample schools on a safe track in their curriculum development process because it is deemed as broad and balanced by the DfE (2013) and aligns itself to the statement made in the Academies Act (2010) about school's curricula having to be broad and balanced. Consequently, the research indicated that using the NC (2013) as

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the primary source document for curriculum development in the four sample schools enabled teacher confidence to be maintained. It is essential for teachers to be confident both in the development of the curriculum and its content because it is they who ultimately have the responsibility for curriculum delivery, ensuring that pupils learn and reach the standards of knowledge required of them at their particular age.

The research data clearly indicated the influence that the NC (2014) had had on teachers' thinking and was significant in the research findings. Furthermore, the strong influence of the NC (2013) in the curriculum development process in the sample schools may have been due to the familiarity the schools had with it and the fact that reading, writing, and mathematics are tested against the contents of it (SATS). However, research evidence suggested that the NC (2013) had somewhat narrowed the views of some of the teachers in the sample schools, but over time it is posited that this stronghold of the NC (2014) may have diminished as schools became more confident and competent in curriculum review and development. The research also suggested that a school's curriculum enrichment activities have the potential to become increasingly powerful if aligned with the school's values. This, in turn, may affect how the curriculum is planned and taught at a micro level, which may create momentum for further curriculum development which moves directly away from the NC (2014) and becomes embedded in the school's bespoke curriculum.

5.4 Teachers' Development of Autonomy and Agency

This research demonstrated the importance of school leaders affording teachers' autonomy in the process of developing a school curriculum. Participant interview data from the research indicated that teachers developed autonomy at three different levels.

The research found that the first level of autonomy occurred at the macro-level, which involved government legislation (namely the Academies Act, 2010), whereby academy schools are afforded autonomy over their curriculum. This autonomy meant they could develop and design the school's curriculum including how it was to be structured and vision, values, and aims. The second level of autonomy that the research highlighted occurred at the meso-level and resided with the respective sample schools' leaders. The school leaders who afforded teachers autonomy in curriculum development enabled the development of some level of teacher agency. As a consequence, the development of teacher agency enabled teachers to become effective change agents in developing their school curriculum.

The third level of autonomy the research found was the autonomy afforded to teachers that occurred at the micro-level, in the classroom. This included daily curriculum planning at classroom level by teachers and their design of learning tasks. The question that the research raised about teacher autonomy was, by having autonomy at these three levels, what is indicated about teachers' involvement in curriculum development in the four sample schools?

The research data highlighted that autonomy becomes more diluted as it reaches teachers at classroom level. This strongly suggested that autonomy could exist in the sample schools, but it tended to be afforded to teachers according to their roles and responsibilities. Research evidence indicated that the top-down approach to curriculum development, in terms of teacher autonomy, indicated that teachers who were not afforded autonomy by leaders had a much-reduced opportunity to work and think independently. (ref. p. 209)

Emerging from the research data was the notion of teacher autonomy being intrinsically linked to teacher agency, because teacher agency is unlikely to occur

without the other (Priestly at el., 2015). However, when teachers work together and have autonomy to influence curriculum development outcomes, an ecological approach to teacher agency can be realised (Priestly, 2015). Ecological agency can be achieved given the right conditions, through a collective autonomy that considers cultures and structures in schooling (Biesta, 2015).

The research brought up an interesting finding about pupils, that they may achieve agency for themselves when encouraged by a class teacher to investigate and formulate their ideas regarding a particular topic. This was mentioned by one Participant whereby they, *'encouraged their pupils to come up with ideas in terms of their learning and then to allow them to put them into practice.'* (Participant 2, Academy 4). This type of agency led to a co-construction of the curriculum in terms of lesson design and knowledge to be taught. Participant interview data indicated that with teachers able to design lessons and content at classroom level, they were also able to afford pupils the opportunity to develop their own agency in terms of what they would like to learn and how they would like to learn it. What does this tell us about what can be achieved in curriculum development in schools when teachers and pupils are given the opportunity to work together on the curriculum? The research found that when pupils are involved in the curriculum development process, the teacher is more likely to move from a position of 'prime constructor of knowledge' to one of 'co-constructor', which is more likely to afford pupils a level of input in their learning. Although this was not evident in all four sample schools, Participant 1 from Academy 3 explained how some teachers, prior to a new topic being taught, would co-construct the knowledge and the types of tasks with their pupils particularly prior to embarking on a new topic.

'I will sit and chat with the children about their next topic of learning. Through the chat, we talk about what they know already and then we talk about what they need to learn. I'm not the only one that does this'. (ibid.)

The research data provided by Participants from the sample schools showed that autonomy and agency are proportionate to the status each curriculum developer held within the respective school. Primarily, autonomy and agency were dependent on the respective school leader in determining the autonomy and agency afforded teachers when developing a whole school curriculum. Participant 3 from Academy 2 shared that whilst they felt their headteacher wanted his teachers to be innovative regarding curriculum development, he also wanted to maintain an overarching view (and final say) about how it should be structured and designed. *'Our Headteacher is pretty good, we were all fairly keen to have our thinking heard. He was happy to go along with much of what we had discussed.' (ibid.)*

5.5 Research Limitations

When considering the impact of this research, it is important to note that it was a small-scale, qualitative case study and was not designed to be generalised. There were two fundamental limitations to this research, firstly the number of sample schools and the time allocated to interviewing the participants from the respective schools. If the research were to be repeated, a larger number of sample schools would provide more data to work with. Consequently, more data would give greater validity to the outcomes of this small-scale case study.

The second limitation of this research was the lack of time afforded to the interviews due to work pressures within the sample schools and professional work pressures on

my behalf. If more time had been given to interview each of the participants,' there would have been the potential to explore in more depth their responses and interrogate their answers further. This would have enabled the collection of data to broaden my knowledge and understanding of how the teachers undertook the task of curriculum development in their respective schools. Despite these limitations, the findings represent informed and interesting practice from which the four sample schools may draw upon as they undertake the process of curriculum development in the future.

5.7 Final Reflections

The underlying sociological aim of this research is stated in the Introduction (Chapter 1). The aim of this research was to explore the premise 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum.' This was timely research because schools were reviewing their curricula and considering changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2016) to ensure that each school was clear on their curriculum intent, implementation, and impact. The work undertaken in the four sample schools addressed an under-researched area in the primary sector of education: schools that were specifically located in coastal areas, with a significant number of disadvantaged pupils, EAL and SEND pupils living in areas of high deprivation (see p. 91-97). Coastal schools had been a focus for the government, so the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching were high profile for each of the sample schools.

This research not only identified key factors and emergent factors that were influential to curriculum development but, through the analysis of the interviews, it identified factors that underpinned teachers' work in this field. Historically, each of the sample schools had fluctuating professional environments, which meant staff turnover was

relatively high at the time the research was conducted. Unfortunately, in some of the sample schools, there was a sticking plaster mentality by some of the leadership (buying in an off the shelf curriculum to save the day and raise standards). This sticking plaster mentality arose from the pressure on schools to meet or exceed government expectations and was further fuelled by the demands of Ofsted inspections. Having returned to the schools more recently, as a School Improvement Adviser, there were two main areas that enabled the schools to move forward. One being the revised curriculum and the other being Quality First Teaching in each of the schools. The sample schools have managed not only to provide an enriched curriculum for their pupils, but also to build structures and systems that have enabled the schools to continually improve outcomes for the majority of their pupils at every Key Stage. Although these schools have built curricula to improve outcomes for pupils, this is only a partial solution to the issues around inequality in education as highlighted by Reay (2017). It is recognised that for some pupils there are ongoing struggles, and that is not to negate or diminish their plight.

This research found that one of the key factors that influenced curriculum development in the sample schools was the context in which they worked - each school worked within a coastal area where there was high deprivation. The sample schools had significant numbers of pupils that lived in impoverished circumstances along with high numbers of EAL and SEND pupils. Therefore, the development of their curricula had to serve a broad range of pupils' needs. This had influenced the teachers' tools for thinking and the curriculum development process had created opportunities for some to develop ecological agency through autonomy and work within their school environments.

This research posits that whilst there was no particular framework chosen for the curriculum development process in any of the schools, interview data showed that because of teachers' daily iterational experiences, rich dialogic discourse and their 'I' positions, a framework naturally formed which aligned itself to Taba's (1962) framework for curriculum development. This research found that the answers to the interview questions participants gave suggests that the way in which teachers contributed to their school's curriculum development became an extension of their personal capacities and provided them with some level of intrinsic professional development. The extension to which their personal capacities grew was dependent upon teachers' mindsets and a willingness to become curriculum developers, and agents of change within the role. The success of teachers' developing ecological agency (working and learning environment together) through the process of curriculum development was defined by and proportionate to their level of engagement with it.

