

**Implementing a Vision for Christian Education Ethos:
The experiences of school leaders and a sample of
pupils in two schools**

by

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**Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2020**

Dedication

For my parents, John and Janice

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisors, Prof Trevor Cooling, Dr Robin Precey and Dr Susan Milns, for their wisdom, encouragement, and support during my research journey. I would also like to thank Dr Hazel Bryan for her contribution at the initial stages of my research. I would like to express my gratitude to the headteachers, governors, staff, pupils, and parents that participated in the research. I would like to thank Robert Melville for his love and support along my journey. Finally, I would like to thank my friends, who have provided encouragement and support.

Contents

Table of Figures	vii
Abstract	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 The purpose of the thesis and research questions	1
1.2 Positionality and research design	6
1.3 The research context	8
1.3.1 The nature of school leadership	9
1.3.2 Coalition Government Policy on education and the academisation of schooling (2010-2015)	9
1.3.3 Changes in conceptions of what constitutes a ‘distinctively Christian’ education ethos	11
1.4 The new contribution this thesis makes to knowledge	12
1.5 Summary	13
1.6 Overview of the thesis	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review Part 1 – The Research Context	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Theme 1: Markets, choice, and accountability	16
2.2 Theme 2: Conceptions of successful leadership	21
2.3 Theme 3: The importance of vision and values in leadership	25
2.4 Theme 4: Leaders influence on others	28
2.5 Theme 5: The importance of school education ethos	31
2.6 Summary	36
Chapter 3: Literature Review Part 2 – The Nature and Purpose of Christian Education	38
3.0 Introduction and approach to the literature review	38
3.1 Church of England policy perspective on Christian Education	47
3.1.1 Theme 1: Concept of ‘Christian distinctiveness’	47
3.1.2 Theme 2: Nature and purpose of Christian education.....	53
3.1.3 Theme 3: Leadership of and accountability for Christian education	55
3.1.4 Theme 4: Formation of pupils	58
3.2 A research perspective on Christian education ethos	60
3.2.1 Theme 1: Lack of clarity over the nature of Christian distinctiveness	61
3.2.2 Theme 2: Influence of the headteacher’s values and learning habits on Christian education ethos	62

3.2.3	Theme 3: Influence of externally imposed accountability systems on Christian education ethos	63
3.2.4	Theme 4: The contribution of distinctively Christian pedagogy to Christian education ethos	64
3.2.5	Theme 5: Influence of sponsors on the development of Christian education ethos	67
3.2.6	Theme 6: Pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos	69
3.3	Summary and implications for the research studies	71
Chapter 4: Analytical framework		73
4.0	Introduction	73
4.1	Bronfenbrenner's PPCT theory of human development	73
4.1.1	Proximal processes	75
4.1.2	Person	75
4.1.3	Context	76
4.1.4	Time	77
4.1.5	Application of Bronfenbrenner's theory to the research	77
4.2	Communities of Practice	78
4.2.1	Engagement, participation and the negotiation of meaning	79
4.2.2	Learning and identity formation	80
4.2.3	Boundaries and brokering	81
4.2.4	Leadership in communities of practice	81
4.3	Lukes' dimensions of power	82
4.4	Summary.....	84
Chapter 5: Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis		86
5.0	Introduction	86
5.1	Methodology.....	86
5.1.1	Overview and use of an IPA methodology	88
5.1.2	Phenomenology	91
5.1.3	Hermeneutics	94
5.1.4	Ideography	95
5.2	Research design and data collection methods	95
5.2.1	Working with children in research	96
5.2.2	The studies' contexts	97
5.2.3	Securing access to participants	98
5.2.4	Sampling of participants	99
5.2.5	Data collection methods	101

5.2.6	Interviews	101
5.2.7	Pupil elicitation tasks	102
5.2.8	Summary of data collected in each school	104
5.2.9	Stages in the data collection processes	107
5.2.10	Learning from the pilot study	107
5.3	Ethical issues	116
5.4	Assessing and addressing quality in the research	118
5.5.	Data analysis	122
5.5.1	Analysis of interview transcripts	123
5.5.2	Analysis of the Church Academy leaders' data	127
5.5.3	Analysis of pupils' perspectives of their education	128
5.5.4	Analysis of the Church Academy pupils' data	138
5.5.5	Reflections on the use of analytical processes and frameworks	139
5.6	Summary	140
Chapter 6: Presentation of Study 1 – Part 1: Interpretive account for the Free School leaders and discussion of the findings		
		142
6.0	Introduction	142
6.1	Leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos	144
6.1.1	Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference	144
6.1.2	Inspiring commitment and building a community	148
6.1.3	Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership	156
6.1.4	Challenges of implementing What If Learning	162
6.1.5	Summary	165
6.2	Discussion of school leaders' experiences.....	165
6.2.1	The influence of leaders' characteristics on education ethos development .	166
6.2.2	Proximal processes: Interactions between leaders	171
6.2.3	The importance of context	181
6.3	Summary and reflection on the issues raised.....	185
Chapter 7: Presentation of Study 1 - Part 2: Interpretative account for the Christian Free School pupils and discussion of the findings		
		188
7.0	Introduction	188
7.1	Pupils' experiences of their education.....	189
7.1.1	Theme 1: Sense of belonging	189
7.1.2	Theme 2: Valuing of Christian practices, symbols and artefacts.....	196
7.1.3	Theme 3: Excellence in everything	199
7.1.4	Theme 4: Making dreams come true	202

7.1.5	Summary	203
7.2	Discussion of the pupils' experiences	204
7.2.1	Analysis using Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model of human development	204
7.2.2	Analysis using Wenger's communities of practice	210
7.2.3	Analysis using dimensions of power	215
7.3	Summary and significant insights	218
Chapter 8: Presentation of Study 2 – Part 1: Interpretative account for the Church		
Academy leaders and discussion of the findings		220
8.0	Introduction	220
8.1	Leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos	221
8.1.1	Theme 1: High standards with a caring Christian ethos	222
8.1.2	Theme 2: Embedding a Christian way of living	226
8.1.3	Theme 3: Critical incident – Managing and responding to SIAMS	233
8.1.4	Summary	238
8.2	Discussion of school leaders' experiences	239
8.2.1	Influence of leaders' characteristics on education ethos development	239
8.2.2	Proximal processes	246
8.2.3	The importance of the broader context in education ethos development ...	250
8.2.4	Analysis using dimensions of power	251
8.3	Summary and significant insights	256
Chapter 9: Presentation of Study 2 – Part 2: Interpretative account for Church		
Academy pupils and discussion of the findings		258
9.0	Introduction	258
9.1	Pupils' experiences of their education	259
9.1.1	Theme1: Valuing school values	259
9.1.2	Theme 2: Special people, places and practices	266
9.1.3	Theme 3: Aspirations and achievement	271
9.1.4	Summary	274
9.2	Discussion of the pupils' experiences	275
9.2.1	Analysis using Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model of human development	275
9.2.2	Analysis using Wenger's communities of practice	283
9.2.3	Analysis using dimensions of power	284
9.3	Summary	286
Chapter 10: Conclusion		
Academy pupils and discussion of the findings		288
10.0	Introduction	288
10.1	The purpose of the thesis	288

10.2	The main findings of the thesis	288
10.2.1	Research Question One	288
10.2.2	Study 1: Leaders of the Christian Free School	289
10.2.3	Study 2: Leaders of the Church Academy	292
10.2.4	Significance of the findings	294
10.2.5	Research Question Two	296
10.3	The new contribution this thesis makes to knowledge	299
10.3.1	Insights into the effects of clashing assumptions about Christian education paradigms	299
10.3.2	Contribution to the literature on pupils' experiences of education within schools with a Christian foundation.....	300
10.3.3	A method for leaders to investigate the relationship between the espoused vision for Christian school education ethos and pupils' experiences of that ethos	301
10.3.4	Recommendations arising from research concerning the complexities and practicalities of implementing a vision for Christian education	301
10.4	Suggestions for further research	306
10.5	Reflections on the transformational nature of the research: My development as a researcher	306
	References	308
	Appendices	341
	Appendix A: Example of the information letters sent to case study schools, participants, parents, and relevant consent forms	343
	Appendix B: Example of the questions/prompts used at interview with school leaders	356
	Appendix C: Free School: Interview extract to demonstrate the process of analysis	357
	Appendix D: List of emergent themes from an interview transcript with a school leader	359
	Appendix E: Table of themes for leaders from the Free School with transcript extracts	360
	Appendix F: Table of themes for leaders from the Church Academy with transcript extracts	364
	Appendix G: Table of themes for pupils from the Free School with data extracts	367
	Appendix H: Table of themes for pupils from the Church Academy with data extracts	369
	Appendix I: Set of draw-and-write tasks for each child	372
	Glossary of Terms	387

Table of Figures

Figure 4.1a	The Context: Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems influencing development
Figure 4.1b	Visual representation of the process-person-context-time model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005)
Figure 5.2a	Table illustrating pupils' participation in tasks (adapted from Hart's 1992 Ladder of Participation)
Figure 5.2b	Table detailing the number and types of participants I employed in each study
Figure 5.2c	Table providing a summary of data collection in each school
Figure 5.2d	Table providing information about the leaders (Pilot School)
Figure 5.2e	Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Pilot School leadership group
Figure 5.2f	Table providing information about the pupil participants (Pilot School)
Figure 5.2g	Table demonstrating the two superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Pilot School pupil group
Figure 5.2h	What Makes My School Unique: Collective Worship (Alex and Evie)
Figure 5.2i	What Makes My School Unique: Religion and the 'Big Green Finger' (Harry)
Figure 5.5a	Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Free School headteacher
Figure 5.5b	Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes across the Free School leadership group
Figure 5.5c	Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate themes in each school leaders' interview transcript (Free School)
Figure 5.5d	Table showing the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for Church Academy school leaders
Figure 5.5e	Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate themes in each leader's interview transcript (Church Academy)
Figure 5.5f	Extract from a completed DWT analytical table for Simon (Free School pupil)
Figure 5.5g	Simon's draw-and-write task: What it's like to be a pupil in my school
Figure 5.5h	An example of a completed photo-ranking chart for Simon (Free School pupil)
Figure 5.5i	Table showing the superordinate themes and subordinate themes across the Free School pupil group
Figure 5.5j	Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate themes and subordinate themes within each pupil's data (Free School)
Figure 5.5k	Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes

	across the Church Academy pupil group
Figure 5.5l	Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate themes within each pupil's data (Church Academy)
Figure 6.0a	Table providing information about the leader participants (Free School)
Figure 7.0a	Table providing information about the pupil participants (Free School)
Figure 7.2b	Contextual influences on pupils' experiences of their education in the Free School based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development
Figure 7.2c	Diagram showing three dimensions of practice for pupils in the Free School, based on Wenger's (1998) dimensions of practice
Figure 8.0a	Table providing information about the leader participants (Church Academy)
Figure 9.0a	Table providing information about the pupil participants (Church Academy)
Figure 9.2b	Contextual influences on pupils' experiences of their education in the Church Academy based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development

Abstract

This thesis investigates school leaders' experiences of Christian education ethos development in their schools, using interpretative phenomenological analysis. It comprises two studies. The first focuses on a secondary headteacher, new to headship, in a recently opened Christian Free School. The second focuses on a long-serving primary Church Academy headteacher. I use creative data-collection methods in both studies to elicit a small group of pupils' views of their education within the school's ethos.

I concluded that both headteachers experienced tensions in developing a Christian education ethos because of external pressures that limited their autonomy. The headteachers' values were important in defining the vision for their schools' education ethos, but both encountered challenges in their deployment. The Free School headteacher faced challenges from the governing body when negotiating a vision focused on excellence, justice and learning in a Christian manner. By contrast, the governing body's vision implied a focus on Christian nurture and education about Christianity. The Academy headteacher experienced challenges in his conceptions of Church education from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools inspector, which ultimately realigned his approach to education ethos development.

I compared the data sets of leaders with those of pupils. I concluded that there was congruence between the headteachers' intended school ethos and the pupils' experienced ethos. Despite the headteachers experiencing internal struggles with their leadership identity, the pupils' data indicated they understood the headteachers' values. They seemed persuaded that the headteachers' values were in their best interests. These values helped them understand what their schools stood for and the expectations placed on them. It led to a powerful sense of belonging.

The thesis contributes new knowledge by developing significant insights into the complexities of headteacher leadership of Christian education. Such insights are not easily obtainable through other methodologies. Furthermore, the thesis develops a practical methodology, which school leaders can adapt to investigate the influence of their vision and espoused values on pupils' school experiences.

List of Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
BHA	British Humanist Association (now called Humanists UK)
CE	Church of England
Cefel	Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership
CGB	Chair of Governors/ Chair of the Governing Body
CoP	Community/communities of Practice
CTC	City Technology College
CWL	Collective Worship Leader
DA	Discourse analysis
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
DTL	Design and Technology/Art Leader
DWT	Draw-and-write task
EBI	Even Better If
ESF	Emmanuel Schools Foundation
FFCT	Friendship, forgiveness, compassion and trust
FS	Free School
HoC Education Select Committee	House of Commons Education Select Committee
HT	Headteacher
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LA	Local authority
MATs	Multi-academy trusts
NCSL	National College of School Leadership
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PPCT model	Person-Process-Context-Time model
PRC	Photo-elicitation ranking chart

PwC	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
RE	Religious Education
REL	Religious Education Leader
SE	School effectiveness
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIAMS formerly SIAS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools formerly termed Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SMSC development	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
TAs	Teaching assistants
TELLS	Truth, excellence, love, leadership, service
UK	United Kingdom
UNCRC	United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Child
VA	Voluntary Aided
VC	Voluntary Controlled
WIL	What if Learning
WWW	What Went Well
Year Rs	Reception class pupils

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I outline the purpose of the thesis and the research questions. I introduce the research methodology and contextual issues relevant to the research. I also consider the new contribution the thesis makes to knowledge. At the end of the Chapter, I outline the structure of the thesis.

1.1 The purpose of the thesis and the research questions

The purpose of the research was to investigate school leaders' experiences of developing education ethos in two schools in England with a Christian religious character. It included researching the views of a small group of pupils concerning their education within that school ethos.

The term 'ethos' is difficult to define. It has been used interchangeably with 'culture' and 'climate' (Glover and Coleman, 2005). Following a review of the literature on school ethos, I developed a working definition. I built on McLaughlin's (2005) conception of education ethos as an identifiable entity, which defined the school's climate or character. My working definition of education ethos represented what members of the school community stood for, its value system, its practices, and the purposes of education. Ethos represented the nature of the interactions between community members. I distinguished between education ethos as an aspirational entity sought by leaders and education ethos as an entity experienced by community members (McLaughlin, 2005). I was interested in the intended and experienced education ethos within the context of Christian education. In Chapter 2, I review the literature on education ethos. In Chapter 3, I discuss the importance of Christian education ethos in state-funded schools in England.

The motivation for the research stemmed from my interest in leaders' development of education ethos. It arose from my former role as headteacher of two primary schools for 12 years (2001-2013), together with my personal experience of a Church of England education. I was raised in a Church of England family. I attended a Church school between the ages of five and sixteen, which contributed to my faith development. I studied an undergraduate degree in sports science and biology, which informed my belief that a balanced yet innovative education

influenced the growth of the body, mind, and soul. During my research journey, I worked as a Senior Lecturer in Education at a University with a Church of England foundation.

I started the thesis with a firm belief that a positive school education ethos was essential to pupils' educational experiences and holistic development. I viewed holistic development as concerned with the development of the whole child, including physical, moral, spiritual, emotional, cultural, and academic development. I considered the right kind of school ethos could enable pupils' sense of well-being and character formation. As a former headteacher, I found an inclusive and supportive ethos allowed pupils to feel safe and secure at school. It could help pupils appreciate the valuing of their contribution to the school community and achievements. I put pupils first in my leadership and promoted their holistic development. As a headteacher, I experienced challenges in resolving different school stakeholders' conflicting demands and constraints on my autonomy resulting from externally imposed accountability systems.

During my career as a headteacher, I became concerned about the unintended consequences of the 'standards agenda' and performativity. It represented a theme within this thesis. In my research, I adopted Ball's (2013) definition of performativity as 'a system or culture of terror'. It was created by an accountability network that employed judgements and comparisons with others regarding performance and controlled actions. Ball argued that performance outcomes represented 'the worth, quality or value' of individuals or institutions' (Ball, 2013, p.57). As a member of a consortium of headteachers, I witnessed pressures on schools to adopt 'reductionist approaches' to education (Biesta and Osborg, 2010). It represented a form of 'teaching to the test' to secure high standards of pupil attainment. This focus on narrow measurements of success within education, and an increasingly prescriptive curriculum, could detract from pupils' holistic development. The pressures on leaders and teachers could create tensions between focusing on what they believed were the ultimate purposes of education and obtaining successful outcomes in Government prescribed tests for pupils. Ball's (2013) studies on teachers' professionalism identified the risks of teachers becoming de-professionalised, with them feeling a need to sacrifice what they valued most in education. Furthermore, Craig (2017) discussed the pressures on headteachers to maximise school performance to avoid losing their jobs if their schools failed to perform. In my research, I examined the extent to which the headteachers managed the pressures towards performativity when establishing an education ethos that provided for pupils' holistic development within a Christian setting.

I considered that school leaders required a long-term vision for education to inspire pupils to become life-long learners and responsible citizens. Although I appreciated the necessity of public accountability to provide transparency about pupil achievement and the use of resources within schools, I believe that a more responsible position on accountability should exist. Accountability needed to be based on a range of indicators for success. In my research, I investigated the leaders' visions for education ethos in the context of Christian education. From the unique perspectives of individual leaders, I explored the influences of their values, beliefs, and motivations on forming their visions. I sought insights into how leaders implemented these visions. I was interested in their perceptions of their roles, leadership autonomy, and challenges in realising their visions.

In my research, I sought to investigate the extent to which headteachers could create and implement an institutional vision from leaders' perspectives. Building vision and establishing school goals was consistently regarded as an essential aspect of effective school leadership (Tooley and Howes, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2006; McKinsey and Co., 2010; West-Burnham and Coates, 2005). The definition of vision I found most useful was Nanus (1992, p.8); the creation of 'a realistic, credible, attractive future' for an organisation. The concept of institutional vision is a contested area. Sceptics such as Fink (2010) and Forrester and Gunter (2009) questioned whether leaders could be visionary, creative, and entrepreneurial in a national policy context that required them to be reactive, compliant, and managerial.

In Chapter 2, I explore the importance of vision and values in leadership and the influence of context on leaders' roles and responsibilities in state-funded schools in England. I sought to make sense of the values and beliefs influencing leaders' visions for education ethos based on leaders' insights into their leadership experiences in two schools. I considered how leaders might resolve the potential tension in developing Christian education ethos while focussing on pupil achievement within a high-performance, high-accountability education system (Greany, 2018).

My starting point as a researcher was the centrality of headteachers in shaping a shared school vision. They achieved this by engaging community members in discussing the community's beliefs and values and modelling and demonstrating a commitment to the values underpinning education ethos. I had personal experience of developing a shared vision in challenging circumstances. When starting my second headship, I inherited a toxic ethos, which had destroyed the commitment, relationships, and loyalty of members of the community. A central aspect of my work was working with the school community to rebuild the school's character. Rebuilding an ethos entailed establishing a shared vision for the school's success underpinned

by a robust set of institutional values. Underlying the transformation in ethos was establishing trust between myself, as headteacher, and community members. I became interested in the uniqueness of each school's education ethos and the beliefs, values and practices that underpin ethos. In this second school, I encountered a culturally and religiously diverse group of parents and pupils. I consciously built links with local churches and mosques to establish an inclusive ethos reflective of the diverse pupil population. The ethos created differed from that I established in my first school, which had strong links with the local Church of England Church.

The approach to the research

I employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the methodology to make sense of a small group of leaders and pupils' lived experiences. I followed Yardley's (2000) guidance for establishing quality in qualitative research: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. I used Guba's (1981) criteria for establishing trustworthiness in research. Within the study, I used the term 'leaders' to refer to headteachers, deputy headteachers, teacher leaders, and the chair of each school's governing body.

The research included two independent studies. The first focused on my interpretation of a small group of leaders' experiences in developing and implementing a vision for Christian education ethos in a newly opened secondary Christian Free School. It included a small group of pupils' experiences of that ethos. The second focused on interpreting a small group of leaders' experiences in developing and implementing a vision for Christian education ethos in an established primary Church of England Academy and a small group of pupils' experiences of that ethos.

These studies followed a substantive pilot study with leaders and pupils in a rural Church of England primary school, designed to refine my data-collection and analytical methods. Here I rehearsed and developed my skills as a researcher. I discuss the pilot study, data collection methods and the criteria for quality research in Chapter 5.

Two research questions underpinned the thesis:

1. How do school leaders experience the development and implementation of a vision for Christian education ethos in a Christian Free School and a Church of England primary academy?
2. How do pupils experience their education within each school's ethos?

My interests in educational leadership informed these research questions. They addressed gaps in the literature on the nature of Christian education in state-funded schools in England, enabled the use of an IPA methodology and built on the pilot study outcomes.

Research Question One sought to gain insights into leaders' values and motivations underpinning their visions for education ethos representing aspects of their identity. I was interested in leaders' aspirations for their school and pupils and what influenced the development of the school vision. I explore identity as an aspect of social learning in the theoretical framework I used to interpret leaders and pupils' perspectives in Chapter 4. The first question also focused on how leaders implemented their visions and the issues and challenges they experienced. Research Question Two explored a small group of pupils' views about their education in the school's ethos. I was interested in the potential influence leaders had on pupils' educational experiences and what pupils valued about their education.

The school leadership research literature pointed to the neglect in considering leaders' roles in faith-based schools (Grace, 2003; Grace, 2009; Green, 2009c; Striepe, 2011; Striepe and Clark, 2009; Striepe, Clarke and Donoghue, 2014; Lawton and Cairns, 2005). The focus of my research was leadership-based research in schools with a Christian foundation in England to contribute to the literature in this field. Using an IPA methodology, I sought to interpret how leaders experienced developing Christian education ethos as one aspect of their leadership. Grace (2009, p.190) highlighted a critical challenge facing faith school leaders, the dual mission to serve 'God and Caesar'. My research explored this possibility using IPA.

My research contributed to the body of research on Christian school ethos in state-funded English schools. There were published ethnographic case studies in schools, which elicited multiple stakeholder views on the nature of Christian ethos. Jelfs (2008) identified the complexities of leaders articulating and embedding Christian values in teaching and learning in the Church of England schools but did not explore this in-depth. Green (2009c) identified a gap between the espoused ethos and values of leaders and pupils' experiences of ethos when researching a Bible-based City Technology College. Pike (2010) and Green (2009c) highlighted the contribution school sponsors made to Christian education ethos development in schools with a Christian faith foundation. The role of sponsors was relevant to my first study, which investigated leadership in the Christian Free School. A group of Christian churches sponsored this school. My research offered a new dimension to the field. It provided insights into the complexities of developing education ethos through an in-depth exploration of leaders' perspectives using IPA rather than ethnography. I explored what school leaders considered the

ultimate purposes of education and schooling in the context of a religiously diverse and pluralistic modern British society. I was interested in the extent to which leaders' exercised autonomy in developing education ethos or merely passed on to pupils what Central Government dictated. I also focused on exploring pupils' perspectives of their educational experiences in schools with a Christian foundation. There was a scarcity of published research detailing in-depth analysis of pupils' experiences of their education in schools with a Christian foundation.

1.2 Positionality and research design

In this sub-section, I discuss my positionality as the sole researcher, outline the research design and introduce the theoretical framework used to make sense of leaders' and pupils' experiences.

To answer the research questions, I employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews with individual leaders. The purpose was to enable them to raise issues related to their unique experiences and contexts (see Chapter 5). To promote pupils' voices, I adapted the traditional interviews associated with IPA. Pupils participated in three inclusive draw-and-write tasks and a photo-elicitation task. These tasks invited them to express their views of their education and what they valued about their school. I could make sense of how pupils experienced school leaders' attempts at establishing a distinct school education ethos. I spent time in school beyond the interviews and tasks to observe the interactions between community members during lessons and school routines to promote my understanding of the context of the people I studied.

In terms of the scope of the research, I interviewed a total of fifteen leaders across three schools. The sample included the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the chair of the governing body of each school, and teacher leaders, such as collective worship and religious education (RE) leaders. I considered headteachers had considerable influence on the school's education ethos development as they had positional authority over the day-to-day management of the schools. Nonetheless, I sought to discern whether the leaders, as a group, presented a unified school vision for education ethos or if individual leaders had their own, potentially competing, and conflicting, visions for education ethos. As I emphasised the experiences of headteachers, I interviewed each of them twice. I worked with sixteen pupils across the three schools. In the pilot, the pupil sample ranged from Year 1 to Year 6 pupils. In the Christian Free School, the sample was composed of Year 7 pupils and in the Church Academy Year 6 pupils.

An interpretive conceptual framework underpinned the IPA methodology, data-collection methods, and analysis of participants' experiences, which guided my view of social reality

(ontology) and the nature of knowledge generated (epistemology). I employed Heidegger's (1927; 1962) hermeneutical phenomenological view of social reality (see Chapter 5). With an IPA methodology, experience attended to aspects that mattered to people and gave rise to specific actions within a world that was 'to hand' and was inherently meaningful to them (Eatough and Smith, 2018, p.196). The knowledge I generated was tentative and not generalisable to other groups of leaders, pupils, or schools.

In developing the methodology, design and conduct of the interviews, I drew on the work of Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). They provided a comprehensive overview of IPA. The interviews and elicitation tasks enabled me to collect rich, detailed, first-person accounts of experience. I employed Smith and Osborn's (2003) concept of the double hermeneutic to interpret participants' accounts. I built up layers of interpretation to comprehend participants trying to make sense of what was happening to them (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). I explain the data analytical processes in Chapter 5.

I aimed to utilise my leadership and teaching experience to inform the research design, negotiate access to the research participants, and build leaders' trust in the research process. In IPA, credibility and trust were essential to eliciting rich, meaningful data (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). I was familiar with leaders' responsibilities and the challenges leaders could face in leading state-funded English schools. I was conscious that leaders of academies and Free Schools might feel their actions were under scrutiny, given the controversies associated with the Coalition Government's policies on academisation and Free Schools (Chapter 2). This scrutiny could limit what they were willing to divulge and the honesty of their responses (Denscombe, 2011). I faced the challenge of delving beyond surface-level school policy responses to gaining their thoughts and feelings about their leadership experiences. Ethical considerations were necessary at all stages of the research process. Showing sensitivity to leaders and pupils' views and positions mattered when meeting with them and representing their views. My insights as a headteacher added credibility to my interpretations of participants' perspectives. Nonetheless, I sought to take a reflexive stance to the research to ensure I critiqued my influence on the research process and the knowledge produced.