It was apparent from the findings of this research that the Academies Act (2010), in terms of curriculum autonomy afforded to the sample schools, was not at the forefront of teachers' thinking when they were involved in developing their respective school's curriculum. Instead, the autonomy afforded to schools in the Academies Act (2010) had been subsumed by the accountability factors tied up in legislation, along with the expectations written into the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2016), which impacted on the development of the school's curriculum. In principle the Academies Act (2010) afforded schools autonomy in curriculum development, yet in practice the legislators of the Academies Act (2010) seem to have overlooked that the autonomy to construct a curriculum requires a certain amount of knowledge in how to do so. This research has highlighted a mismatch between legislation and actual school practice in

curriculum development. Historically, both primary school teachers and primary school leaders were significantly constrained as to what was taught and how it was taught through government initiatives. This resulted in both teachers and leaders becoming deskilled in curriculum development practises, which has led to impoverished knowledge about how to develop their schools' curricula. The sample schools were compelled to use the NC (2013) to ensure a smooth transition of a body of knowledge gained in the primary phase to the secondary phase of education, so their fundamental knowledge and skills could be built on. In addition, the sample schools felt compelled to teach NC (2013) core subject knowledge in order for pupils (end of KS data) national assessment data to meet or surpass national expectations, which is collected and collated for each school (SATs) and then put into league tables for society, namely parents to compare. This is indicative of the policy agenda that promoted both autonomy and accountability; a dyad with opposing intentions (academies autonomy to construct their own curricula versus accountability through national tests) and one that has created disharmony and tied the hands of curriculum developers. The DfE (2011a) have been responsible for thwarting curriculum developers due to the demands of a compliance regime where there is high stakes testing (DfE 2016a, Academies Act, (2010)).

This research found that there was little choice for the sample schools but to follow the NC (2014) content for the core subjects, reading, writing and mathematics, because pupils would be assessed according to the knowledge set out in the NC (2013) (DfE, 2013). There seemed to be little room for autonomy for the sample schools because they had become a political football tossed between DfE legislation and government inspection frameworks. Whilst legislation is the law, headteachers/principals keep a careful eye on inspection frameworks because it is

through the inspection framework that they can be criticised in terms of their school's curriculum and the quality of education the school provides. If curriculum developers are to be enabled to bring about deep curriculum transformation, then the legislation that stymies the curriculum development process needs to be adjusted or even overhauled. In terms of individual teachers and leaders in the sample schools, the overriding issue in this research was how the curriculum development process could be managed so that teachers' and leaders' learning experiences through the curriculum development process could be enriched through the dialogic discourse providing autonomy to pursue critical thinking.

5.8 Recommendations

The emerging recommendations from this research, into 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum,' needs to be considered in relation to aiding effective curriculum development. The first recommendation is for curriculum developers (teachers) to take into account the school's context/profile and the factors that would affect the curriculum development process both internally and externally. The second recommendation would be to take every opportunity government legislation provides (Academies Act, 2010), in terms of autonomy over the development of an academy school's curriculum, in order to develop a dynamic curriculum that provides equality of opportunity and meets the pupils' educational needs. One that ultimately prepares pupils for their next stage in education, as well as the wider world. The third recommendation is for teachers to be fully conversant with the curriculum development process prior to undertaking whole school curriculum development. This would enable teachers to work with greater

understanding of the process, for example, understanding how curriculum models may be of use.

This research is deemed to be original because curriculum development has never been researched before in the four primary academy coastal schools chosen to take part in this research. The research has investigated, 'what are the factors that teachers in four primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum.' It has drawn upon each teachers/participants perceptions in the four chosen primary academy schools and has provided knowledge in terms of the factors that the participants thought influenced the development of each of their school's curriculum. Therefore, this research has added to the limited body of knowledge already in existence about primary academy coastal schools' curriculum development and represents an under-researched element of an ever-changing landscape that warrants further academic attention to support curriculum development in academy coastal schools.

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Appendix A

Sample Letter

SAMPLE LETTER - Email to Headteacher

Dear

Curriculum Research Project: An Investigation of the Factors that Teachers in Four Primary Academy Coastal Schools in South-East England Identified as Influential in the Development of their Respective School's Curriculum

I would just like to confirm what was agreed at my visit with you.
The research to be undertaken is a study of the Factors that Influenced the Development of the School's Curriculum in four Primary Academy School in Kent.

The research will involve interviewing teachers that were involved in the process of developing the school's curriculum. The interviews will need to be recorded for the purposes of analysis.

Anonymity of the school and the teachers involved will be protected.

Please would you kindly complete the consent form below for my records.

Many thanks once again for your support.

Jayne True

Curriculum Research Project

Headteacher Consent Form

The leadership of the school agree to the research, Jayne True, undertaking the research on the 'factors that influence the development of the school's curriculum' as described in the letter to the headteacher.

Headteacher:
Signature:

Date:

Appendix B

Sample Correspondence

Information for teachers:

I am a doctoral student who works in the field of education. In order for me to complete the doctoral degree I need to undertake some research in schools. My research is focused upon the teacher's perspective of identifying the factors that influence the development of the curriculum.

The research involves interviewing teachers on how they have been involved in the school's curriculum development and in what they think are the factors that may affect the development of the school's curriculum.

I will need to undertake interviews ideally with teachers individually.
Anonymity will be protected for all participants.

Teachers will have the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

I hope that you will be willing to be involved in the research be because it is my belief that building a curriculum that allows pupils to gain the necessary experiences and knowledge in preparation for their next phase of education is vital for their success.

I am happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.
Please would you kindly complete the consent form below for my records.

Thank you in anticipation of your agreement to take part in the research.

Jayne True

_____

Teacher Consent form
Curriculum Research
I consent to taking part in the research described.

Name………………….

Signature:……………. Date ……………………

Appendix C

Sub-questions arising from variables within the Literature Review

1. *Do primary academy schools take advantage of the Academies Act, (2010) in relation to curriculum development? - External factor*

2. *What factors influence teachers' perceptions when involved in curriculum development? (Priestley, Biesta and Robinson, 2012) - Internal factor*

3. *Does the location and context affect curriculum development in primary academy schools? (Fotheringham et al. 2012) Internal factor*

4. *How has government policy affected the development of the school's curriculum? (Sheerman, 2008) External factor*

5. *Has testing (SATs) constrained the development of the school's curriculum. (OECD, 2012) External factor*

6. *Do all teaching staff have the opportunity to become involved in curriculum development? (Leverett, 2000)* Internal factor

7. *Is the academy's curriculum personalised for children? (Priestly, Minty and Eager, 2014) Internal Factor*

8. *Do the teachers work with each other teachers and leaders to develop their school's curriculum? (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012) Internal Factor*

9. *Does the headteacher/leaders support teacher involvement in curriculum development? (Male 2012) Internal factor*

10. *What documentation has been used to guide curriculum development? (Male 2012; Priestly, Minty, and Eager 2014) External factor*

11. *Do teachers feel responsible for the curriculum they are developing? (Priestley, 2011) Internal factor*

12. What other contributory factors affect curriculum development?

Internal/external factors

13. Do you feel that accountability measures affect the curriculum? (Male 2012,

Priestly, 2011; Priestly et al., 2012; Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2012

External factor

14. Does the academy follow the N.C.? External factor

15. Do you think teachers' influencing the development of the curriculum is

important? (Male, 2012, Brundrett and Duncan, 2010) *Internal factor*

16. Do teachers feel confident about their expertise in terms of curriculum design?

(Alexander, 2010) *Internal factor*

Appendix D

Interview Schedule

Research Question: What are the factors that teachers in our primary academy coastal schools in South-East England identified as influential in the development of their respective school's curriculum?

The purpose of the research – I would like to ask you some questions that will enable me to understand the factors that are identified as influential to curriculum development. Thus, enabling academy schools to be better when developing their curricula.

Interview Format – Check that participants are happy to have their interviews recorded using a tape deck. I explained, I would ask each participant to check what they had said in their interview to ensure it was accurately recorded, as this would add further validation to the accuracy of the research.

Motivations – I hope this information will enable some academy schools to consider a number of factors before they develop their curriculum.

Timeline – The interview should take about 15 -20 minutes.

Transition – General discussion about their responsibilities in school and general professional background (Noted prior to recording) – to act as a participant settler prior to the recorded answers to the questions.

Check that the participant is comfortable to start the interview. Start the tape recorder.

Questions	Notes from interview
1. What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?	
2. To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?	
3. How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?	

Closing of Interview: I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know, so that I can successfully complete this research? I should have all the information I need. Would it be alright to contact you if I need to clarify anything?

There will be an opportunity for you to make an accuracy check on the information you have shared with me.

Thank you again for your participation in this research

Transcripts and Participants Interviews

An Investigation into: What are the Factors that Teachers in Four Primary Academy Coastal Schools in South-East England Identified as Influential in the Development of their Respective School's Curriculum?

Transcripts of Interviews

Academy 1: Participant 1 (A1Q1P1)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
When I look at my school…I think the society sets certain benchmarks which parents expect the school to meet government expectations…SATs. Once those expectations or needs of the society and parents were identified, we then started to set the curriculum. To a great extent, it is actually pupils for whom the curriculum is designed…it is not possible not to mention that they have an influence in the curriculum development process… we spoke to the pupils to see what they thought and what they felt they needed in the school's curriculum. In my view pupils cannot be ignored, especially when it affects them most as they are the ones who have to remember and understand what they have learnt.
Academy 1: Participant 1 (A1Q2P1)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Umm… I was involved in looking at what we had as a curriculum and then we looked at whether our topics fitted the National Curriculum. We needed to think about how we were going to change what we had to improve it. We thought about what would be different about it for our pupils so it can make a real difference to them. Some of our families are very poor so we thought about what experiences we could give them that they may never get. Like going to a theatre. We wanted the curriculum to provide life experiences to help our pupils to grow up and become someone who can contribute to our society.
Academy 1: Participant 1 (A1Q3P1)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I think our curriculum does meet the needs of our learners as it does prepare them for their next stage of education and provides them with skills and knowledge they will need. Our curriculum takes a child centred approach to learning. We plan from what a child knows. I also think it equips our pupils with the competencies and skills they need when they join different industries in future and start their jobs…it has to prepare them for their future. Through our curriculum we make our pupils aware of the social, political, environmental, international, and local issues in the wider world

so, they can play an important role as citizens when they grow up. I think it was Gove who said schools had to have a world-class curriculum…we have focused on what pupils need to know so we have looked at the National Curriculum and then we looked at howwe could design our school's curriculum to meet the needs of our pupils. We looked at what our pupils need living in this area and what they will need in future. We took pupil voice into consideration… and staff were asked what they thought.

Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q1P2)

Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?

I think one of the factors that influenced us most was that the curriculum needed to meet government standards in core subjects. Also, that parents and society expect children to learn certain things and achieve certain standards. These expectations needed to be given some consideration when we planned and designed the curriculum, and this also affected planning lessons. You just can't ignore that the children play an important part in the process. When I look at the curriculum development process in my school, at the initial stages of curriculum development, there was a discussion about what parents expected and what we could provide in the curriculum.

Academy 1 Participant 2(A1Q2P2)

Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?

I am just responsible for implementing the curriculum. My responsibility is just to do what they want me to do. Teachers not having enough input into the design of the curriculum.

Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q3P2)

Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?

It brings about the best outcomes with teachers using great approaches to learning …it also helps to produce learners that have all the competencies needed to live in the world today.
It focuses on not only instilling fundamental educational values and principles in learners but also the moralities that help to create a visionary mind-set among learners. It is in my opinion our curriculum attempts to develop all round competencies through rich curriculum content …making pupils equipped and up to date in respect to global standards whilst also focusing on the development of skills in various areas and interest for the learner.

Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q1P3)

Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?

The factors that affected the development of the curriculum was government requirements so our children can pass the government standards … SATs to ensure our children are ready for secondary transfer which means they need

national curriculum subjects, so they gain a basic education to do this. We can add to the curriculum by designing it a way that broadens children's experiences, such as going to the theatre. These types of activities are important as they enrich their lives as many of our children never get to experience such things as they lead impoverished lives. Parents, governors and the children themselves are all factors that affect how we develop and design our curriculum.
Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q2P3)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I looked with the rest of the team at what our existing curriculum covered. We then looked at our vision and values to see how our existing curriculum was incorporating our school values. We also looked at whether our values were still relevant to our school. We thought about how these would be taught through the curriculum. We wanted our content of our curriculum to really inspire our children so they could be aspirational in their lives. Some of our children do not get to experience what other children do, so we have to provide it for them. For example, going to the beach or the zoo. It helps them to become rounded young people, so it is so important what we include into the school's curriculum. Teams that do have a say into the development and content of the school's curriculum.
Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q3P3)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I think our curriculum does meet the needs of our learners because the majority of our children make good progress, and they are interested in what they learn. They come up with some good ideas themselves and where we can, we will adapt the curriculum to peak their interests, so learning is fun. Of course, we need to make sure our children are literate and numerate, so we try to match what the standards they are achieving in reading and writing are reflected in their topic work. We do prepare our children to move onto secondary school and the wider world. I do think secondary schools miss a trick in that they do not want to know what our children know in foundation subjects. Transition could be better for our year 6 children. I think they could do better in the foundation subjects if the secondary's had better knowledge about them.
Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q1P4)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
One of the main factors that I think affects the development of the curriculum is the children's needs. Children here generally come in well below what is expected nationally, so we have to look at what children know and do when they first start school…mm... to give them lots of experiences that will help them to learn and remember so they can meet national expectations at the end of reception… GLD a number of children don't which then affects the curriculum offered in year 1. SATS affects what we have to teach as there are government standards to reach at the end of each key stage… We try to plan topics with the children as we know

what knowledge they need to know. Linking the skills, they need to have to the learning is important, as they go hand in hand with the knowledge.
Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q2P4)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I was specifically involved in developing mathematics across the school. Maths's development and a move to using bar method, WRMH materials. Art and DT subject leader. The whole staff worked on the skills booklet.
Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q3P4)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
Our curriculum I think does meet the needs of our pupils. We differentiate children's learning if needed. However, we believe that quality first teaching makes a great deal of difference. It's all about the children remembering what they are taught so they can recall it when they need to. Our children start school well below national expectations which means we have to try and close learning gaps as soon as they start school. Language and communication are an area we have to focus on as soon as they start school. Children's vocabulary is generally weak. We have a large number of children whose English is a second language. By the time they move to secondary many of the children have caught up. We have tried hard not to narrow our curriculum because of their low starting points.

Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q1P1)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
There are many factors I believe. It may be the designers' choices, children's needs, or … the government standards. The community around the school can also be seen as a factor…they have certain assumptions about what pupils should be proficient in at a certain age, so that is what we have focused upon. This is what the academy will be judged on come an Ofsted inspection and by parents too. So, I think…these may be the factors.
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P1)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Well, we were called for a brief discussion one day where we were told about curriculum changes. Leaders obtained views about what the children would think about the changes from us and about how we felt about the changes to be made, but we didn't know what decisions had been taken. We only got to know of curriculum change when a lot of discussions had already been undertaken…so I can't say that I have made any major contribution. I feel I could have played a more important role and could have provided an understanding of the skills and strengths I have and what issues I face in the classroom which could have helped them…though I

admit that I do not have the expertise in the development of curriculum or in curriculum discourse.
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q3P1)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I believe our school's curriculum is learner-centred…pupils needs are important and should be included when developing the curriculum. Discussions have been carried out with us too… about what we think learners need.

Academy 2 Participant 2 (A2Q1P2)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Well…my school...curriculum development…. well, there are many factors. Well, the students we teach here will have a purpose in life and ultimately will make the society of the future. They will join different industries and businesses, so they need to get the basics from school…the basic skills, the basic concepts, the basic knowledge. It's a primary academy so, it is here their foundation in their skills and knowledge will be established. So, I think society and industries can influence the skills and knowledge that children need from a curriculum so this can be built upon in readiness to be part of the future workforce. And I think this should be considered when developing a curriculum. Curriculum designers need to identify what children are interested in and address this in the curriculum.
Academy 2 Participant 2 (A2Q2P2)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Well… we did deliver the materials and consulted the pupils, if you can call this involvement or a contribution to the process, but frankly I think this is a very limited role that we have played. Upon reflection, I feel teachers should be more involved and they should be given more voice… I think it is in the initial stages when teachers' opinions should be sought. We could have shared opinions about what we think our pupils need, we could have also carried out some research about what could work best and then report back to the leaders…there should be more collaboration and more teacher involvement. The role of the teacher in the curriculum development process is to provide the realities of what happens in the classroom. Those developing the curriculum are often not aware of the manner in which we fashion the curriculum…greater involvement for us at various stages may benefit curriculum development.
Academy 2 Participant 2 (A2Q3P2)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I think that the school's curriculum helps to produce rounded individuals who are able to meet the demands of the job market and be able to cope with life, whatever it brings. I also think the curriculum can be designed to include pupils' interests and enable them to be confident. I think some planning could be done in partnership with pupils which may meet their needs better.

Academy 2 Participant 3 (A2Q1P3)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Mm…factors that affect curriculum development. Well in reflecting on what we did, we took the views of parents, teachers, TAs, and pupils whilst thinking about government standards. We thought about industry and the kind of skills they would need to go into the jobs market in the future. Our leaders guided us to develop a curriculum that included their views. One which would help them to succeed in secondary school and beyond. We have basically stuck to the national curriculum as this knowledge will be what the secondary school will expect… also Ofsted.
Academy 2 Participant 3 (A2Q2P3)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
We work very collaboratively at school although some teachers were not as involved in the development of the curriculum as others which is a shame. There should have been a bit more collaboration and gaining of opinions wider that than senior leaders. We gauged the opinions of the children of how best to deliver our curriculum once we were about to implement it. Leaders looked at our children's needs and included a flexibility into the curriculum for significant and events such as the Royal wedding, Cricket world cup, WW1 centenary, local historical projects etc. I feel that I have contributed effectively to this whilst others feel they could have had more involvement. I think we are a good team and that the work undertaken together made it easier to establish what the school's curriculum was.
Academy 2 Participant 3 (A2Q3P3)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
There has always been a high focus on core subjects…which has been dictated by the government through National Assessments being completed at the end of each Key Stage. This has affected the way we have planned the curriculum but has provided schools with a basic standard by which children should have gained certain knowledge and skills. I think our children are well prepared to move onto secondary through the range of experiences school life gives them. It helps them to have the necessary skills to gain jobs in the future and contribute to society and the wider world. We need to provide an education that is equal of better to other countries so our children can work internationally if they choose to.

Academy 2 Participant 4 (A2Q1P4)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Factors that influenced us…Government standards, the national curriculum, pupils, parents, staff, governors as they need to approve it. I think as a school we meshed viewpoints well.
Academy 2 Participant 4 (A2Q2P4)

All teachers have had an integral part in developing our curriculum to varying degrees, some working as part of a group whilst others having a more strategic input. Senior leaders had been involved in developing the school's plan to identify the actions needed to review and implement our school's curriculum. Some teachers have tried to implement a more skills-based approach to planning. I particularly worked on Early Years and linked the children's skills and experiences through to year 1 experiences. We worked together to enrich the National Curriculum which we use as the knowledge base whilst developing topics that incorporate certain aspects of the National Curriculum.
Academy 2 Participant 4 (A2Q3P4)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
Our curriculum provides a range of experiences that enables them to understand the wider world. Of course, it is important that they are literate and numerate, but a school's curriculum is so much more. It provides the children with a basic knowledge in a number of subjects identified in the National Curriculum which has been broadened even further through special days projects, visitors and visits. Our children respond really well to additional events as some of them have not had the average experiences in their lives that the majority of other children would have experienced. These experiences enable them to become more rounded in their views and generally as young people.

Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P1)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
A lot of factors actually influenced the process of curriculum development. We looked at what we had initially come up with and then we linked it to the National Curriculum and then looked at each year group in terms of coverage. The state sets National Standards that we have to achieve, and then there are National Assessments that our children have to take in the core subjects… so we have to develop our pupils in these areas and get them to remember and recall things. So, I think this was a major factor that influences the process of curriculum development. Link to NC 2014
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q2P1)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I think my role has been to collaborate with the team who were designing the curriculum. We shared our experiences while we also shared suggestions related to the content and objectives. Sometimes we were lost…we did not know how to plan and what to plan for certain proficiencies and outcomes…those people on the development committee probably had some understanding of what they considered the

curriculum to be. We told the leadership what issues we were having, and they arranged briefing sessions to be able to answer our queries and then these were addressed…good communication about the changes I think is important for better implementation.
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q3P1)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
So far, I think it is meeting pupils learning needs well. We started with looking at the Primary National Curriculum but initially we faced some difficulties in understanding the language used in the written curriculum. It required us to make greater effort in getting pupils to recall things effectively and understand what they have learnt. Our school's curriculum is able to accommodate the varying interests of the learners …for example, some children who like science whilst others love art and have really good talent…so it provides a breadth of subjects. It takes into account not just the scientific mind but also the artistic mind. I think our curriculum encourages creativity and independence, which stimulates 'imagination and develops critical thinking skills in learners…these are some valuable aspects of the curriculum…for the learners these things can go a long way…when they enter the secondary phase.
Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q1P2)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Curriculum development is a long process and there are many things that you have to face and many factors to take into consideration. First, it is important that the parents feel comfortable and satisfied with what we are doing with their child at the school and how and what we are making their child learn. Also, to some extent teachers, and the skills and abilities that they have are an influence on the process of curriculum development. When our school began development of their curriculum, not only our views were sought but our strengths and weaknesses and abilities were also identified, and the curriculum was designed keeping those in consideration. So, in my view, our abilities and strengths and weaknesses may also be considered a factor.
Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q2P2)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I think we also have contributions to make to the process… an active role in the process. It is on the basis of the information that we provide that curriculum designers make their decisions.
Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q3P2)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
Well, it is situated in the local context. There is an understanding of the demands and needs of the school and of the local context in which the school exists. Though it doesn't ignore the wider context…. there is also attention paid to societal and global needs…the demands of the job…everything…

Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q1P3)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Factors that influenced curriculum development …Research based evidence of best practice including training that staff have been involved in i.e., Shanghai maths research group. Staff discussion and sharing of ideas, reviewing what went well and what could do with improving. Personal passions of staff and their subject expertise areas.
Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q2P3)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q3P3)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I think our curriculum really helps children to understand the wider world and their locality in which they live. The kind of topics we have designed to broaden our pupil's knowledge link more strongly to their locality, so they understand how they situated in their own lives. We have taken a view that they need to understand what is going on around them before we grow their knowledge about the wider world…nationally and internationally.

Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q1P4)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Influences on the development of the curriculum. I think our leaders have strong influences as we look to them to guide us or structure the development. Working collaboratively together… we were put into teams to look at various subjects based mainly on the knowledge content of the National Curriculum. Then we looked at what we already had… linked to the topics we taught in each year group. We asked pupils what they thought about the content… What topics did they enjoy? We have stayed with the National Curriculum because they need a basic knowledge in all the subjects…so they are ready for secondary. Of course, governors needed to approve the school's curriculum. We look at how we could meet our pupils needs. Many come from deprived backgrounds. We thought about the types of experiences our children were unlikely to have, so we wanted to incorporate great experiences into hook days.
Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q2P4)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I was involved in looking at the school's curriculum for years 3 and 4. We looked at the progression across the year groups particularly for topic work which included history, geography, art and R.E. It was interesting as we could mind map the topics and align them to the curriculum to ensure there was coverage and progression. We have included the National Curriculum in our school's curriculum as we thought

it was important to give them a common knowledge for secondary school.
Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q3P4)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
We have made sure that we have included the National Curriculum in our school's curriculum because we know that the knowledge, they will need at secondary will need to be built on so they can eventually take exams that will either get them a job or into college or university. So, we have to try and give them the kinds of knowledge and experiences that will provide them with a basic foundation from which they can build upon. We also focus on SMSC, so their development as young people are informed and provides them with a good understanding of how the world operates.

Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q1P1)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Well, there are many factors that impact on the process but when I see my school, I think the standards that have been set so far by the state and by the Primary National Curriculum, have had a lot of impact. When we think about planning a curriculum, what comes to the mind is that eventually our children must move to secondary school and eventually become part of the workforce. So, there is a need to prepare them to be able to become a part of the society they will join. Therefore, it is required that the curriculum includes those aspects that are required for functioning in a better manner in the society. The basic skills they need, the knowledge they need for starting high school and then getting into university, or later when they join different industries…this all had to be considered. Also, the designers may need to think about whether the teachers in the school will be able to achieve the objectives set for each year group.
Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q2P1)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
In the curriculum development process that was undertaken in our school, we were given a lot of opportunities for sharing out thoughts and views on it…what we wanted and how we wanted pupils to learn…we all shared it…some also shared ideas on the basis of the experience they had in the classroom…some teachers here have years of teaching experience, so they know a great deal about the issues and outcomes. I think they considered whatever we shared and when I got a look at the curriculum, there were a lot of things that we suggested included in it.
Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q3P1)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
I think our curriculum is one which nourishes the children's minds. Currently, there is a lot of attention and importance given to some subjects such as Maths or science or English. It should encourage pursuing any

subject that the child is interested in…equal opportunities and time for retaining their interest should be provided…also, it should polish their skills further. Our curriculum is of good quality…as it ensures that we deliver knowledge and skills in the best way to prepare the learners for global challenges and demands. It focuses on various subjects and the variety of interests of learners.

Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q1P2)

Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?

The curriculum has to be matched with indicators for each grade level. These can be seen as targets that need to be achieved when the curriculum is implemented. I think the school environment also has a role… For example, when there is a positive environment where everyone enjoys learning, and there is encouragement, there are better outcomes, and teachers put in more effort. Curriculum designers can then plan higher targets and expect more learning gains… so school environment for me is also a factor. Also, students' needs have to be included in the curriculum…without this it wasn't possible to develop such a curriculum that we have.

Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q2P2)

Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?

I do not say that we do not have a voice in the curriculum development process, but we do not have a direct role. It is in the hands of the developers whether they take into account what we shared with them. But when we go in the class, we have more autonomy. We can select and prepare suitable resources for the learners and also pace learning according to the needs of our students…so here our role can be seen as a more active one.

Academy 4 Participant 2(A4Q3P2)

Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?

Our curriculum is very simple and straightforward. It has to produce citizens that are able to meet the demands of the world…particularly those of the 21st century in which they are living…the technological and scientific advancements, the changes taking place in every sphere of life, require that the curriculum is such that it takes into consideration these areas. The curriculum here is comprehensive. It caters to the needs of our learners at all times. The curriculum prepares an individual to think about not only betterment of his own wellbeing but also to have a strong vision of bringing advancement and improvement to his surroundings…it makes an attempt of not only fostering the skills and expanding the knowledge base of an individual; it has the characteristics to mould a person into such a character that he begins to explore and think about their surroundings

Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q1P3)

I think the factors that affect developing the curriculum are probably quite common for all schools. Although we are an academy our school's curriculum still follows the National Curriculum as we wanted to make sure that our children have the basic knowledge they need for secondary school. In reviewing our curriculum, we thought about our children's needs are and what life experience they need for their age. We then thought about who else needs to be included in the development. We asked the pupils about what they would like to see. They had a range of ideas from learning how to fish, to learning how to ride a horse. Parent view and government standards are also important to consider. We have notified parents that we would be reviewing the curriculum and although invited to give their thoughts, there was no response. Governors were involved in the process in that they were kept up to date with the development and they provided feedback to us on what they thought.
Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q2P3)
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
I have felt I have been able to give a lot of input into developing the school's curriculum. We all worked in groups looking at different subjects within different year groups. Although the overall contents were agreed during these sessions there was an element of flexibility which allowed us as teachers to plan for the needs of the children in our class. Our school values were matched into how we would teacher some of the contents. These drove the curriculum.
Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q3P3)
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
We want the children to be resilient, creative, good communicators as well as problem solvers. As a Church school, it is important that they develop their spiritual lives too. Awe and wonder in our beautiful world are something that the curriculum should foster so that our children grow up to be the kind of citizens we would all like to be.

Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q1P4)
Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?
We reflect back on the targets that have been identified in SEF and SDP and see how we can best ensure that all children have access to a curriculum that challenges them and allows them to shine through their talents and succeed in areas they find difficult. The curriculum has to pay heed to what the statutory requirements are. A curriculum should work for all types of learners whether they are visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. A curriculum should give children the opportunity to have some input into their learning. The children are allowed in Early Years to make a lot of choices, but this generally decreases as they get older. We need to ensure that children are still given an element of choice and the chance to assume responsibility for

their learning. It should be about making the children resilient, creative, good communicators as well as problem solvers.
We love to bring the outside in, and children relish the opportunities to learn outside. Sharing good practice is a key element in ensuring a clear curriculum. Teachers are all still learners and we need to ensure that we continue to learn together.
Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?
Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q2P4)
Well, mmm… I helped to gather pupil voice in relation to the curriculum which revealed that they liked topics that involved real life experiences. They enjoyed visitors and school trips. In planning the curriculum, we decided that starting a topic with a trip or a visitor would help to enthuse the children and pique their interest to want to investigate areas of knowledge for themselves …especially the older children.
Question 3: How does your curriculum meet the needs of your pupils and prepare them for their future lives?
Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q3P4)
Our curriculum strives to give children a wide variety of experiential learning activities that they may not necessarily get otherwise. I always contextualise learning – if you enjoyed that here are the jobs you could do. We are reviewing the PSHE, RSE and wellbeing part of our curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.