I acted as an outsider/insider researcher. Insider researchers become members of the organisation they research or share experiences with research participants (Asselin, 2003). While I possessed insider insights into the nature of leadership, I was an outsider seeking to understand participants' perspectives of their school's education ethos. As an outsider with no connections to the school, I perceived I could act impartially, having no vested interests or micro-

political agendas. To this end, I sought to view the familiar as strange by being open to the meaning participants made of the discourses, symbols, educational practices, and values underpinning their school's education ethos. I was influenced by Gadamer (1976), who emphasised the importance of making explicit personal fore structure in interpretative research. The reason was so that readers could judge how my position influenced the research.

A central aim of my research was to elicit the voice of pupils. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, advocated children's right to have their opinion considered regarding matters that affect them. To me, this included their understanding of the school's ethos. A growing body of literature took account of the role of pupil's voice and the benefits of pupil engagement with research. In Chapter 5, I set out my position on the use of children in the study and how I looked to maximise pupils' engagement in the research process. I sought to make sense of the meaning the pupils made of the relationships, values, and practices they experienced in their schools. I was interested in how they perceived their school responded to their needs and what they regarded as important in their education.

To interpret leaders' influences on developing education ethos, and their influence on pupils' experiences of their education, I devised a theoretical framework based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model of human development, Wenger's (1998) view of learning as experience and identity formation in communities of practice and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power. In both studies, I viewed learning as 'experience' in a social context. Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model illuminated the complex range of social influences that can interact with the genetic, physiological, and personal characteristics of an individual to shape an individual's learning and identity. Wenger's model of learning within a community of practice helped me understand how ethos could be made meaningful to participants and influence their identity development. Because Wenger (1998) did not fully acknowledge the broader influences on learning outside the boundaries of the school community, I used the different interactive ecological systems Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed as surrounding an individual. I considered power as an essential aspect of leadership when forming education ethos. Lukes' dimensions of power offered the means of interpreting the ways leaders appeared to influence pupils' experiences and, in turn, were influenced by other agencies engaged in pupils' education.

1.3 The research context

In IPA, the research context and temporality mattered in making sense of leaders' and pupils' experiences. In this Section, I introduce three aspects of context important to the research:

1. Conceptions concerning the nature of school leadership.
2. Coalition Government (2010-2015) policy and the academisation of schooling.
3. Changing conceptions of what constituted Christian education ethos.

In both studies, I found that Central Government policy and Church of England policy influenced leaders' approaches to the development of education ethos. In Chapter 2, I review the literature on the context affecting the nature of school leadership. In Chapter 3, I explore the nature of Christian education ethos and Church of England policy on Christian distinctiveness.

1.3.1 The nature of school leadership

My review of the literature identified various interpretations of the term 'leadership'. For the research, I considered leadership in schools as having two central aspects: providing direction and exercising influence to achieve institutional goals. I derived identification of these aspects from school effectiveness research, for example, Leithwood and Seashore Louis (2012) and Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008).

1.3.2 Coalition Government policy on education and the academisation of schooling

The data collection took place when the Coalition Government (2010-2015) was in office. There was a period of substantial change in the education system in England. The economy, marketisation of schooling and international comparison of schools in England with those in other countries using international league tables placed school leaders under increased pressure to achieve excellence in all aspects of the school's work.

Although there was a focus on standards for economic competitiveness in a global arena, the Coalition Government recognised the educative importance of school ethos. The White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, emphasised that schools should 'decide their own ethos and chart their own destiny', but leaders had been 'severely constrained' by the bureaucratic systems imposed by the previous Government (DfE, 2010, p.11-12). Through becoming academies, leaders could acquire greater autonomy over education which would facilitate ethos development and innovation:

We want every school to be able to shape its own character, frame its own ethos and develop its own specialisms, free of either central or local bureaucratic constraint. It is our ambition, therefore, to help every school which wishes to enjoy greater freedom to achieve Academy status (DfE, 2010, p.12).

The justification for focusing the studies on leaders in an academy and Free School was to explore whether leaders, freed from the specific requirements of the National Curriculum, perceived they had the autonomy to create innovative approaches to Christian education ethos, content and delivery of the curriculum. However, there was a risk that the ongoing demands of Ofsted and public examinations could stifle such innovation. Central Government required all maintained schools to publish a statement of their school ethos (DfE, 2014b). In line with faith schools nationally, the governing bodies of the schools I researched had a statutory responsibility to communicate school aims and values through a school ethos statement (National Society, 2013a).

Academies are autonomous schools receiving funds directly from Central Government (Coldron et al., 2014). The Labour Government introduced them into the English education system in 2000 to eradicate pupils' underachievement in disadvantaged urban areas and facilitate the parental choice of schooling (Curtis et al., 2008; Gunter and McGinty, 2014). Under the Coalition Government, the nature of academies altered, but the consistent feature was their freedom from Local Authority (LA) influence (Curtis et al., 2008).

When I began my research journey, I planned to focus the research on the experiences of leaders and pupils from Church of England academies. It was due to the importance the Government placed on expanding the academies programme through the Academies Act 2010. This policy was highly contentious, being contested by both parents and teacher trade unions. Ranson (2012) highlighted growing concerns about how charitable sponsors' personal ambitions, belief systems of diverse faiths, or private business interests drove sponsored academies. The Church of England was committed to the academies policy. It became the largest provider of sponsored academies in England (Church of England, 2010). I was interested in how Church school leaders perceived their autonomies and accountabilities and sought to utilise their freedoms in developing a Christian education ethos. I was interested in investigating whose values influenced leaders' development of Christian education ethos. Were these values the personal values of leaders or those imposed on leaders, which arose within the broader social, economic, and political context, including the Church of England's position on the purposes of Christian education ethos?

I modified the research design to include participants in a Christian Free School. Free Schools were a new type of school established in England since 2010. Researching leaders' experiences of developing Christian education ethos from scratch in the first year of a newly opened Christian Free School provided a contrast to that of leaders in a Church Academy. Under the Academies

Act 2010, Free Schools could be established and run by parents or other providers. The schools were governed by a trust, which had members who owned the company and elected directors who led the school as governors (Higham, 2014). The Free School in my second study was not part of the wider Church of England family of Church schools. Therefore, leaders would not be obliged to adhere to the Church of England educational policy. A group of Churches, however, sponsored the School. I was interested in how the headteacher perceived his relationship with the sponsoring body concerning formulating and implementing a vision for education ethos.

Increased support from Central Government for faith-based education

When I began my research, Government policy provided support for state-funded faith-based education. In 2010, Prime Minister David Cameron pledged support for establishing more faith-based schools based on the 'faith schools' effect' (Winnett, 2010). Cameron considered faith schools had an ethos that helped improve standards. There was some basis within the literature. In an American study, Jeynes (2003) attributed the success of schools to pupils' learning habits rather than positions of social privilege. Later, Green (2015) found that Christian character development fostered learning habits, contributing to pupils' academic achievement.

Nonetheless, there was a debate on the legitimacy of providing state-funded faith-based education in multicultural Britain (Gardner, Cairns, and Lawton, 2004; Berkeley, 2008; Halstead, 2012). This debate revolved around several issues. There was the question of whether it was the state's role to finance schools with a faith foundation. There was the issue of whether the religious education offered and faith-based ethos was for society's social good or harmful to society and the well-being and development of pupils (Halsted 2012; Gearon, 2013). I considered this debate lacked relevance for my research. I took the position that faith-based schools were legislated for and seen by the Government as essential in enabling parental choice of schooling. As they existed, I was interested in determining leaders' experiences of developing and implementing their visions for education ethos.

1.3.3 Changes in conceptions of what constitutes a 'distinctively Christian' education ethos

There were national developments in thinking concerning the nature of Christian education in schools in England. The Church of England made a significant contribution to this discourse (Chapter 3). In a landmark Church policy document, Dearing (2001) advocated providing an education to offer pupils 'a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ' (Dearing, 2001, p.14). Dearing charged school leaders with developing a distinctively Christian yet inclusive education ethos for pupils of diverse faiths or no faith. This

policy of inclusiveness was not concerned with schools converting pupils to the Christian faith but offering them the experience of faith, worship and a school life founded on Christian values. The aim was to enable pupils to make informed choices about their faith through a process they might otherwise not experience (Dearing, 2001, p.16). Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell (2016, p.21) commented that the aim was for pupils to experience a transformative education to equip them 'to be transforming people in the world'.

The research on what constituted a distinctively Christian ethos or the influence of Christian ethos on pupil outcomes was scarce in the first part of the millennium (Green, 2009c). Leaders found articulating the nature of Christian ethos and the role of values in ethos development challenging (Section 3.2). I was interested in whether this was an issue or whether the leaders had a clear conception of Christian education ethos.

In another Church of England sponsored report, Chadwick (2012) presented a framework for strengthening the Church's work in education at Synodical, Diocesan, and local levels. This report followed substantial structural changes brought about by the Academies Act 2010 and the Education Act 2011 to the dual system established in 1944. Chadwick (2012, p.4) emphasised that distinctiveness in Church school education was concerned with 'a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum and ensuring that a Christian ethos permeates the whole educational experience'. Religious education and collective worship were to make a significant contribution to education ethos development.

After I completed the data collection, the Church of England Education Office (2016b) published its Vision for Education, providing a theological rationale for Church school education. It focused on educating children 'for life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). The Church of England (2016b) emphasised the importance of leaders offering an excellent education in their schools comprised of four essential elements: wisdom, knowledge, and skills; hope and aspiration; community and living well together; and dignity and respect.

1.4 The new contribution this thesis makes to knowledge

in terms of the new contribution this thesis makes to knowledge, both studies provided rich insights into the complexities of headteachers leading the development of a Christian education ethos (Chapter 10). The methodology employed was suited to revealing such complexities compared with the alternatives. The studies showed that both headteachers experienced tensions between developing a Christian education ethos based on their hearts and desires and

one based on alternative agendas or values controlled by agents in the education system, which affected their autonomy. In both studies, I concluded that leaders' characteristics, motives, and interpretation of the school's context appeared necessary in developing and implementing their visions for Christian education ethos. The headteachers strived to reconcile personal motives, beliefs, and values with their responsibilities to others framed in terms of audit and accountability. Both headteachers appeared to reconcile a focus on Christian values with an emphasis on achieving high academic standards.

Although both headteachers experienced challenges to the manifestation of their visions for Christian education ethos, pupils' perspectives on education ethos indicated that they understood the headteachers' values and vision. Pupils came to realise what their schools stood for. It resulted from leaders providing opportunities for them to engage in Christian practices and explore Christian symbolism and institutional values through interactions within the school community. Experiencing the school values and understanding their significance enabled pupils' sense of belonging to their community. High-quality relationships mattered to pupils as well as their educational achievement.

1.5 Summary

In the introduction, I explained how I established the aims and rationale for the research. I started to indicate the contribution the research makes to new knowledge. It arose from the rich insights gained on the complexities of leading the development of Christian education ethos from school leaders' unique perspectives. In the next Section, I provide an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.6 Overview of the thesis

The thesis comprises ten Chapters. In Chapter 2, I contextualise the research studies by discussing the literature concerned with the nature of school leadership at the time I collected data (June 2014-July 2015). I consider relevant educational policy and legislation influencing leaders' practices.

In Chapter 3, I explore the literature on the distinctive nature and purposes of Christian education in state-funded Christian schools in England. I consider issues concerning the development of a Christian school education ethos. I draw on the landmark Church of England policy documentation published since the beginning of the millennium. The Church of England policy influenced the leaders' interpretations of Christian education ethos in both studies. I

review the research into leaders' and pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos and consider the importance of the studies to this thesis.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the theoretical framework I used to interpret leaders' and pupils' experiences. I based it on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model of human development, Wenger's (1998) communities of practice and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power. I explain how leaders could influence pupils' experiences of their education.

In Chapter 5, I examine how the theories of hermeneutics, phenomenology and ideography underpin IPA. I discuss the research design and ethical issues, which needed addressing and the researcher's positionality concerning children's engagement with educational research. I explain and illustrate the data analytical processes employed.

In Chapters 6 to 9, I present the research findings. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on Study One. In Chapter 6, I present the Free School leaders' perspectives and in Chapter 7, the Free School pupils' perspectives. I divide each of these Chapters into two parts. In the first, I present the themes, which emerged from participants' perspectives. In the second, I discuss the findings concerning the research questions and existing literature on the nature of leadership, a distinctively Christian education (Chapters 2 and 3) and the theoretical framework provided by Bronfenbrenner (2005), Wenger (1998) and Lukes (2005). In the second part of Chapters 7, I also interpret leaders' influences on pupils' experiences of their education. Chapters 8 and 9 focus on Study Two. In Chapter 8, I present Church Academy leaders' perspectives and in Chapter 9, Church Academy pupils' perspectives. The format of each of these Chapters follows that used in Study One.

In Chapter 10, Conclusion, I reflect on the research findings and identify the new contribution of the thesis to knowledge. I discuss issues and questions arising from the research. I also review the strengths and limitations of the research and reflect on my development as a researcher. Finally, I suggest possible lines of enquiry for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review Part 1: The Research Context

2.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 discussed leadership and the policy context's influence on leaders' visions for school education ethos. Chapter 2 contextualises the research by reviewing relevant school leadership literature. I organise the review under five themes, which underpin the research questions:

1. Markets, choice, and accountability
2. Conceptions of successful school leadership
3. Vision and values in leadership
4. Leaders influence over others
5. Importance of school education ethos.

The first theme focuses on three strands underpinning the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government education policy (2010-2015): markets, choice, and accountability. These strands inform the policy context within which leaders in research schools worked. The second theme explores conceptions of successful leadership that potentially influenced leaders' working practices in research schools. The third theme considers the central aspect of leadership in the research: developing and implementing a vision and the relationship between vision and values. The fourth theme centres on the power dimension of leadership and how leaders might influence others to commit to their vision. The final theme reviews the literature on school education ethos, the relationship between ethos and culture and its importance to school leaders.