Appendix F

An Investigation into: What are the Factors that Teachers in Four Primary Academy Coastal Schools in South-East England Identified as Influential in the Development of their Respective School's Curriculum?

Analysis of Thesis Questions

Colour coded – External Factor in turquoise

Internal Factors – no colour

Question 1: What factors have influenced curriculum development in your primary academy school?	
Academy 1: Participant 1 (A1Q1P1)	Factors
When I look at my school…I think the society sets certain benchmarks which parents expect the school to achieve with their children, so we first identified what expectations were from the school and then how we were going to enable the pupils to achieve the knowledge and understanding they need to meet government expectations…SATs. Once those expectations or needs of the society and parents were identified, we then started to set the curriculum. We used the National Curriculum (2014) to develop the main part of our school's curriculum as we are used to using it, then we started to enrich their learning experiences that we believe our children need. After all, they are the ones for whom the curriculum is designed…it is not possible not to mention that they have an influence in the curriculum development process… so, we spoke to the children to see what they thought and what they felt they needed in the school's curriculum. In my view children cannot be ignored, especially when it affects them most as they are the ones who have to remember and understand what they have learnt. When we are planning topics, we ask the	- Parents' expectations - Passing SATs/Standards - Government expectations - Needs of society - Pupils influencing the curriculum – what they need - Remembering and understanding learning - The National Curriculum (2014) - The children themselves (choices) - High deprivation and impoverishment of pupils

children what they think, as we sometimes plan them together.	
Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q1P2)	Factors

I think one of the factors that influenced us most was that the curriculum needed to meet the government standards set, so we have to follow for reading, writing and mathematics, and then there are also assessments that our pupils must take at the end of Key Stages. So, we have to develop pupils learning in these areas anyway. We have to teach them in a way that they can remember. These expectations needed to be given some consideration when we planned and designed the curriculum, and this also affected planning lessons. You just can't ignore that the children play an important part in the process. When I look at the curriculum development process in my school, at the initial stages of curriculum development, there was a discussion about what parents expected and what we could provide in the curriculum. We have a large number of children that come from poor backgrounds and as a result have frees school meals. Some parents have to access food banks. We try and help with school uniforms, and we have a breakfast club and afterschool club so that parents can work. It's very sad to see how tough some of our families are having it.	• Meeting Government Standards • Parents and society • Children as part of the process • Impoverishment
Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q1P3)	Factors
The factors that affected the development of the curriculum was government requirements so our children can pass the government standards … SATs to ensure our children are ready for secondary transfer which means they need a broad range of national curriculum subjects, so they gain a basic education to do this. We can add to the curriculum by designing it in a way that broadens children's experiences, such as going to the theatre. These types of activities are important as	• The government, parents, pupils, • Secondary school, teachers • SATs • National Curriculum • Enrichment activities • Secondary readiness

they enrich their lives as many of our children never get to experience such things as they lead impoverished lives. Parents, governors and the children themselves are all factors that affect how we develop and design our curriculum.	

Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q1P4)	Factors
One of the main factors that I think affects the development of the curriculum is the children's needs. Children here generally come in well below what is expected nationally, so we have to look at what children know and do when they first start school…mm... to give them lots of experiences that will help them to learn and remember so they can meet national expectations at the end of reception … GLD a number of children don't which then affects the curriculum offered in year 1. SATS affects what we have to teach as there are government standards to reach at the end of each key stage … We try to plan topics with the children as we know what knowledge they need to know. Linking the skills, they need to have to the learning is important, as they go hand in hand with the knowledge. Our children need us to provide a curriculum that meets their needs so they can be successful in life, which means although we follow the NC (2014), we need to give them a range of broader experiences that they may not necessarily get, such as life skills. There are many factors I believe. It may be the designers' choices, children's needs, or … the government standards. The community around the school can also be seen as a factor…they have certain assumptions about what pupils should be	● The quality of nursery education. ● Children's experiences prior to formal schooling ● Assessing needs ● Matching needs to learning ● Children's views ● Teacher views /leaders' views ● Linking skills ● Children's needs ● Developers' choices ● Government ● Context ● School communities ● Children's interests

proficient in at a certain age, so that is what we have focused upon. This is what the academy will be judged on come an Ofsted inspection and by parents too. So, I think…these may be the factors. When I think of a really effective curriculum, the first thing that comes to my mind is learners' needs. … Parental expectations need to be considered when planning a new curriculum or when the children undertake various projects. You just cannot ignore parents as they are important and should feel informed about what we teach. … parents and society expect children to learn certain things at a certain age and to be able to remember what they have learnt. ... When we were in the initial stages of curriculum development, there were also discussions about what parents would want to see and what we could provide in terms of the school's curriculum. …I think the thing that influences curriculum development the most, is that the curriculum is influenced by the government's standards. …some teachers are more confident than others. Those who were more confident had more to offer in regard to curriculum development.	

Academy 2 Participant 2 (A2Q1P2)	Factors
Well…my school...curriculum development…. well, there are many factors. Well, the students we teach here will have a purpose in life and ultimately will make the society of the future. They will join different industries and businesses, so they need to get the basics from school…the basic skills, the basic concepts, the basic knowledge. It's a primary academy so, it is here their	• Preparation for life/employment • Society • Industry • Future workforce • Children's interests

foundation in their skills and knowledge will be established. So, I think society and industries can influence the skills and knowledge that children need from a curriculum so this can be built upon in readiness to be part of the future workforce. And I think this should be considered when developing a curriculum. Curriculum designers need to identify what children are interested in and address this in the curriculum. We thought about what the curriculum needs to contain and the types of activities our children learn through. They need to be well motivated so learning hooks are important, something that will grab their imaginations, so they become immersed in what they are learning. We mind-mapped out our thoughts so we could make a cohesive plan moving from long, to medium to short term plans. … Some of our newest teachers didn't feel confident going into developing our school's curriculum, even some of our more experienced teachers felt somewhat unprepared for the job. …I believe for a curriculum to be highly effective it has to be learner-centred…their needs are important and should be included in the curriculum. The curriculum needs to be broad and balanced, so we fulfil government policy.	
Academy 2 Participant 3 (A2Q1P3)	**Factors**
Mm…factors that affect curriculum development. Well in reflecting on what we did, we took the views of parents, teachers, TAs, and pupils whilst thinking about government standards. We thought about industry and the kind of skills they would need to go into the jobs market in the future. Our leaders guided us to develop a curriculum that included their views. One which would help them to succeed in secondary school and beyond. We have basically stuck to the national curriculum as this knowledge will be what	- Pupils ==Government standards== ==Jobs for the future== - Views, parents, TAs, teachers and pupils

the secondary school will expect… also Ofsted.

Many of us developing the curriculum have had different professional experiences and life experiences, I suppose, which is a good thing because we can all bring different knowledge to the process.

…I do not say that we do not have a voice in the curriculum development process, but we do not have a direct role. It is in the hands of our leaders whether they take into account what we share with them or not. But when we go in the class, we have more autonomy and freedom. We can select and prepare suitable resources for the learners and also pace learning according to the needs of our pupils…so here our role can be seen as a more active one.

…An effective curriculum, I understand, is one in which the varying interests of the learners are accommodated…for example, some pupils like science but there are others who love art and have got really good talent…so if it is to be a highly effective curriculum, it has to take into account not just the scientific mind but also the artistic mind.

'…so, if it is to be a highly effective curriculum, it has to take into account not just the scientific mind but also the artistic mind.'

Society sets certain benchmarks of what the parents expect their children to achieve in school, so we had to identify what parents expect from the school and what will enable children to achieve at a certain age. Once these expectations or local needs of society and parents are identified, we can then set the curriculum. A curriculum that can make them aware of expectations and how to move out of the poverty trap by having a good education.

Society sets certain benchmarks of what the parents expect their children to achieve in school, so we had to identify what parents expect from the school and what will enable children to achieve at a certain age. Once these expectations or local needs of society and parents are identified, we can then set the curriculum. A curriculum that can make them aware of expectations and how to move out of the poverty trap by having a good education. 'I personally found by being involved in the school's curriculum development really useful, having an opportunity to work with colleagues has meant the process has enabled us to have more ownership. Once we worked together and used the same process for each subject, I think we became better at it'. 'Our Headteacher is pretty good, we were all fairly keen to have our thinking heard. He was happy to go along with much of what we had discussed'. One teacher had said that she would just prefer to be told what to teach'.	