I investigated Central Government and Church policy's influence on leaders' developing and implementing their visions for education ethos within the research. Coalition policy emphasised choice, entrepreneurialism, accountability, and privatisation. The origins of these policies trace back to the 1979-97 Conservative Governments and global perspectives on economics and international economic competition (Ball, 2010; Preedy, Bennet and Wise, 2012). Communication of formal policy arose in varying forms such as reports, statutory and non-statutory guidance, and speeches. Values are hidden in policy documents and represent those of the authors. In developing education ethos, leaders mediate Government policies and agendas. They can resist them, misrepresent them or ignore them as unworkable. Policies can

be contested, interpreted, and enacted in a variety of ways. The 'rhetorics of texts and meanings of policy-makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices' (Ball, 2010, p.7).

2.1 Theme one: Markets, choice and accountability

Government policy was to advance the marketisation and privatisation of the education system. Education policy was framed by the Prime Minister's rhetoric of the 'Big Society', including empowering individuals, social groups, and communities to participate in decision-making (Forrester and Garrett, 2016). The Government saw the attainment gap between different socio-economic groups and the lack of social mobility as a failure in the education system. This gap was rectifiable by individuals, families, communities, and the market rather than state regulation.

Central to the Government's education policy was the drive to further headteachers' autonomy and enhance parents' choice of schooling (DfE, 2010). Autonomy concerned the extent to which those at lower levels of the system could make decisions independently of those at higher levels (Woods and Simkins, 2014). In contrast, control concerned the power of those in superior positions, such as the Government or sponsors of academies, to limit such autonomy (Woods and Simkins, 2014). The Government sought to rebalance the two opposing concepts of autonomy and control. Greater freedom for leaders would promote entrepreneurial responses to the challenges facing schools. Raising standards and promoting social justice would narrow the attainment gap between pupils from different socio-economic groups. Further, greater autonomy could encourage leaders to respond to the local needs of the community. The Government removed some of the Labour Government's (1997-2010) regulatory frameworks seen as stifling innovation, reinforcing uniformity in educational provision, and limiting pupils' achievement.

The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 established the core aspects of autonomy, control, and parental choice (Craig, 2017). Changes in educational governance structures exposed leaders to the influence of marketplace values. School governors managed aspects of staffing and financial resources through the Local Management of Schools. Market-based accountability and increased central regulation over education counterbalanced increased autonomy at an institutional level (Forrester and Garratt, 2016). Regulatory aspects included introducing a National Curriculum and statutory assessment of pupil achievement against expected standards for their age. The Education (Schools) Act 1992 established Ofsted (Office for Standards in

Education) and introduced regular inspections of schools. Inspectors evaluated school performance using centrally generated accountability criteria. The annual publication of school-wide performance data in league tables enabled parental comparison of schools. These measures placed pressure on leaders to comply with the Government's agenda to establish their position in the marketplace (Ball, 2010). Failing schools falling short of meeting the Government's required standards became identifiable.

Following the ERA, schools' relationships with parents altered. Parents became consumers on behalf of their children. The Government saw parental choice and competition between schools as drivers for school improvement (Ball, 2010). Through open enrolment, the basis of school funding was pupil numbers. The assumption was that schools would become more market-sensitive by responding to the interests of parents. To maximise the budget, schools would focus on efficient use of resources, pupil recruitment, and pupil achievement (Ball, 2010).

Coalition policy on academies and Free Schools extended Labour Party policies. The emphasis was on giving leaders of academies and Free Schools more autonomy than leaders in local authority schools. By removing compliance with the National Curriculum and national workforce conditions, leaders could be innovative concerning curriculum and organisational arrangements (Woods, Woods, and Gunter, 2007). The Government promoted the diversity of schooling by expanding the range of educational provision to reflect different values, purposes, and pupil needs (Woods and Simkins, 2014).

The Labour Government originally introduced city academies in 2000 to eradicate underachievement in disadvantaged urban areas by enabling parental choice of schooling (Curtis et al., 2008; Gunter and McGinty, 2014). Lord Adonis (2012), a principal Government advocate of academies, argued that independent, ambitious management and a vision focused on rapid success was central to their success. External sponsors of academies would take a leading role in school governance. City academies attracted sponsorship from businesses and charitable organisations judged capable of improving the life chances of pupils. The Academies Act 2010 expanded the existing academies programme by approving conversion to Academy status for all schools judged outstanding by Ofsted. These exceptional schools could develop academy trusts, act as standalone academies or become sponsors for other schools deemed unsuccessful. The Education Act 2011 required all schools deemed failing by Ofsted to become academies. By 2015, there were 5500 academies in England, representing approximately one in four schools (Morgan, 2016). This rapid academisation of schools represented a significant school system change (Lupton and Thomson, 2015).

The Academies Act 2010 also empowered 'teachers, charities, parent groups and faith organisations and others who had the vision, drive and skills' to establish and run Free Schools' (DfE, 2010, p.58). Applications to the DfE set out the reasons for establishing a Free School. It included a statement of its aims and objectives, evidence of local demand, the type of education proposed and justification of how the school would promote pupil learning and discipline (Hatcher, 2011).

The academisation and Free Schools policies were contentious. There were criticisms that these schools would not promote equity and social justice (Ball, 2013; Forrest and Garratt, 2016). Research findings suggested that pupils' progress and attainment were not significantly better than in maintained schools with similar characteristics (Worth, 2014). Greany (2018) concluded there was little evidence that academies working alone or in chains made any significant difference to pupil outcomes (Hutchings, Francis, and Kirby, 2015).

There was criticism of Free Schools for violating public accountability principles since they were accountable directly to the Secretary of State rather than the local community (Hatcher, 2011). Academies and Free Schools could appoint most governors at the expense of elected local community representatives. Higham (2014) argued that self-selecting actors made private decisions about the location, purposes, and education ethos of state schools. Schools could be moulded to meet the interests of groups on the assumption they ultimately served the public good.

Issues related to autonomy, accountability, and control

In the 1980s, external, quantitative accountability systems replaced the previous high-trust professional and peer-based accountability systems (Craig, 2017; Ball, 2003). Leaders' autonomy had to be 'earned' through performative success (Waldergrave and Simons, 2014). Published accountability criteria gave leaders transparency in expectations for successful leadership in a complex, dynamic education system. Since 2015, outstanding schools have been exempted from inspection unless their performance deteriorated (Ofsted, 2015).

A question was whether leaders in the research schools saw compliance with specified criteria as making it easier to predict educational outcomes and success, thus providing a sense of security. The use of assessment reduced the complexity of education, making schooling 'strong, secure, predictable and risk-free (Biesta, 2013, p.2). Long-term promotion of pupils' holistic development might be compromised. It could arise if accountability pressures caused leaders to focus on short-term pupil performance improvements when developing and implementing a

vision for education ethos. The issue was if adherence to accountability criteria reduced the number of options for action. In the data analysis, I explored two issues Biesta (2010) raised: who benefitted from the reductions in decisions concerning education outcomes and who had the power to define what counted as learning. What interested me was whether the leaders in the research would risk doing what they saw necessary to promote holistic education.

In my research, questions arose about how leaders' values could be challenged or undermined when forming the school's vision for education ethos. It could occur if leaders faced ethical dilemmas about their approach to ethos development. I investigated the influence of Ball's (2010) policy technologies, markets, managerialism, and performativity on leaders' practices. Market technologies promoted comparison between schools using external criteria. Management technologies advanced a 'what works' approach to education (Ball, 2010, p.42). Performance technologies determined what defines a good teacher or leader and what they value in education.

An issue for my research was the extent to which externally imposed accountability frameworks limited school leaders' autonomy and innovation (Higham and Earley, 2013; Academies Commission, 2013; Dunford et al., 2013; Brown, Stoll, and Godfrey, 2017). Dunford et al. (2013) found little innovation in the curriculum and educational practices in the first two cohorts of Free Schools due to the demands of Government bureaucracy and accountability systems. Similarly, Brown, Stoll, and Godfrey (2017, p.134) found headteachers aligned school structures, procedures, and practices with accountability requirements. It included instigating performance management systems linking teachers' successes to pupil attainment to meet Ofsted inspection criteria. The stakes were high. If headteachers failed to meet performance standards, they risked the loss of reputation personally and for the school. An issue for my research was whether compliance rather than resistance to policy became necessary to ensure the leaders' survival. I sought to reflect on the conclusion that Ball (2003) reached that a 'performativity' regime was unhealthy because it undermined professional autonomy. Ball argued teachers had to teach to the test, with accountability for outcomes reducing freedom in curriculum development.

Leaders seeking to develop innovative education practices in research schools would need to feel they possessed the capacity, confidence, and freedom to exercise autonomy. Headteachers had to decide the extent to which they should comply with externally enforced accountability criteria. There have been classifications of leaders' responses to external policy directives. Hoyle and Wallace (2007) argued that leaders could commit to implementing external direction, remain uncommitted with minimal compliance or fashion their response while sustaining a focus

on the pupils' interests. MacBeath (2012) found two extreme reactions to policy: seeing it either as a positive, supportive force for improvement or as an oppressive force imposing dysfunctional strategies that deskilled and disempowered teachers. Earley et al. (2012) classified leaders' responses to policy as 'confident', 'cautious', 'concerned' or 'constrained' about exercising autonomy. Confident headteachers embraced independence and worked within the policy to support the school's aims and values.

The intensification of leaders' roles

Several researchers reported increases in school leaders' workloads in response to changes in the external policy context. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) (2007, p.vi) found many headteachers' struggling to create sufficient time to engage effectively in the various strategic issues they were required to deal with'. Earley et al. (2012) concluded that headteachers perceived they spent insufficient time leading pupil learning and too much on educational administration. In reviewing other studies of school leaders' activities, Earley (2013, p.112) identified headteachers' work as 'fast-paced, stressful, relentless, fragmented, involving a wide range of activities.' Preedy, Bennet and Wise (2012, p.1) summarised a range of factors intensifying leaders' roles:

- Increased autonomy
- Greater accountability for performance and deploying resources
- Market accountability resulting from competition for pupils brought about by parental choice and funding linked to pupil enrolments
- Severe budget constraints resulting from the global financial crisis impacting on expenditure on public services
- Tensions between the expectations of the standards agenda and focus on the holistic development of pupils and their well-being
- Increased diversity of pupils and their needs, leading to challenges of responding to diversity whilst simultaneously reaching consensus about values and educational purposes.

Given these findings, an issue relevant to my research was the priority the headteachers placed on school ethos development given their plethora of responsibilities. Sources of support for leaders became increasingly uncertain, with the diminishing local authority support for leaders' professional development (Earley, 2013). In this context, the Church of England's support for its schools, discussed in the next Chapter, became more significant as leaders were encouraged to

form alliances. The purpose was to share expertise, engage in peer review and learn from research as part of the self-improving school system (Greany, 2018). The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership enabled leaders to network, share resources and inspire each other to deliver the Church's vision for education (cefel.org.uk).

2.2 Theme 2: Conceptions of successful school leadership

This theme relates to conceptions of successful leadership, its influence on leaders' priorities, expectations for performance and how they provided direction and exercised influence to achieve institutional goals (Leithwood and Seashore Louis, 2012; Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, 2008). A range of variables underpinned leaders' capacities to provide direction in achieving organisational goals. These included leaders' behaviours or competencies (DfE, 2016); their vision and strategies (Davies and Davies, 2012); their personal and professional values (Begley, 2012; Earley, 2013); how they distributed and used power (Simkins, 1997); and their unique work context (Hickman, 2012; Earley, 2013; Gewirtz, 2002). In the research, I related leadership to context, particularly the influence of macro-level and micro-level factors on education ethos development. Macro-level factors included societal, educational and Church of England values. Micro-level factors included the pupils' characteristics (Thrupp, 1998) and the size and type of school (Day et al., 2009).

In reviewing international literature on successful school leadership, Day and Sammons (2013) found that school outcomes determined leaders' success in English-speaking countries. These included standards of pupil achievement and the promotion of continuous school improvement. Research studies identified leadership as one of the most significant variables in explaining pupil outcomes (e.g., Day et al., 2009; Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2006; Louis, Dretzke and Wahlstrom, 2010; Day, Qing, and Sammons, 2016). Alongside the impact of direct instruction on pupil outcomes, leaders indirectly influenced pupil outcomes by promoting the right learning conditions (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). The IMPACT project found that school leaders improved pupil learning by influencing staff motivation, commitment, teaching practices, and developing teachers' leadership capacities (Day et al., 2009). Funded by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), the IMPACT project reflected the Government's perspectives on successful leadership at the time. There was an emphasis on leaders securing high pupil achievement. The small sample of school leaders, together with the Government funding, raised questions about the broader application of the findings. There are issues in using research studies seeking causal

relationships between effective leadership and pupil outcomes to inform leaders' practices because of the range of variables other than school leadership potentially contributing to pupil outcomes, such as parental influence, pupils' social history and pupil mobility (Goldstein, 1997).

In my research, I investigated leaders' perspectives on the purposes of education and their aspirations for pupil outcomes. More recently, the importance of leaders influencing a range of pupil outcomes gained significance in educational research, notably leaders' influence on the development of student well-being (The Children's Society, 2018), pupils' capacity for life-long learning and development of character virtues (Walker, Roberts and Kristjansson, 2015; Arthur et al., 2015). From a policy perspective, Spielman (2020), as Chief Inspector for Ofsted, expressed concern over the overemphasis on teaching to the test that focused on transmission and testing of a limited range of knowledge. Instead, leaders should act with integrity and offer a broader range of experiences. The purpose was to enable pupils to develop their talents. Her view was instrumental in driving changes in the Ofsted criteria for school inspections.