Academy 2 Participant 4 (A2Q1P4)	● Factors
Factors that influenced us…Government standards, the national curriculum, pupils, parents, staff, governors as they need to approve it. I think as a school we meshed viewpoints well. In primary school I think the curriculum should teach pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be able to move to their next school. It is important they are literate and numerate. '… can make them (pupils) aware of expectations and how to move out of the poverty trap by having a good education.	● NC 2013 ● Government ● Pupils ● Staff ● Governors

Keeping in mind the key features of the curriculum development framework, considering the government legislation, as a school we strongly believe in teachers being part of curriculum development and not be passive in the role. Our curriculum needs to take on board our children's needs	

Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P1)	● Factors
A lot of factors actually influenced the process of curriculum development. We looked at what we had initially come up with and then we linked it to the Primary National Curriculum and then looked at each year group in terms of coverage. The state sets National Standards that we have to achieve, and then there are National Assessments that our children have to take in the core subjects… so we have to develop our pupils in these areas and get them to remember and recall things. So, I think this was a major factor that influences the process of curriculum development. I think I had less autonomy when we were developing the school's curriculum together as we used the NC (2014) to base our curriculum on. We have not strayed far from the contents … …When we first started to think about the curriculum, we thought about what parents expected, so, we have kept them informed with what we were doing and asked them to tell us if there was anything, they wanted us to consider'. …When we first started to think about the curriculum, we thought about what parents expected, so, we have kept them informed with what we were doing and asked them to tell us if there was anything they wanted us to consider'. we didn't get much of a response from parents. I think it is because	● Link to PNC* ● Coverage in each year ● National Standards ● Recall

our parents think it is something the school should just get on and deal with.	
…When we first started to think about the curriculum, we thought about what parents expected, so, we have kept them informed with what we were doing and asked them to tell us if there was anything they wanted us to consider'. we didn't get much of a response from parents. I think it is because our parents think it is something the school should just get on and deal with. …in the learning, teaching and assessment activity, that pupils should not be viewed as the passive recipients of knowledge but rather that they should be engaged and make contributions towards the processes of learning, (teaching and assessment). 'I will sit and chat to the children about their next topic of learning. Through the chat we talk about what they know already and then we talk about what they need to learn. I'm not the only one that does this'.	

Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q1P2)	Factors
Curriculum development is a long process and there are many things that you have to face and many factors to take into consideration. First, it is important that the parents feel comfortable and satisfied with what we are doing with their child at the school and with what we are making their child learn. Also, to some extent teachers, and the skills and abilities that they have are an influence on the process of curriculum development. When our school began development of their curriculum, not only our views were sought but our strengths and weaknesses and abilities were also identified, and the curriculum was designed keeping those in consideration.	- Parents - Teachers' skills and abilities - Strengths and areas of weakness in terms of knowledge and delivery

So, in my view, our abilities and strengths and weaknesses may also be considered a factor. It is important that the parents feel comfortable and satisfied with what we are doing with their children at the school in relation to their learning. …The guidelines of government legislation for the curriculum development framework also support the role of teachers. We follow the guidelines of government legislation … …our children need to learn life skills such as cooking… 'Although we have the NC (2014) it isn't the whole of our curriculum. We have added in a variety of lessons that help pupils to understand the wider world around them'.	

Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q1P3)	Factors
Factors that influenced curriculum development …Research based evidence of best practice including training that staff have been involved in i.e., Shanghai maths research group. Staff discussion and sharing of ideas, reviewing what went well and what could do with improving. Personal passions of staff and their subject expertise areas. One of the leaders spoke about what we were going to do and how we may think about developing a curriculum to meet the needs of our children living in this area. There didn't seem to be any clear plan. (Participant 3 Academy 3).	

I feel I have autonomy to design the tasks that pupils are going to learn through. We are not told how to teach. …

Our curriculum not only focuses developing knowledge and skills, but it helps to instil fundamental educational values and principles among the learners but also modalities that help to create a visionary mind-set amongst the learners. It is in my opinion that a highly effective curriculum tries to development all-round competencies. A rich content of knowledge which makes pupils more fully equipped for the world.

Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q1P4)	Factors
Influences on the development of the curriculum. I think our leaders have strong influences as we look to them to guide us or structure the development. Working collaboratively together… we were put into teams to look at various subjects based mainly on the knowledge content of the National Curriculum. Then we looked at what we already had… linked to the topics we taught in each year group. We asked pupils what they thought about the content… What topics did they enjoy? We have stayed with the National Curriculum because they need a basic knowledge in all the subjects…so they are ready for secondary. Of course, governors needed to approve the school's curriculum. We also thought of how we could meet our pupils needs. Many come from deprived backgrounds. We thought about the types of experiences our children were unlikely to have, so we wanted to incorporate great experiences into hook days as part of their projects. …As a school we decided to look at a curriculum subject together, so each of us teaching in specific year groups could contribute to what was working well in the subject and	• Teachers • Leaders • National Curriculum • Pupils • Standards • Secondary School • Governors

what wasn't. This was more linked to topics and foundation subjects. …They will join different industries and businesses, so they need to get the basics here for that…the basic skills, the basic concepts, the basic knowledge……... It's a primary academy so it is here that their foundations will be established. …Well, there are many factors that impact on the process but when I see my school, I think the standards that have been set so far by the government and by the national curriculum, have had a lot of impact. Reading, writing, and mathematics has to be included in the curriculum and it needs to follow the contents in the NC (2014) as the children will be tested on this knowledge, through national tests. … 'a colleague voiced that she wasn't feeling confident about developing the curriculum'.	

Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q1P1)	Factors
Well, there are many factors that impact on the process but when I see my school, I think the standards that have been set so far by the state and by the Primary National Curriculum, have had a lot of impact. When we think about planning a curriculum, what comes to the mind is that eventually our children must move to secondary school and eventually become part of the workforce. So, there is a need to prepare them to be able to become a part of the society they will join. Therefore, it is required that the curriculum includes those aspects that are required for functioning in a better manner in the society. The basic skills they need, the knowledge they need for starting high school and then getting into university, or later on in life when they join different	- PNC* - State/Government - Prep for secondary - Prep for life/living in society - University - Joining the workforce - Achievable objectives

industries…this all had to be considered. Also, the designers may need to think about whether the teachers in the school will be able to achieve the objectives set for each year group.

I think the aspect that makes our curriculum highly effective is that it encourages creativity and independence, stimulates their imagination and develops critical thinking skills in the learners… these are some of the valuable aspects of our curriculum…for the learners these things can help pupils go a long way in life….

'We looked at the profile of our children and the context we work in, to determine the strategic needs of pupils. Many come from impoverished backgrounds.'

Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q1P2)	Factors
The curriculum has to be matched with indicators for each grade level. These can be seen as targets that need to be achieved when the curriculum is implemented. I think the school environment also has a role… For example, when there is a positive environment where everyone enjoys learning, and there is encouragement, there are better outcomes, and teachers put in more effort. Curriculum designers can then plan higher targets and expect more learning gains… so school environment for me is also a factor. Also, students' needs have to be included in the curriculum…without this it wasn't possible to develop such a curriculum that we have. Knowledge is not the only thing that is valued in a highly effective curriculum, but development of skills should also be focused on. I also think a highly effective curriculum should encourage learners to explore and understand independently, make them creative….and to become	● Learning environment ● Targets

critical thinkers, and develop their talents, skills, and abilities. …We were thinking about children's life experiences. Some of our children live on the estate near the school and get very little chance to travel out of the area and for some pupils their world around them is very local to where they live. We thought about how we could give them experiences that would allow them to feel motivated and passionate and take some of our pupils beyond their narrow world, by providing experiences that teaches them about the wider world. It is hard when many of our children come from families with problems…like unemployment. We have to try and balance the books for them and give them a good education. …It is kept in consideration by the developing body that the curriculum has to be matched with indicators for each year group. These can be seen as targets that need to be achieved when the curriculum is implemented. …Our curriculum has to be able to be built upon by secondary school teachers, so if we do not teach our children the right knowledge then we are going to do them a disservice. If we mainly teach knowledge that sits outside of the NC, our pupils are going to find it very difficult at secondary school. Our children will end up being behind in their knowledge as secondary schools teach a traditional curriculum. They will end up playing catch up.	

Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q1P3)	Factors
I think the factors that affect developing the curriculum are probably quite common for all schools. Although we are an academy our school's curriculum still	● Pupils ● National Curriculum ● Secondary school

follows the National Curriculum as we wanted to make sure that our children have the basic knowledge they need for secondary school. In reviewing our curriculum, we thought about our children's needs are and what life experience they need for their age. We then thought about who else needs to be included in the development. We asked the pupils about what they would like to see. They had a range of ideas from learning how to fish, to learning how to ride a horse. Parent view and government standards are also important to consider. We have notified parents that we would be reviewing the curriculum and although invited to give their thoughts, there was no response. Governors were involved in the process in that they were kept up to date with the development and they provided feedback to us on what they thought. I think an effective curriculum to be one that is the best…it should be best in the approach to teaching it provides…it should be best in terms of the outcomes it brings…it could also be one that produces learners that have all the competencies needed for living in the world. Our curriculum focuses on imparting values and ideologies of life that foster confidence and self-growth in the learner's mind. The school curriculum helps the pupils broaden their horizons. Our children really need examples of people who have aspired in life from poor backgrounds. In my school's case learning about careers is really important for the children as there is a large number of parents out of work.	● <mark>Poverty /disadvantaged</mark> ● Parent feedback ● Governors

Question 2: To what extent, if any, have you contributed to curriculum development in your primary academy school?	
Academy 1: Participant 1 (A1Q2P1)	Factors
Umm… I was involved in looking at what we had as a curriculum and then we looked at whether our topics fitted the National Curriculum. We needed to think about how we were going to change what we had to improve it. We thought about what would be different about it for our pupils, so it can make a real difference to them. They are central to our decisions, discussions have been carried out with us too, about what we think learners need. However, I think that I am just responsible for implementing the curriculum, my responsibility is just to do what they want me to do. (Leaders) Some of our families are very poor so we thought about what experiences we could give them that they may never get. Like going to a theatre. We wanted the curriculum to provide life experiences to help our pupils to grow up and become someone who can contribute to our society.	● National Curriculum (for England, 2014) contents ● Making changes to make a real difference and meet pupils' needs. ● Planned event days to enhance the school's curriculum