In researching leadership in urban contexts, Riley (2009) argued that successful leaders must thoroughly audit the school's communities. The purpose was to understand and respond to the needs, challenges, and complexities of peoples' daily lives. By listening to pupils and members of their communities about their lives and experiences, leaders could take a more strategic response to social policy issues. These included such matters as domestic abuse that could have a considerable impact on pupils' lives. This process was an essential precursor to building trust and mutual understanding between schools and communities in educating pupils. As Riley (2009) argued, trust must be created and earned, not assumed. It was important in binding schools and their communities together. Trust could be built by schools and communities signing up to common goals. Leaders gaining knowledge and understanding could reach out to their communities and develop a shared affinity and allegiances between the school and communities concerning pupils' education needs. In learning about their communities, leaders could harness the use of community resources to enhance pupils' life chances. Riley (2009) saw such an approach as advantageous to leaders seeking social justice and sustainability by emphasising an ethical, community-based approach to leadership. In my research, I explored how leaders sought to build trust in enabling the community's commitment to the school's vision and shared value system.

Leaders could use a range of practices to provide direction and influence the achievement of school goals. These included the complementary approaches of instructional and transformational leadership (Day, Qing, and Sammons, 2016; Day and Sammons, 2013). Leaders'

use of transformational leadership appeared relevant to leaders in my research to increase community members' commitment to the school vision (Brown, Stoll, and Godfrey, 2017). Instructional leadership entailed leaders staying 'consistently focused on the right stuff', the core technology of schooling and making all other dimensions of schooling work in the service of robust core technology and enhanced pupil achievement (Murphy et al., 2007). The core technology of schooling included teaching, learning, the curriculum, and assessment.

Instructional leadership appeared relevant to leaders seeking to embed the school's value system in classroom practices and influence pupils' educational experiences. Southworth (2009) argued that leaders should focus on 'learning-centred leadership' to enhance pupil achievement. Southworth envisaged school leaders influencing learning through three inter-related strategies: modelling, monitoring, and dialogue. Modelling exemplified the power of example. Leaders needed to 'walk the talk' to gain members' commitment to strategies and values (Southworth, 2009, p.95). Monitoring entailed analysing performance data to inform self-evaluation for school improvement, observation of lessons, and feedback on teaching and learning. Dialogue concerned creating opportunities for teachers to talk with colleagues about teaching and learning. Using this threefold approach, headteachers could diagnose developmental needs across the school. I also explored the possibility of leaders using mentoring to underpin all three aspects of supporting teachers to find solutions to pupil learning issues (West-Burnham and Coates, 2005). However, my research did not focus on evaluating pupils' learning.

Transformative leadership appeared to have specific relevance to leaders in schools with a Christian foundation because of the focus on transforming communities (Shields, 2010). Church of England policy identified the importance of leaders transforming school communities (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012; Church of England Education Office, 2016b). Shields (2010) argued that transformative leadership offered the promise of increased individual achievement and a better life lived in common with others. If leaders were to make a positive difference to pupils' lives, they needed to critique the purposes of schooling. They had to act courageously in developing learning environments and pedagogical practices that met the needs of all pupils (Shields, 2010). They would need to share expertise generated with other schools to promote pupils' achievement for the greater good. However, in a competitive marketplace, leaders might be less willing to share such expertise.

Transformative approaches to leadership emphasised developing approaches to education that enabled pupils to become creative, caring human beings in a context of social justice and

democratic human fellowship. Fielding (2012b), developing Macmurray's (1935) work, contemplated how people might live good lives together in the context of profound and consistent changes in society. He argued the need to judge education by its influence on character development rather than a narrow range of performance indicators. His concern was that society tended to value 'technical knowledge' concerned with methods for achieving goals, over 'valuational knowledge'; the knowledge required to decide what was worthwhile (Fielding, 2012b, p.678). The result was that people were worshipping 'efficiency and success' but not knowing 'how to live finely' (Macmurray, 1935, p.76).

Fielding (2012b) produced a typology of schooling to enable leaders to examine the purposes of education and identify the structures and systems required to support such purposes. I used this typology to analyse the purposes of education determined by leaders in my research. His typology included four types of schooling: impersonal organisations, affective communities, high-performance learning organisations, person-centred learning communities and agents of democratic fellowship. High-performance learning organisations appeared to have the most relevance concerning Coalition policy objectives, which focused on leaders' compliance with standards for excellence (DfE, 2010; DfE, 2015; DfE, 2016). Fielding argued that leaders should attend to two aspects: functional relations, which were instrumental, and personal relations, which fostered uniqueness, individuality, and human flourishing. He argued in high-performance learning organisations, leaders used the personal for the sake of the functional.

Consequently, developing community relations, pupil voice, well-being, and creativity met instrumental purposes: improving measurable pupil outcomes. Fielding (2012b, p. 689) claimed creativity and personalisation became 'the servants of a debilitating reductive standards agenda'. In contrast, he suggested that if leaders formed a 'person-centred community', the functional was used for the sake of the personal and was expressive of it, which could be morally satisfying. Personal development and people would be valued. Pupils could embrace a 'richer, more demanding fulfilment of education in and for a democratic society' (Fielding, 2012, p. 689). Leaders could develop more participatory and less hierarchical forms of engagement.

In the research, I explored the extent to which it was possible to identify Fielding's ideal school type's features. The basis was leaders creating schools as agents of democratic fellowship where pupils could become partners in their education and influence their learning and achievement. In particular, the research's focus was the extent to which leaders' espoused values matched those lived and learned through community members' daily encounters. Learning to be human was the central purpose of education, and failure to do this could prevent others from living well

together (Fielding, 2012b). These purposes resonated with the Church of England (2016b) vision for education in its schools, which emphasised the significance of pupils learning to live well together in a diverse, multi-faith society.

2.3 Theme 3: The importance of vision and values in leadership

Establishing a vision, or sense of shared purpose, has been regarded as central to successful school leadership. It enabled people to fulfil their aspirations and meet ambitious goals (Davies and Davies, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2006; McKinsey and Co, 2010; Nanus, 1992). The management consultants McKinsey and Co. (2010) reviewed several education systems across the world to determine what factors led to improvement. They found that almost all school leaders claimed the setting of a vision and direction as one of the most critical factors contributing to their success. Nanus (1992) argued that the right kind of vision could attract commitment, energise people, create meaning in people's lives, establish a standard of excellence and bridge the gap between the present and future.

I was interested in leaders' visions for education ethos and whether there was a consensus amongst leaders concerning their aspirations for the school and purposes of education to be provided. Developing vision entailed leaders imagining what their schools might become, what they valued about education, and deciding their education goals. Leaders could hold personal visions for education ethos based on their experiences, values, hopes and circumstances that differed from the school's espoused vision (Ungoad-Thomas, 2005). Ofsted (2015) and DfE (2015) standards of excellence for headteachers emphasised the importance of headteachers communicating a compelling vision for the school among community members. Similarly, the National Society (2013b) valued vision-building in Church schools, requiring leaders to develop a vision for Christian distinctiveness. Its implementation's effectiveness was judged as part of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (Chapter 3). The assumption was that leaders knew what their schools should achieve and possessed the capacity to create appropriate structures and practices to enable institutional learning processes. This capacity extended to them exerting strategic influence to gain the commitment to the vision of people working and learning in the school to make the vision a reality.

Davies (2006) linked vision formation to strategic leadership. He found that strategic leaders attended to four stages: conceptualising the school vision; engaging others; articulating and implementing the vision; and monitoring and evaluating its impact. These processes implied leaders engaged in rational approaches to strategy development and could establish causal links

between educational inputs and outputs in a turbulent policy environment. However, leaders faced numerous educational reforms, creating uncertainty and ambiguity when planning their future direction. Davies and Davies (2012) emphasised the importance of leaders building community members' trust in gaining commitment to the vision. It was achievable by them demonstrating credibility in their roles and them acting with integrity by modelling the school values.

Critiques of vision

There is a need to critique the process of leaders formulating visions for education (Forrester and Gunter, 2009; Fink, 2010; Earley, 2013). Fink (2010) argued that leaders experienced tensions; they had to be visionary, creative, and innovative as well as compliant, reactive, and instructional (theme one). Although leaders might have personal aspirations and values, centralised control of curriculum and assessment prevented them from acting on and serving the community's needs. Bottery (2004) characterized school leaders as acting as managers rather than leaders. Bennis and Nanus (1985) distinguished between leadership and management: 'Managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing' (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p.21). They viewed leadership as 'empowerment' through leaders being innovative, flexible, and transformational.

In contrast, they viewed management as responding to a set of contractual exchanges, which could result in 'compliance' or, at worst, 'spiteful obedience' (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p.218). Compliance with external systems of accountability provided evidence of school leaders doing things right. Since the implementation of the ERA 1988, Simkins (1997) argued that school leaders gained operational power while Central Government gained criteria power at the expense of local authorities and the teaching profession. Criteria power related to control over the aims and purposes of education, while operational power determined education provision and resourcing. Ball (2013) expressed concern that in the English education system, the economic purposes of education were of greater significance than the humanist purposes and character development of pupils.

Importance of values and acting with a moral purpose

To comprehend the nature and importance of values underpinning leaders' visions, I drew on the definitions of values by Begley (2001) and Wright (2010), together with frameworks for classifying values (Hodgkinson, 1991a; Mueller, 2014). Begley (2001, p.356) defined values as 'conceptions of the desirable with motivational force'. Self-interest, concern for rational

positions or ethical stances could underpin values (Hodgkinson, 1978). Values characterised individuals, groups, organisations, professions, and societies, which influenced choices and behaviours. Attitudes, verbal utterances, or actions associated with their manifestation could make them ambiguous and hard to interpret. Wright (2010), writing from a Christian theological perspective, distinguished between values and principles. A value was 'some aspect of human life which was prized, from which principles and thereby, rules might be generated' (Wright, 2010, p.41). From a Christian perspective, values could include love, peace, freedom, or justice. Principles were employed when values were 'upheld'. Conceptions of values relate to principles, ethics, morals, and morality.

When acting with moral purpose, leaders should attend to ethics, established social principles that govern their behaviour, and assess their actions' potential impact on others (Haydon, 2007; Hickman, 2012; Begley, 2012). These could include professional standards governing leaders' behaviours, such as the standards for headteachers and teachers (DfE, 2015; DfE, 2013). Begley (2012, p.46) argued that the imposition of values on others was unethical and violated human rights. Morality, or acting with morals, was about taking responsibility, doing what was right and acting with integrity. The implications for leaders were that they should make the vision transparent. It included considering how school values linked to school rules, making them morally binding on pupils rather than conceptions of the desirable.

Values as sources of influence, conflict and identity in creating and implementing a vision

An issue in my research was whether school leaders experienced conflict, or tensions, between their personal values and national and local policy priorities. Values could arise from different social sources and influence an individual's character, decision-making and actions (Begley, 2012). Begley (2012) argued that leaders needed to be aware of their values and ethical predispositions. He identified a potential conflict between a leader's values and those arising from other sources, making consensus hard to achieve. In developing the school's education ethos, leaders would need to address value conflicts in decision-making. These sources included values held by an individual's family, peers, acquaintances; the profession; the organisation; the community, society, culture; and aspects related to the transcendental such as God, faith, and spirituality.

Hodgkinson's (1991a) hierarchy of values explored the motives behind leaders' visions and how they sought to manage conflicts in values. At the top were 'trans-rational values'; those adopted based on commitment or faith, which are scientifically unverifiable or justifiable by logical argument. Examples included acting 'in the best interests of children', acting for justice, equity,

respect, and dignity. In the middle were 'rational values', the motives for action based on logical reasoning. This layer was sub-dividable into values focusing on calculation, consequence, or consensus. Begley (2012) argued that accountability pressures could cause school leaders to make decisions based on rational reasons grounded in consequences or consensus because they were defensible. At the bottom of the hierarchy were sub-rational values based on personal preference.

Developing a vision for education ethos could be considered advantageous to leaders in research schools. Several research studies emphasised the significance of values in headship and the tensions between a headteacher's values and those imposed by priorities in the broader policy context (Campbell, Gold and Lunt, 2003; Coldron et al., 2014; Day et al., 2010; Rayner, 2014). These findings were relevant to my research. They indicated the importance of leaders attending to their values to form a moral compass to navigate their way through the proliferation of expectations placed on them. Day et al. (2010) found successful headteachers held in common specific attributes and values, which enabled them to tackle daunting situations in the face of adversity. Campbell, Gold and Lunt (2003) found that leaders retained a commitment to their own personal and professional values in framing their aspirations for the school, pupils, and staff. It was despite the shift in educational discourse towards market forces and managerialism and a focus on educational attainment and inclusion. They articulated values related to pupils' holistic development, social justice outcomes, diversity, and equality. Rayner (2014), in a small-scale study of the professional values of three headteachers, found that despite all the opportunities and restrictions national educational policy priorities placed on headteachers, their personal history mainly shaped their values and influenced their decision-making. Coldron et al. (2014) investigated fifteen headteachers' responses to the changing policy environment. They found that when headteachers experienced conflicts between their professional values and personal values, the latter predominated.

2.4 Theme 4: Leaders influence on others

This theme considers the use of power in leadership and how leaders work to influence others to achieve commitment to the school's vision and achievement of school goals.