Academy 1: Participant 2 (A1Q2P2)	Factors
We worked together in groups reviewing what we had as a curriculum already. This helped us to think about what was working and what needed to be changed. We all had had different teaching experiences, so we worked in groups of 3's and 4's. The subject leader was with us so, when we started to review a subject, we had someone with us who was familiar with what was being taught across the school.	
Academy 1: Participant 3 (A1Q2P3)	Factors
I looked with the rest of the team at what our existing curriculum covered. We then looked at our vision and values to see how our existing curriculum was incorporating our school values. We also looked at whether our values were still relevant to our school. We thought about	● Teams that do have a say in the development and content of the school's curriculum ● Pupil voice

how these would be taught through the curriculum. We wanted our content of our curriculum to really inspire our children so they could be aspirational in their lives. Some of our children do not get to experience what other children do, so we have to provide it for them. For example, going to the beach or the zoo. It helps them to become rounded young people, so it is so important what we include into the school's curriculum. There is a lot of attention and importance given to some subjects such as Maths or science or English…this does not make a curriculum highly effective. The curriculum should encourage pursuing any subject that the child is interested in	
Academy 1: Participant 4 (A1Q2P4)	**Factors**
I was specifically involved in developing mathematics across the school. Maths's development and a move to using bar method, WRMH materials. Art and DT subject leader The whole staff worked on the skills booklet	● <mark>SATS – National Curriculum</mark> ● Parent ● Pupils ● Teachers

Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P1)	**Factors**
Well, we were called for a brief discussion one day where we were told about curriculum changes. Leaders obtained views about what the children would think about the changes from us and about how we felt about the changes to be made, but we didn't know what decisions had been taken. We only got to know of curriculum change when a lot of discussions had already been undertaken…so I can't say that I have made any major contribution. I feel I could have played a more important role and could have provided an	● Views of staff

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understanding of the skills and strengths I have and what issues I face in the classroom which could have helped them…though I admit that I do not have the expertise in the development of curriculum or in curriculum discourse.	
Academy 2 Participant 2 (A2Q2P2)	Factors
Well… we did deliver the materials and consulted the pupils, if you can call this involvement or a contribution to the process, but frankly I think this is a very limited role that we have played. Upon reflection, I feel teachers should be more involved and they should be given more voice… I think it is in the initial stages when teachers' opinions should be sought. We could have shared opinions about what we think our pupils need, we could have also carried out some research about what could work best and then report back to the leaders…there should be more collaboration and more teacher involvement. The role of the teacher in the curriculum development process is to provide the realities of what happens in the classroom. Those developing the curriculum are often not aware of the manner in which we fashion the curriculum…greater involvement for us at various stages may benefit curriculum development.	*(Reflecting upon how teachers could have been more involved)*
Academy 2 Participant 3 (A2Q2P3)	Factors
We worked collaboratively mainly after the contents was decided up by leaders Some teachers were not as involved in the development of the curriculum as others which is a shame. There should have been a bit more collaboration and gaining of opinions wider than senior leaders. We gauged the opinions of the children of how best to deliver our curriculum once we were about to implement it. Leaders looked at our children's needs and included a flexibility into the curriculum for significant and events such as the Royal wedding, Cricket world cup, WW1 centenary, local historical projects etc. I feel that I have contributed effectively when invited to do so whilst others feel they could have had	- Senior leaders - Events (e.g., WW1 centenary) included into the curriculum

more involvement. I think we are a good team and that the work undertaken together made it easier to establish the school's curriculum in terms of topic work.	

Academy 2 Participant 4 (A2Q2P4)	Factors
Not all teachers have played an integral part in developing our curriculum, some have worked as part of a group whilst others having a more strategic input. Senior leaders had been involved in developing the school's plan to identify the actions needed to review and implement our school's curriculum. Some teachers have tried to implement a more skills-based approach to planning. I particularly worked on Early Years and linked the children's' skills and experiences through to year 1 experiences. We worked together to enrich the National Curriculum which we use as the knowledge base whilst developing topics that incorporate certain aspects of the National Curriculum.	● Skills based curriculum

Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q2P1)	Factors

I think my role has been to collaborate with the team who were designing the curriculum. We shared our experiences while we also shared suggestions related to the content and objectives. Sometimes we were lost…we did not know how to plan and what to plan for certain proficiencies and outcomes…those people on the development committee probably had some understanding of what they considered the curriculum to be. We told the leadership what issues we were having, and they arranged briefing sessions to be able to answer our queries and then these were addressed…good communication about the changes I think is important for better implementation.	● Teachers' involvement ● Good communication

Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q2P2)	Factors
I think we also have contributions to make to the process… an active role in the process. It is on the basis of the information that we provide that curriculum designers make their decisions.	● (Teachers') active role throughout the process
Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q2P3)	**Factors**
I have been involved in reviewing the curriculum we have in place already to ensure the knowledge covered in the National Curriculum is included in our school's curriculum. We have felt as a school that it is the children's entitlement to have this knowledge taught to them, so they have the necessary knowledge and skills in place for their secondary education. I was also involved in looking at our school's values to make sure we are providing a curriculum that meets their needs. A group of us looked at the feedback from pupils and parents on the curriculum and tried to incorporate their thoughts.	● Primary National curriculum* review against existing school's curriculum ● Secondary transition ● Values ● Feedback ● Parents
Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q2P4)	**Factors**
I was involved in looking at the school's curriculum for years 3 and 4. We looked at the progression across the year groups	● Reviewing the curriculum

particularly for topic work which included history, geography, art and R.E. It was interesting as we could mind map the topics and align them to the curriculum to ensure there was coverage and progression. We have included the National Curriculum in our school's curriculum as we thought it was important to give them a common knowledge for secondary school.	● Combing subjects into topics ● <mark>National Curriculum</mark>

Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q2P1)	Factors
In the curriculum development process that was undertaken in our school, we were given a lot of opportunities for sharing out thoughts and views on it…what we wanted and how we wanted pupils to learn…we all shared it…some also shared ideas on the basis of the experience they had in the classroom…some teachers here have years of teaching experience, so they know a great deal about the issues and outcomes. I think they considered whatever we shared and when I got a look at the curriculum, there were a lot of things that we suggested included in it.	● Sharing of ideas on the basis of experience to formulate the school's curriculum
Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q2P2)	Factors
I do not say that we do not have a voice in the curriculum development process, but we do not have a direct role. It is in the hands of the developers whether they take into account what we shared with them. But when we go in the class, we have more autonomy. We can select and prepare suitable resources for the learners and also pace learning according to the needs of our students…so here our role can be seen as a more active one.	● Developing the curriculum to match children's needs in the classroom
Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q2P3)	Factors

I have felt I have been able to give a lot of input into developing the school's curriculum. We all worked in groups looking at different subjects within different year groups. Although the overall contents were agreed during these sessions there was an element of flexibility which allowed us as teachers to plan for the needs of the children in our class. Our school values were matched into how we would teacher some of the contents. These drove the curriculum.	• Working in groups to review the curriculum • Agreed contents in each session • School values matched to contents/lessons

Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q2P4)	Factors
Well, mmm… I helped to gather pupil voice in relation to the curriculum which revealed that they liked topics that involved real life experiences. They enjoyed visitors and school trips. In planning the curriculum, we decided that starting a topic with a trip or a visitor would help to enthuse the children and pique their interest to want to investigate areas of knowledge for themselves …especially the older children.	• Events (e.g., school trips) enhancing the curriculum • Children's interests • Pupil's voice

Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q1P4)	Factors
We reflect back on the targets that have been identified in SEF and SDP and see how we can best ensure that all children have access to a curriculum that challenges them and allows them to shine through their talents and succeed in areas they find difficult. The curriculum has to pay heed to what the statutory requirements are. A curriculum should work for all types of learners whether they are visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. A curriculum should give children the opportunity to have some input into their learning. The children are allowed in	• Targets • Leaders • Meeting pupils' needs • Statutory requirements • Learning styles • Pupils given choice • Attributes/values

Early Years to make a lot of choices, but this generally decreases as they get older. We need to ensure that children are still given an element of choice and the chance to assume responsibility for their learning. It should be about making the children resilient, creative, good communicators as well as problem solvers. We love to bring the outside in, and children relish the opportunities to learn outside. Sharing good practice is a key element in ensuring a clear curriculum. Teachers are all still learners and we need to ensure that we continue to learn. I know we are still in the process of developing our curriculum but still I feel teachers should be more involved and they should be given more voice…and I think it is in the initial stages when their opinions should be sought about what they (leadership team) want us to do in the classroom. We can share what we go through in the classroom, we can also carry out some research about what could work best and report to them…there should be more collaboration and more teacher involvement. …Teachers have a lot of knowledge, and they are the ones who have first-hand experience of how the pupils react to or learn certain things…so they can play an important role…they can be a good source to get information from…I think when teachers' input is sought, the developed curriculum is better. A number of teachers felt they had learnt quite a lot through the process.	● Learning environments ● Teachers as learners

Appendix G

Factors Affecting Each Academy's Curriculum Development

Coding - factors numerical numbers and colour coded after the identified factors. This is produced in a form of a table indicating the frequency of the factors mentioned in the interviews.

Academy 1

Academy 1 – Identified Factors for question 1	Academy 1 – Identified Factors for question 2	Academy – Identified Factors for question 3
Participant 1 (A1Q1P1)	Participant 1 (A1Q2P1)	Participant 1 (A1Q3P1)
17.Parents expectations 1.Passing SATs 1.Government expectations 2. Needs of society 11.Pupils influencing the curriculum – what they need 7.Remembering and understanding learning	1.National Curriculum contents 7.Implementing changes to make a real difference and meet pupils' needs. 18.Planned event days to enhance the school's curriculum	3.Secondary school 3.Prepares pupils for the next key stage 7.Child centred approach 2.Competencies and skills Jobs 18.Curriculum to include social, environmental and international knowledge 18.A world class curriculum Meeting pupils' needs Pupil voice and Staff voice
Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q1P2)	Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q2P2)	Academy 1 Participant 2 (A1Q3P2)

1.Meeting Government Standards 2.Societal needs 11.Children as part of the process	9.Teachers not having enough input into the design of the curriculum	10.approaches to learning 19.Good outcomes / assessment 5.Worldwide competences 6.Values 18.Rich content 5.Global standards

Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q1P3)	Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q2P3)	Academy 1 Participant 3 (A1Q3P3)
1.The government, 3.Secondary school, teachers need 1.SATs 1.National Curriculum for England (2014) 18.Enrichment activities	18.Teams that do have a say into the development and content of the school's curriculum. 11.Pupil voice	7.Meeting the need of pupils 7.The curriculum is adapted when necessary 1.Standards in reading writing and mathematics 18.Planning topic work 3.Secondary school/foundation subjects 5.World-wide/internationalism
Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q1P4)	Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q2P4)	Academy 1 Participant 4 (A1Q3P4)
20.The quality of nursery education 20.Children's experiences prior to formal schooling 19.Assessing needs 7.Matching needs to learning 11.Children's views Teachers' views /leaders' views 21.Linking skills	1.SATS – National Curriculum 17.Parent 11.Pupils 9.Teachers	7.Differentiated work to meet the needs of pupils 22.Quality first teaching 1.National Standards 7.Language and communication English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils' needs to access the curriculum 3.Secondary education

Academy 2

Academy 2 – Identified Factors question 1	Academy 2 – Identified Factors question 2	Academy 2 - Identified Factors question 3
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q1P1)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P1)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q3P1)
7.Children's needs 9.Developers' choices 1.Government 22, Context 22.School communities 11.Children's interests	9. Views of staff 11.Children's views 9.Greater contributions of teachers	7.Pupils' needs 7.Sharing learners' needs when developing a curriculum
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q1P2)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P2)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q3P2)
2.Preparation for life-Employment 2.Society 2.Industry 2.Future workforce 7.Children's interests	*(Reflecting upon how teachers could have been more involved)* 7.Pupils' needs 9.Collaboration between leaders and teachers to develop the curriculum	7.Rounded individuals 11.Planning in partnership with pupils to meet their needs 11.Pupils' interests
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q1P3)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P3)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q3P3)
11.Pupils 1. Government standards 2. Jobs for the future 17,9,11. Views, parents, TAs, teachers and pupils	18.Events included into the curriculum 7.Leaders reviewing children's needs 22.Sharing how to deliver the curriculum 9.Collaboration between teachers and leaders to develop the curriculum	1.National Assessments Standards 18.Gaining knowledge and skills 3.Secondary school 2.Jobs 5.Society and the wider world Competing Internationally
Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q1P4)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q2P4)	Academy 2 Participant 1 (A2Q3P4)
1.National Curriculum 1.Government 11.Pupils 9.Staff 23.Governors	21.Skills based curriculum 9.Different levels of input by teachers and leaders	7.Ensuring children are literate and numerate 1.National curriculum contents 18.Special events

Academy 3

Academy 3 – Identified Factors question 1	Academy 3 – Identified Factors question 2	Academy 3 - Identified Factors question 3
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P1)	Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q2P1)	Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q3P1)
1.Link to National Curriculum for England (2013) 18.Coverage in each year National Standards	9.Teachers' involvement 9.Good communication Leaders' controlling the curriculum development process 9.Briefing sessions to keep everyone in the loop re curriculum development	1.National Curriculum for England (2013) 7.Gifted children 7.Creativity and independence 7.Interests of children 3.Secondary phase of education
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P2)	Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q2P2)	Academy 3 Participant 2 (A3Q3P2)
17.Parents 14.Teachers' skills and abilities 14.Strengths and areas of weakness in terms of knowledge and delivery	9.Playing an active role throughout the curriculum development process	22.Local context – location that the school serves 5.Societal and global needs 2.Job demands
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P3)	Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q2P3)	Academy 3 Participant 3 (A3Q3P3)
14.Training Staff 18.Maths's research 9.Sharing ideas with staff and good practice 9.Subject expertise	1.National Curriculum for England (2013) review against existing school's curriculum. 3.Secondary transition 8.Values 9.Feedback 17.Parents	5.The wider world 22.Local area 18.Topics of interest
Academy 3 Participant 1 (A3Q1P4)	Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q2P4)	Academy 3 Participant 4 (A3Q3P4)

8.Teachers 8.Leaders 1.National Curriculum 11.Pupils 1.Standards 3.Secondary School 23.Governors	9.Reviewing the curriculum 18.Combing subjects into topics 1.National Curriculum for England (2013)	1.National Curriculum for England (2013) 3.Secondary school 2.Jobs/employment 2.College or university 21.Basic skills 15.Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) content

Academy 4

Academy 4 – Identified Factors question 1	Academy 4 – Identified Factors question 2	Academy 4 -Identified Factors question 3
Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q1P1)	Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q2P1)	Academy 4 Participant 1 (A4Q3P1)
1.National Curriculum for England (2013) 1.State/Government expectations 3.Prep for secondary 2.Prep for life/living in society 2.University 2.Joining the workforce 18.Achievable objectives	9/14.Sharing of ideas based on experience to formulate the school's curriculum 14.Teachers' experiences and training	11.Children's interests 21.Basic skills 7.Equal opportunities 5.Global challenges
Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q1P2)	Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q2P2)	Academy 4 Participant 2 (A4Q3P2)
11.Pupils 1.National Curriculum 3.Secondary school 25.Poverty /disadvantaged 17.Parent feedback 23.Governors	9.Working in groups to review the curriculum 18.Agreed contents in each session 12, School values matched to contents/lessons	2.A curriculum that produces citizens 2.Technological and scientific advancements 7.The Curriculum is flexible enough to meet the needs of all children 21.Skills progression across the curriculum

		7.A curriculum that fosters independence
Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q1P3)	Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q2P3)	Academy 4 Participant 3 (A4Q3P3)
		7.Resilience 7.Creativity 18.Communication 7.Awe and wonder
Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q1P4)	Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q2P4)	Academy 4 Participant 4 (A4Q3P4)
1.Targets 9.Leaders 7.Meeting pupil's needs 1.Statutory requirements 10.Learning styles 11Pupils' given choice 12.Attributes/values 13.Learning environments 14.Teachers as learners	18.Events and school trips enhancing the curriculum 11.Children's interests	18.Contextualised learning 15.Well-being / Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) & SMSC

External factors -sub-themes – frequency of factors mentioned by participants

1. Government expectations – targets standards/statutory requirements/policy adherence and adherence to the NC (2013)

2. Society's expectations /life – contributing to society

3. Secondary readiness

4. Pre-school experience

5. Global and international

6. Location and Context- coastal

Internal Factors

7. Meeting the needs of pupils inc. disadvantaged pupils

8. Values -school

9. Working in teams to develop the school's curriculum

10. Learning styles

11. Pupils' given choice

12. Attributes/values pupils need for life

13. Learning environments

14. Teachers as learners

15. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) content

16. Basic skills

17. Parental responses/expectations

18. Curriculum planning

19. Assessment

20. Nursery education/pre-school experience

21. Basic Skills in teaching and learning

22. School context and local community

23. Curriculum Implementation

24. Governors

25. Poverty/disadvantaged pupils

Factors and Frequency Table	
External Factors	Frequency of comments
1. Government expectations – targets standards/statutory	28 – Key factor – chapter 4-4.4, 4.5

	Frequency of Comments
requirements/policy adherence and adherence to the NC (2013)	
2. Society's expectations /life – contributing to society	16 – Key factor – chapter 4 -4.6
3. Secondary readiness	12 – Key factor – chapter 4 – 4.6
4. Pre-school experience	
5. Global and international	2 -
6. Location and Context- coastal	7– linked to society's expectations 1- Linked to internal information on context/location

Internal Factors	Frequency of Comments
7. Meeting the needs of pupils inc. disadvantaged pupils	28 – Key factor – chapter 4 – 4.6
8. Values -school	
9. Working in teams to develop the school's curriculum	3- 19 – Key factor – chapter 4 – 4.2,
10. Learning styles	4.7, 4.8
11. Pupils' given choice/voice	
12. Attributes/values pupils need for life	2- 17 – Key factor – chapter 4 – 4.6
13. Learning environments	2
14. Teachers as learners	
15. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) content	1
16. Basic skills	7 – Key factor – chapter 4 – 4.7
17. Parental responses/expectations	2-linked to curriculum planning chapter 4 – 4.2
18. Curriculum planning	-Linked to curriculum planning
19. Assessment	6 – linked to curriculum planning
20. Nursery education/pre-school experience	6 – included in chapter 4 – 4.3
21. Basic Skills in teaching and learning	
22. School context and local community	20 – key factor chapter 4 – 4.2 2 – key 4.4, 4.5
23. Curriculum Implementation	2
24. Governors	
25. Poverty/disadvantaged pupils	5 – chapter 4- 4.7
	6 – key factor chapter 4 – 4.2
	3- linked to curriculum planning.
	3
	2-key factor – chapter 4 – 4.2