Power in leadership

An essential aspect for investigation in my research was how leaders used power to influence pupils and teachers into adopting the value system underpinning the school's education ethos. It included considering the power relationships between the parties involved in pupils'

education. In schools, the concept of power was troublesome as leadership literature tended to regard power as coercive: making people do what they would not choose to do (Western, 2013, p.75). Lukes (2005), however, considered power could be viewed as the capacity to do something and was not necessarily negative. When exercised in a relationship of dependency, power could be 'productive, transformative, authoritative and compatible with dignity' (Lukes, 2005, p.109). I used Lukes' (1974; 2005) dimensions of power to analyse the power exercised over leaders and how leaders might exercise power over pupils. Chapter 4 explains how I used Lukes' dimensions to make sense of leaders' and pupils' experiences.

Leaders in the research schools faced potential criticisms in using power to influence the beliefs and values of others. An issue for my research was whether the leaders in the schools with a Christian foundation avoided facing potential criticisms of the indoctrination of others into the Christian faith. In Chapter 3, I discuss the importance of leaders in research schools, considering the purposes of the school's Christian education. There was potential criticism of charismatic leaders for using their personalities to make subordinates comply unreflectively with the institutional vision and values by imposing cultural controls (Western, 2013). Watson and Ashton (1995, p.16) warned that schools should not 'dictate commitment' to specific values or beliefs. Instead, they should enable pupils to consider their commitment through developing their understanding and awareness of the influence of values in their lives.

Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), ethical leadership (Begley, 2012; Trevino, Hartman, and Brown, 2000; Western, 2013) and transformative leadership (Shields, 2010) gained importance in school leadership. Trevino, Hartman, and Brown (2000) identified ethical leadership as having two dimensions: leaders possessing moral traits, such as integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, and leaders being models for others through their actions. Transformative leadership requires that leaders question educational purposes and practices in eradicating any injustices and inequalities. The goal was to enable more inclusive, equitable and democratic forms of education for all pupils (Shields, 2010, p.559, p.583). I discuss the nature of servant leadership in Chapter 3.

Potentially power and trust operate in opposition to each other. Moos (2012, p.29) discussed the importance of leaders maintaining a power-trust balance through a trustworthy use of power. Whereas the use of power could persuade or force people to act in a way that was not of their choosing, trust depended on others' goodwill. To maintain trust, there needed to be the legitimate use of power. Leaders communication of the school's value system as a code of conduct could constitute a legitimate use of power. It would enable the community to establish

high standards and evaluate whether leaders acted with integrity. Coaching conversations to allow members of the community to discuss, question and gain empathy with the position of leaders could secure commitment to the vision (Coates, 2017). Empowering staff to act on the vision would require leaders to acknowledge potential staff vulnerabilities and consider their professional development needs associated with learning-centred leadership (Bryk and Schneider, 2003).

My research interest was how leaders articulated what a successful education ethos looked like, monitored its implementation, and engaged members of the community in reflecting on the vision for education ethos. When investigating vision formation in schools, Davies and Davies (2012) found that leaders needed to gain the commitment of members of the community by sharing the implementation strategy and addressing potential problems. Defining strategic measures were also essential to make a judgement on the success of the vision's implementation.

The way the headteacher supported and worked with teacher leaders and the governing body was interesting to me when examining leaders' experiences of developing and implementing the school's vision for education ethos. My starting point was that the headteacher held a prominent leadership role in education ethos development (Day et al., 2009; Gibton, 2017, p.40). It was because headteachers had ultimate accountability for school performance (Greany, 2018). Headteachers improved pupil outcomes through their aptitudes (their values, virtues, dispositions, attributes, and competencies), strategies and timely implementation of these strategies in response to their unique contexts (Day et al., 2011). Hallinger (2003), in the United States, identified strong and directive leadership from principals who focused on the curriculum and instruction as important in institutional effectiveness (Moos, 2012). Craig (2018), however, warned external accountability systems could place unrealistic expectations on headteachers. It could make them feel vulnerable, prompting them to adopt authoritarian leadership at the expense of collaborative or distributed approaches. Headteachers could resort to a form of coercive leadership that created a toxic culture through the 'poisoning of enthusiasm, creativity, autonomy and innovative expression' (Wilson-Starks, 2003, p.2). Enforced compliance could undermine teachers' professional autonomy. Whilst leaders might secure short-term improvements in standards, there could be a long-term negative impact on pupil learning, staff recruitment and retention.

Distributed leadership

Concerning my research, I was interested in how headteachers worked with and developed talented and imaginative middle leaders and teachers to move the school forward to its desired future. In a complex, dynamic education system, Government education policy promoted a move from conventional, hierarchical patterns of leadership towards 'distributed leadership', with teachers being actively engaged in school decision-making (Ofsted, 2015; DfE, 2016). Power and control were redistributed away from the top of an organisation (Western, 2013). Distributed leadership emphasised reciprocal interactions between the leader and subordinates (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). Leaders could collectively perform multifaceted tasks requiring a capacity more significant than a headteacher working alone (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2007; Earley et al., 2012). Distributed leadership could improve effectiveness through increased engagement and self-esteem, which would enhance school capacity to manage the challenges posed by a complex environment (Woods, 2005, p.30).

The term 'distributed' leadership was mistakenly used interchangeably within the leadership literature with 'collective', 'collegial', 'shared' or 'collaborative' leadership (Spillane, 2005). As opposed to distributed leadership, my interpretation was that collective leadership required democratic leadership, connectivity, and collaboration to create an energized and adaptive organisation (Western, 2013). Day et al. (2009) found the distribution of leadership in schools depended on the trust headteachers placed in staff. Headteachers, in the early phases of headship, adopted more autocratic styles of leadership. Such types of leadership are like models of 'transactional' or 'instructional' leadership. The headteacher coordinated the curriculum, supervised teaching and learning and monitored student progress (Hallinger and Murphy (1985) in Gumus, Bellibas, Esen and Gumus, 2018). There was more delegation of responsibilities in the middle and later phases as the headteacher's confidence and trust in staff capabilities increased. This finding was relevant to my research as the headteachers of each school were in post for different periods, which could influence their perspectives on distributed leadership.

2.5 Theme 5: The importance of school education ethos

Understanding the difficulties in defining education ethos and its potential influence on pupils was essential to my interpretation of leaders' experiences of developing school education ethos and pupils' experiences of their education within that ethos.

The importance of school education ethos

Rutter et al. (1979) introduced the term 'school ethos' to describe a school's atmosphere or tone influencing school effectiveness. The atmosphere was due to a culmination of social factors within a school rather than any individual variable. Hargreaves (1995) highlighted how they had not considered ethos as part of their original research focus on school effectiveness, but its significance emerged from the findings. They used the idea of school ethos to explain how some schools appeared to provide a more positive educational experience for pupils than others.

Education policy consistently linked leadership effectiveness with developing a robust and positive school ethos (DEE, 2001, p.5; DfE, 2010; DfE, 2011; DfE, 2016). DfE (2010) placed importance on leaders' autonomy in developing education ethos. DfE (2011) claimed that a positive school ethos contributed to a thriving learning environment. DfE (2015b) introduced new standards of 'excellence' for headteachers, replacing the DfES (2004) standards applicable at the time of the data collection. Two of the four new 'Excellence as Standard' domains emphasised headteachers influence on ethos. Excellent headteachers should create an ethos within which all staff were motivated and supported to develop their skills and subject knowledge and support each other. They should also provide a safe, calm, and well-ordered environment, promoting pupils' exemplary behaviour in school and wider society (DfE, 2015). The DfES (2004) did not explicitly mention 'ethos' in the standards for headteachers. However, there was a clear expectation that the headteacher would develop a culture of high expectations that was fair, equitable and open. The vital influence the headteacher should have over the school community in modelling community values and promoting high standards was a consistent feature in the policy documentation. In the research, this raised a question about the kinds of ethos leaders sought to develop.

In a quasi-market education system, developing school ethos became important in marketing or branding schools. Communication of a Church school ethos statement could provide parents with the means of identifying the school's Christian distinctiveness (Chadwick, 2012; Gwynne, 2012, p.13 in Pritchard, 2012). I discuss Christian distinctiveness in Section 3.1.

Despite the increasing focus on developing a school ethos in educational policy, the ethos was viewed as a complex or elusive concept, which was hard to recognise, define or measure (Allder, 1993; Glover and Colman, 2005, McLaughlin, 2005; Solvasson, 2005). Solvasson (2005) and McLaughlin (2005) reviewed research into education ethos, finding interchangeable use in the

terminology of 'ethos', 'climate', 'ambience' and 'culture'. They called for consistency in using the terms.

McLaughlin (2005) regarded ethos as 'the prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an identifiable entity' (McLaughlin; 2005, p.311). I drew on this definition for use in this thesis but expanded on it. I considered education ethos as the 'climate' or 'character' of the school, which had several contributory elements seen in models for institutional culture, such as that provided by Hofstede (1997). Hofstede (1997) identified institutional values, practices, and symbolism in the physical environment as culture constituents. I supported McLaughlin's stance that ethos was important in influencing how people felt and behaved in the school. McLaughlin (2005) noted that although ethos was commonly referred to as something experienced, it could be shaped as 'intended' ethos. McLaughlin suggested tensions could exist between intended and experienced ethos and indicated that several different ethoses (ethae) might coexist within a school, which could be conflicting. He argued that experienced ethos manifested itself through many factors influencing pupil behaviour, learning, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and character formation. McLaughlin argued that school ethos was integral to pupils' lives, and leaders should ensure that the influence of ethos was substantive. Leaders could exert influence, even in an indirect or sometimes non-transparent and unconscious way.

Donnelly (2000, p.135) sought to clarify the nature of ethos in a small scale-study of two Northern Ireland primary schools by distinguishing a 'positivist' and 'anti-positivist' view of ethos. The former was related to formal expressions of the aims and objectives of the school. The latter concerned the 'mood of the organisation', emerging from social interactions between people. Donnelly (2000) saw ethos as dynamic and subject to change and identified the concept of a 'gap' between the aspirational ethos of school leaders and the ethos experienced by the research participants. Solvasson (2005) also found a gap between teachers' intended ethos and the ethos pupils experienced when investigating teacher-pupil relationships.

When analysing leaders and pupils' perspectives on school educational ethos, I sought to explore any potential dissonance or the 'gap' between leaders' espoused or intended ethos and pupils' experienced ethos. Green, E. (2009c) identified a gap between leaders' espoused Bible-based ethos and pupils' experienced ethos in a City Technology College with a Christian foundation. Similarly, Green, S. (2015) found differences in staff and pupils' perceptions of the value of Christian ethos in a Church secondary school in enabling achievement (see Section 3.2).

Education ethos and culture

Hofstede's (1997) model of culture was valuable for my research, as I found the Church Academy leaders used it to understand the school's Christian education ethos. Hofstede (1997) viewed culture as having four main elements and represented these diagrammatically as an onion with four layers around a core. The outer three layers of culture formed practices visible to cultural outsiders. The outer layer represented overt symbols, such as words, artefacts, and pictures, which could have a special meaning to cultural members. The third layer represented heroes, the people possessing the behavioural characteristics prized by the culture. The second layer represented the cultural rituals, the collective activities the community deemed essential. Values formed the core of institutional culture, defining what people thought should be achieved.

Schein (2010), like Hofstede (1997), emphasised that institutional culture had visible and hidden dimensions. He generated a three-tiered model for analysing culture: artefacts, espoused beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. In analysing pupils' experiences of education ethos in both schools, I considered the sense they made of implicit and explicit school values communicated and exemplified within the interactions between school community members and school practices (Chapters 7 and 9).

Mueller (2014) investigated the nature of institutional values underpinning ethos. He concluded that the concept of organisational values was a complex phenomenon. Leaders could assume that institutional values equated to individual values or that each institutional value was a 'mosaic' devised from the building blocks of personal values. In schools with a Christian foundation, such as those in my research, members' religiosity could vary (Farnell, 2016). There was a potential danger of leaders assuming that the Christian designation and espoused values should automatically determine institutional practices and decision-making for all community members. Mueller (2014) claimed that people possessed little mutual understanding of institutional values. Any lack of discourse concerning value descriptors could lead people to assume a collective agreement mistakenly. Furthermore, he argued that the literature revealed a lack of clarity about how individuals negotiated their experiences of institutional values whilst engaged in their professional roles. Mueller (2014) identified three components of institutional values:

1. Subjective aspects, which are personally experienced and unstructured
2. Objective aspects, which can be assessed and are factual

3. A 'middle ground' of values, where values include subjective and objective elements

Mueller (2014) recommended that leaders generate a shared understanding of the manifestation of institutional values in practices. Due to the ambiguity of values, leaders should provide the community with their meaning and model expected behaviours. The implication for my research was the importance of investigating and making sense of leaders' experiences of the communication of values and ways they sought to integrate values into school and curriculum practices.

Influence of school education ethos on pupils' experiences

Within the research studies, I investigated leaders' influence on pupils' experiences of the school's education ethos. I found a limited range of research that exemplified the power of ethos, but that of Graham (2012) in an English maintained secondary school proved useful. Graham (2012) used a hermeneutical phenomenological methodology to elicit seven final year pupils' experiences of ethos. Whilst a small-scale study, his findings emphasised the value of pupils' voices in ethos development. Central to his findings were acts of solicitude, positive and negative, that influenced learners' behaviour, the mood of social groups and contributed to perceptions of the school's overall atmosphere. He associated acts of solicitude with the care people showed others. Heidegger (2005) argued that acts of solicitude could be either 'deficient', 'indifferent' or 'positive'. Ethos represented a dynamic rather than fixed phenomenon. When there were deficient or indifferent acts of solicitude, this influenced the entire pupil group's mood. The implications for my thesis were that pupils' perspectives of the school's ethos could be subject to change depending on the types of relationships experienced.

Bennett's (2017) review of behaviour in schools found that the most successful leaders established cultures of high expectations. All community members understood the expectations and held the belief that all students mattered equally. Warin (2017) undertook a limited, small scale study in three primary schools of leaders' establishing whole school ethos of care. He identified the positive contribution such care had on pupils' mental health and well-being. Stern (2013) found education ethos had a spiritual dimension, exemplified in how schools generated and supported three aspects of humanity: community, learning and dialogue. He devised the term 'spirited schools', as representative of those who valued a sense of community in terms of the relationships and friendships developed. Such schools valued learning as transformation and used dialogue to enable people to be themselves in their relations with others and their contributions to learning and the community. His findings emphasised the importance of leaders

reflecting on the rhetoric of the school in its practices and lived reality. In my research, I considered how leaders' values and practices influenced the school's ethos and underpinning value system and the meaning pupils made of the school's underlying value system.

The literature demonstrated the importance of ethos to leaders in developing an effective school. There were potential limitations in leaders understanding its nature. The lack of research verifying the effects on pupils made it a distinctive aspect of my research. In Chapter 3, I discuss the Church of England expectation for education ethos development and its influence on pupils' educational experiences in Church schools (National Society, 2013b). I review the research investigating the nature of Christian education ethos and its influence on pupils' educational experiences (Section 3.2).

2.6 Summary

In this Chapter, I reviewed aspects of school leadership. First, I explored three central strands underpinning Central Government policy on education, which established the context leaders of academies and Free Schools worked within. Second, I explored aspects of leadership: the nature of successful leadership, the importance of vision and values in leadership and how leaders work to influence others. Third, I considered the literature on school education ethos. I identified the implications for data collection and analysis.

Leaders' values, personal histories and attributes could influence the formation and implementation of a shared vision for school education ethos, as well as potentially conflicting values held by different groups, such as parents, the school's sponsoring body and Central Government. An aspect of the investigation in the research was identifying whose values influenced the school's education ethos. In academies, it could be the sponsor who established the vision as opposed to the headteacher. In the English education system, which has continuously valued outputs, efficiency and effectiveness, successful leadership was measured and understood using accountability criteria and benchmarks. An issue for exploration was how school leaders in research schools made sense of their purported autonomy in developing the ethos in their schools. For the headteacher's vision to be realised, the headteacher would need to secure the commitment of others to the vision. Questions arose about the leaders' perceptions of their autonomy to determine education ethos and the purposes of education. I was interested in exploring any tensions and contradictions in values perceived by leaders when developing education ethos and how they perceived the ethos they created met the needs of staff, parents, and pupils.

From a review of the literature, I concluded that education ethos was a difficult concept to define. A potential issue facing leaders was how they might embed education ethos in school practices, so there was unity between their intended ethos and that experienced by pupils. Questions arose about how leaders and pupils interpreted education ethos, the priority leaders placed on education ethos development, and how the school vision shaped the school's curriculum and pedagogy. In Chapter 3, I consider the nature of Christian education in state-funded schools in England and what constitutes Christian education ethos.

Chapter 3

Literature Review Part 2:

The Nature and Purpose of Christian Education

3.0 Introduction and approach to the literature review

Research Question One investigates leaders' experiences of developing and implementing a vision for education ethos. Research Question Two explores pupils' experiences of their education within the school's ethos. Chapter 2 discussed the importance of education ethos for leadership and defined the term 'education ethos' for use in the research. In this Chapter, I review the literature concerning the nature of Christian education ethos and Church of England policy around the provision of distinctively Christian education in state-funded schools. The purpose was to enable me to explore the context within which leaders in the research schools operated.

In the first Section, I take a policy perspective on the development of Christian education ethos. Exploring the Church of England ('Church') policy perspective was essential. I found it influenced leaders in my studies in developing Christian education ethos within the Christian Free School and Church Academy. I focus on the policy reports by Dearing (2001), Chadwick (2012), and the Archbishops' Council (2013) as they potentially had the most significant influence on schools at the time of data collection.

My starting point is the Dearing Report (2001), which sought to establish a coherent national policy for education in Church schools. The Chadwick Report (2012) highlighted the challenges facing the Church's continued role in education in response to the Academies Act 2010. Chadwick recognised the Church's need to adapt to the diversity of school types, educational providers, and sponsors. The adaptation went beyond the 1944 Education Act's continuance of a dual system of voluntary and county schools. Voluntary schools (Aided, Special Agreement, or Controlled) were affiliated to and partially funded and controlled by the Christian churches (Freathy and Parker, 2015, p.5). The Archbishops' Council (2013) emphasised the changing role of Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) in supporting school leaders to secure academic standards alongside developing a distinctively Christian education ethos.

Church policy before the new millennium helped contextualise the debates concerning Christian education before the Dearing Report in 2001. In England, the character of maintained Church schooling and its distinctiveness dates back to the Elementary Education Act, 1870. I consider

the historical changes in discourse concerning school education ethos. I also include discussion to acknowledge the insights into education ethos represented by scholarship relating to Roman Catholic schooling. The Durham Report (1970), The Fourth R, distinguished between Church school education's 'domestic' and 'general' functions from a Church of England perspective. The 'domestic' function concerned providing an education for children from Christian homes. In contrast, the 'general' function involved service to the community (Francis, 1993, p.54). Although Durham (1970, p.281) favoured the 'general' function, the report stimulated debate on which function should be emphasised (Street, 2007b, p.138). The Dearing Report (2001, p.xi), which explored Church schools' nature and purposes, engaged with these two functions. This distinction in the purposes of Church school education remains essential to leaders developing Christian education in a contemporary setting.

I also reflect on policy documentation by the Church of England Education Office's (2016b) discussion of the Church's most recent vision for education and pupils' Christian formation. Although published after completion of the research data-collection phase, it contributed to my exploration of the nature of Christian education ethos, data analysis, and me making sense of participants' perspectives.

I appraise research concerning leaders' development of Christian education ethos and pupils' perspectives of their education within schools with a Christian foundation. It was to inform the choice of methodology and analysis of participants' experiences. I restrict the review to studies exploring education ethos in Christian academies, City Technology Colleges and Free Schools, Church schools and academies, and schools funded by Christian sponsors. I exclude studies undertaken in Catholic schools for manageability, as I found no evidence of Catholic education influencing education in the research. I review perspectives on Christian distinctiveness, Christian ethos, Church school ethos, and vision for Christian ethos. I consider the influence of Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools on leaders' visions for education ethos because SIAMS influenced the Church Academy leaders' approaches to education ethos development in the research. I explore potential issues facing school leaders' development of Christian education ethos in research schools.

Historical perspective on Christian education and the changing discourse on school education ethos in England

Historical perspectives on the purposes of Christian education relate to the Churches evolving roles in state education. Parliamentary enactments in 1870, 1902 and 1944 maintained the

Church of England's predominant position, as the established Church, in educational policy-making in England. The Elementary Education Act, 1870 established the foundations of the dual system of education. The Education Acts of 1902 and 1944 maintained this position. The Church was a significant partner with the Government in providing schooling for the nation's children. The relationship came under pressure from varying directions. Nonetheless, the Church's role in this partnership in formal terms remained largely unaltered until the Academies Act, 2010. Furthermore, there was a significant contribution by the Roman Catholic Church as a provider of Christian education in England. Both Churches contributed to the discourse on Christian distinctiveness.

The Churches were the original providers of elementary education in England (Worsley, 2013). Voluntary societies established in the 1800s raised funds to provide schools to educate the poor. Joshua Watson founded the National Society in 1811 to educate the poor in suitable learning, works of industry, and the principles of Christianity according to the established Church. Watson saw exposure to liturgy and catechism as necessary to good character formation. By 1815, the National Society had created 546 schools educating 97,920 pupils (Wickham, 2013, p.24). By 1835, this number rose to 1,000,000, which represented a significant achievement. The establishment of the Catholic Poor School Society in 1847 enabled pupils education in Roman Catholic Church schools (Worsley, 2013, p.5).

Interdenominational differences between Anglicans and Non-conformists over education characterised the nineteenth century. Within the Church of England, there was also intra-denominational rivalry between leading Anglicans over religious education. The rivalry centred over providing denominational and non-denominational religious education. The former entailed teaching according to a particular Christian denomination, while the latter represented a basic form of Christianity (Parker, Allen and Freathy, 2020, p.549).

The Elementary Education Act 1870 permitted establishing School Boards to provide elementary schools in England and Wales where insufficient numbers of denominational schools existed (Worsley, 2013, p.5; Rosman, 2003, p.201). These secular Board schools received state grants alongside Church schools in what became known as a 'dual system' of education (Parker and Freathy, 2020, p.202). The dual system consisted of the provision of voluntary denominational schools alongside non-denominational Board schools. The character of the schools became strongly defined by the religious education provided. Section 14 of the Act (the 'Cowper-Temple clause') did not prescribe what, if any, religious instruction be taught in the new Board schools (Parker, Allen and Freathy, 2020, p.555). It forbade the teaching of religious catechism or

religious formulary distinctive of any particular denomination (Chadwick, 2013, p. 45). The Act enabled Christian religion to remain a salient feature of the English education system. Church schools became defined as the schools providing denominational religious education. There was much acrimonious debate about the form of religious education (if any) pupils should receive in Board schools (Rosman, 2003, p.201).

The Church of England provided the only schools in many rural areas from 1881 after the Elementary Education Act 1880 introduced compulsory education until ten years of age. Non-conformist parents had no option but for their children to attend Church of England schools. Although they could opt out of religious education, few did. They were subject to the influence of local clergy, who often chaired the governing body and had a visible presence within the schools (Rosman, 2003, p.201). School Board elections became sources of religious conflict over education. Where those favouring denominational schools gained control of the Board, they could claim that Board schools were not required in the area and provided opportunities to construct new Church schools. In contrast, a Board opposed to denominational schooling could refuse to recognise new voluntary schools and deprive them of government funding (Rosman, 2003, p.201).

The Education Act 1902 abolished School Boards and established Local Education Authorities to oversee education in their areas. These Local Education Authorities had powers to establish new secondary and technical schools and develop the existing system of elementary schools. The Act reinforced the 'dual system'. It bolstered the control of education by religious groups, which were withering under pressure from School Board initiatives. The Act enabled voluntary schools to enter the system and receive finance from the rates while maintaining some independence, for instance, in staff appointments. The legislation caused considerable controversy. Non-conformists protested at support for Anglican and Catholic schools and lost their influential role on elected School Boards. They objected to funding religious education in schools (Chadwick, 2013, p.45). A cry went up denouncing, 'Rome on the rates.' A National Passive Resistance League was formed, whose members refused to pay that section of their rates which they believed would support denominational schools. The 1902 Act became a major political issue, contributing significantly to the defeat of the Conservative Government and the Liberal Party landslide victory in the 1906 General Election. In the four years following the Act, there was the issue of 70,000 summonses for non-payment of rates (Rosman, 2003, p.2003). The Liberal President of the Board of Education, Augustine Birrell, attempted to abolish the dual system and

bring all Church schools under state control through Education Bill 1906. However, after the defeat in the Lords, the Liberal Government abandoned the attempt (Chadwick, 2013, p.46).

Churches of varying denominations sought to influence religious education in the expanding secular school sector during the 1900s (Bates, 1994, p.6-7). Controversies arose about teachers teaching religion without appropriate qualifications, commitment and against their conscience. A report on religious education commissioned by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury welcomed cooperation between LEAs and Churches in establishing syllabuses that advanced the teaching of Christianity (Parker and Freathy, 2020, p.204). In contrast, dissenters viewed 'the Cowper-Temple clause as an infection that spread an 'undenominational atmosphere' into all schools, including schools not governed by the clause (Parker and Freathy, 2020, p.204). The quality of religious education and worship became essential components of the atmosphere of Church schools. The discourse on the atmosphere was representative of the early debates on Christian distinctiveness.

Church schools fell into poor states of disrepair. LEAs could provide better building standards and teachers' pay (Worsley, 2013, p.6). The Church of England's challenge to improve standards in its buildings proved overwhelming. The strategic decision to prioritise work in partnerships with LEAs in influencing religious education in all schools in the country over the struggle to hold on to some schools in a poor state of disrepair (Parker and Freathy, 2020, p.205) provided the basis of the Church's service role in the education to this day.

The Education Act 1944 was a landmark for Christian education for the Church of England and Roman Catholic schools. Negotiations between Butler, President of the Board of Education and Archbishop Temple resulted in the Church of England's support for the legislation. The Act modified the dual system by introducing two forms of Church school status: Voluntary Controlled (VC) or Voluntary Aided (VA). LEAs would manage VC schools, with some Church representation on school management boards, and provide denominational religious education if requested by parents. The Government would provide the running costs. In contrast, the Churches would retain control of VA schools with a 50% capital building grant. Butler appreciated the Church would find it hard to finance secondary education and was reluctant to surrender Church schools to Government control.

The response of the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church to these options differed, influencing their distinctive approaches to Christian education ethos development in post-war England. The Church of England opted for both, reflecting a balance between their domestic role

in nurturing children in the faith and service role in educating all the nation's children. It ultimately led to Church schools becoming confused over their domestic and service functions in education, which could erode the distinctiveness of the Christian education ethos. The Roman Catholic Church opted entirely for VA status to protect their interests in education, focusing on the domestic function of education.

The Act required mandatory daily collective worship and religious education in all maintained schools (Chadwick, 2013, p.47). It did not specify what religion should be taught or define the character of worship. The assumption might have been Christianity was synonymous with religion in post-war Britain (Cox (1983) in Revell, 2008, p.220). LEAs had to create an Agreed Syllabus for religious education in schools, except for VA schools. Parents gained the right to withdraw their children from religious education in maintained and voluntary schools. Archbishop Temple believed that Christian education should permeate the whole school atmosphere through separate curriculum subjects and good citizenship (Parker and Freathy, 2020, p.209). In part, this compensated for declines in Sunday school and religious education in children's homes. An education in Christianity mattered in resisting the oppressive ideologies arising in Europe since the 1930s. Some members of the Church argued for the teaching of pupils in an 'atmosphere' of religion. The Church and school would be closely associated, with pupils trained to be members of a worshipping community (Louden, 2012, p.66).

Since the Education Act 1944, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England faced challenges in providing for Christian education ethos in response to the secularisation of society and decline in time devoted to religious observance. In the 1960s and 1970s, the religious diversity of school populations and society increased (Brown, 2013, p.159). Christian education came under attack as being irrelevant, indoctrinatory, and anti-educational. Hirst (1972) argued that Christian education was a kind of nonsense. Little of anything produced might constitute a distinctively Christian education and have significance (Hirst, 1972, p. 44-46). In addition, the Church was slow to respond to changes in education required by multi-culturalism in the late 1970s and 1980s. Until the 1960s, the teaching of religion in schools equated with Christian nurture. With the growth of non-Christian communities and the popularity of alternative philosophies and expressions of spirituality, it was no longer possible to associate the teaching of religion in schools exclusively with Christian nurture (Revell, 2008, p.221). Agreed Syllabuses, such as that produced by Birmingham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, began to recommend teaching non-Christian religions and secular lifestyles as authentic expressions of religiosity. Concern over creating a Christian school 'atmosphere' gained significance in the

evolving discourse on providing distinctively Christian education in a secular society. All aspects of school life should contribute to pupils experiencing a Christian way of life.

The Durham Report, *The Fourth R*, rationalised the Church of England's continued contribution to the dual education system through its role in education's domestic and service functions. It succeeded in stifling calls from secular humanists to abolish religious education in state schools. It also rationalised its role in the general education of all children derived from its involvement in its schools (Durham, 1970, p.54). It recognised the importance of community building focused on the relationship VA schools had with the local Church. The Durham Report influenced debates over Christian education in future decades (Chadwick, 2013, p.49; Pilkington, 2001, p.55).

The Education Reform Act 1988 represented the first significant piece of educational legislation concerning religious education since 1944. Agreed religious education syllabuses had to reflect religious traditions in Great Britain. These were mainly Christian, whilst accounting for the teaching and practices of other religions. The Education Act 1992 introduced the Ofsted inspections. Diocesan Inspection of religious education, worship, and the Christian school education ethos in Church of England and Roman Catholic schools led to decisions on the criteria for measuring quality in Christian education in the context of inspections.

The Roman Catholic Church's contribution to Christian education and discourse on Christian distinctiveness

It is essential to acknowledge the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church in providing Christian education and discourse of Christian distinctiveness. The Roman Catholic Church places Christ at the centre of the school's education (Stock, 2012, p.10). Underpinning Catholic teaching and educational purposes are the universal principles set out by the Vatican. These principles include the dignity of human life, the common good and subsidiarity. Therefore, the principles should not be 'just fitted in' (Miller, 2006, p.1).

Pope Paul VI (1965, p.8) emphasised that the Catholic school's purpose entailed creating 'a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel Spirit'. Schools should integrate Gospel values and teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of teaching, learning and school life. Staff should actively promote and model these values and support pupils in understanding how they relate to them (Stock, 2012, p.10-13). Stock (2012) provided Catholic educators with explicit guidance on how the ethos can be made clear in policies, liturgies, and the spiritual care of pupils. In England and Wales, schools receive support from the Catholic Education Service (catholic.education.org).

Teachers individually and collectively have 'prime responsibility for maintaining the distinctive ethos and enabling the Catholic Church to achieve its educational mission (Congregation of Catholic Education (CCE), 1982, p.24). They instruct pupils in Catholic doctrine and practice, support them in developing a relationship with Jesus and enable them to become disciples. In addition, teachers are to support parents in bringing their children up in the faith, with the commitment affirmed at their child's baptism.

Religious education is essential in establishing a Christian education ethos. VA schools are responsible for the religious education provided. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW, 2000, p.4) viewed religious education not as 'one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.' The directive was to devote ten per cent of curriculum time to RE. Teachers, and especially RE teachers, are required to educate pupils in the faith. With the decline in Church attendance nationally, schools may be the only places where pupils can learn about the teachings of the Catholic Church and how to incorporate Gospel values into their lives.

Sullivan (2000) considered that school leaders' embody the essential meanings of the school and the significance of its work. As catechetical leaders of the Catholic school, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and RE leader of a Christian school community should be practising Catholics in good standing. They need to comprehend and accept the Roman Catholic Church's teachings (Weeks and Grace, 2007, p.231). School governors faced the practical issue of employing and retaining sufficient practising Catholic teachers who understand their Christian education role (Fincham, 2019, p. 5). At the beginning of the 1960s, many Roman Catholic teachers came from religious orders, and priests engaged in school leadership. This number was reduced substantially by the 1980s, with many lay Catholics becoming teachers (Sullivan, 1998, p.53). Leaders were required to provide opportunities for staff to engage in ongoing faith formation and spiritual growth.

Several authors argue the importance of leaders of Catholic schools understanding Christian theology of education and articulating this in their educational practices (McGrath, 2007; Weeks and Grace, 2002; Grace, 2012; Sullivan, 2000; Stuart-Buttle, 2018). Theology, a way of being in and seeing the world, pervaded early Christian teaching. Grace (2002) found headteachers possessed a poor Catholicity in comprehending the ethos of their schools. They also experienced issues with mission integrity in the education marketplace. Headteachers could find it harder to serve the poor, the troublesome, the alienated and the powerless (Grace, 2002). Playing the market entailed admitting pupils from the most emotionally supportive homes to promote

school standards (Grace, 1995, p.176). Headteachers had a dual role in serving 'God and Caesar' (the state), which meant keeping the mission in appropriate balance.

Weeks and Grace (2007, p.8) argued a high level of theological literacy amongst leaders and staff was essential in maintaining the Catholic school mission's 'vitality, authenticity, and distinctiveness.' They defined theological literacy as the ability to communicate knowledgeably how the faith of the Church relates to contemporary everyday experiences (Weeks and Grace, 2007, p.8). Grace (2012) linked theological literacy with the 'spiritual capital' of the school. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) called upon lay Catholic educators to witness the faith. They should generate new spiritual capital through permanent formation processes (Congregation of Catholic Education, 1982, p.36). However, Casson's (2011) ethnographic research into pupils' interpretations of their lives in Catholic secondary schools raised questions about who shapes their understanding of Catholicity, the authorities, or the pupils themselves. Pupils asserted their right to act as 'bricoleurs', constructing fragmentary Catholic identities from elements of the Catholic faith tradition. Their understanding of themselves as Catholics differed from the definitions held by the Roman Catholic Church (Casson, 2011, p.217).

Two research studies into the use of *What If Learning*, a Christian approach to teaching and learning in Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, suggested teachers found it challenging to make Christian theology relevant to their pedagogy. Teachers needed support with this process (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016; Church of England Education Office, 2016a). I discuss this research in Section 3.2.4. Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell (2016) sought to provide teachers with a way to achieve what Grace (2002) termed 'mission integrity': integrating Christian distinctiveness with promoting excellence in academic subjects. Teachers viewing their professional role as the compliant transmission of Christian truths could be unhelpful to those opposed to evangelism. *What if Learning* enabled teachers to focus on the theological significance of pupils' learning. It did so by promoting a Christian understanding of what it means to be human, accepting the integrity of the discipline taught and their requirement to attend to academic excellence. Astley (1994) devised a typology of Christian education to assist teachers' reflection on their professional roles within a Christian school: education into Christianity, education about Christianity and education in a Christian manner (Section 3.1.2).

3.1 Church of England policy perspective on Christian education

Analysis of Church of England policy on school education from 2001 falls under four themes, focusing on the direction provided to leaders on developing Christian education ethos and influencing pupils:

1. Concept of Christian distinctiveness
2. Nature and purpose of Christian education
3. The leadership of and accountability for Christian education
4. Formation of pupils.

My argument is that from 2001 onwards, the Church sought to strengthen its control over Church school leaders' development of Christian education ethos, which limited leaders' autonomy. The Church established an agenda for what mattered in Church school education, which evolved and reflected Central Government education policy developments. In undertaking the review, I consider the importance of Church policy for my research.

3.1.1 Theme 1: Concept of 'Christian distinctiveness'

Dearing (2001, p.3) and Chadwick (2012, p.2) referred to Church schools being distinctively Christian. The Dearing Report (2001) reviewed the achievements of Church schools and presented proposals for future developments. Dearing endorsed the 1998 General Synod Resolution that placed Church schools 'at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation' (Dearing, 2001, p.1). This mission reaffirmed proclaiming the Gospel, nourishing Christians in their faith, bringing others into faith, and maintaining all people's dignity by highlighting social justice issues (Wright, 2013). To fulfil the mission, Church schools needed to be distinctively and recognisably Christian (Dearing, 2001, p.3). They would offer a 'particular view of humanity'. Everyone involved in Church schools could 'begin to discover who we are, why we are here and - perhaps what we might be' (Dearing, 2001, pp.11,15).

The Dearing vision for education had a theological purpose, which was concerned with pupils' holistic development through their engagement in Christian relationships and practices underpinning the school's Christian ethos:

'In all circumstances, we would recommend that Church schools must be distinctively places where the Christian faith is alive and practised. Church schools will seek to offer excellence in education, and in so doing, they will above all be concerned to develop the whole human being through the practice of the Christian faith' (Dearing, 2001, p.33).

‘As a community of faith, a Church school should, in its best expression, reflect the nature of the Trinity, a life shared and defined by references to others’ (Dearing, 2001, p.15).

Wright (2013, p.196) saw Dearing as ‘offering an embryonic theology of mission.’ He considered this approach fulfilled most of the original goals of the National Society, established in 1811. These included providing mass education for pupils from low-income families (Dearing, 2001, p.3). However, for Dearing, provision for pupils’ holistic development was necessary. To embrace the Church’s mission to the nation, Wright (2013, p.196) argued the Church should ‘boldly’ embrace an ‘incarnational theology’. The purpose was to enable pupils to engage with faith and experience a Christian way of life.

Dearing defined minimum requirements for Christian school ethos. Schools needed to engage meaningfully in daily acts of worship, provide quality religious education, incorporate Christian values into the ethos, observe major Christian festivals, maintain an active relationship with the parish church, and include Christian symbolism within the physical environment (Dearing, 2001, p.20). School leaders received minimal guidance on implementing a distinctively Christian ethos. Furthermore, this guidance excluded ways of manifesting the ethos through the contribution of curriculum and pedagogical practices. Dearing restricted discussion of the curriculum to two paragraphs. In these, he invited teachers to develop schemes of work representative of the school’s Christian character (Dearing, 2001, S.4.10-11, p.21-22). Leaders were left to define the school’s Church of England status and adopt a school ethos statement without guidance. Two doctoral theses by Street (2007a) and Jelfs (2008) highlighted leaders as struggling to implement Church school ethos (Section 3.2.1).

Dearing’s critics considered the report offered insufficient clarity about the purpose of Christian education and what constituted a Christian school ethos (Elbourne, 2013; Cox, 2011; Jelfs, 2008). Cox (2011), as a Diocesan Director of Education, found it challenging to identify headteachers who could articulate the distinctiveness of Church school education. He sought to explain the nature of Christian distinctiveness from a professional’s perspective with experience of working in schools. Cox argued that distinctiveness was more than a matter of schools showing they cared about pupils. Schools should explain the beliefs underpinning Christian values, such as belief in God and what it was to be a person.

Elbourne (2013, p.248) acknowledged that Dearing left a ‘positive legacy’. However, he found the concepts of ‘distinctiveness,’ ‘Christian values,’ and ‘inclusiveness’ for leaders’ unhelpful in manifesting a Christian school ethos. He problematised the focus on ‘distinctiveness’. It forced

Church schools to compare themselves with maintained schools in identifying their differences instead of focusing on what lay at the heart of their identities. There was a need for a different form of language to explore and comprehend the Christian faith within Anglican schools. Elbourne (2013, p.248) proposed using three concepts to define ethos: 'rootedness,' 'belonging', and 'narrative.' 'Rootedness' invited expressions of faithfulness to the Gospel and a shared Anglican tradition. He used the metaphor of a plant root system nourishing a plant to grow its unique identity to illustrate how a Church school, rooted in a Gospel narrative and shared Anglican tradition, could secure its Christian identity and offer hospitality to a diverse population.

Although Elbourne's (2013) conceptions might help comprehend the nature of Christian school ethos, school leaders needed to engage with the policy discourse to become influential leaders. The National Society (2013b) embedded the terms 'distinctiveness' and 'values' in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools framework. This framework evaluated the effectiveness of Christian distinctiveness. Leaders had to utilise the Church's terms in self-evaluating the influence of the school's Christian ethos on its community. Using terminology such as that presented by Elbourne could act as a distraction in responding to Church policy. For instance, the Church developed a Statutory Inspection toolkit to help leaders prepare for inspection. This toolkit provided greater clarity on the nature of distinctiveness. Using a demanding set of questions, it enabled leaders to evaluate the school's distinctive Christian character and values in promoting pupils' holistic development. It incorporated the language of Church policy relating to distinctiveness in four Statutory Inspection questions (National Society, 2013b):

1. How does the school, through its distinctive character, meet the needs of all learners?
2. What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
3. How effective is the religious education?
4. How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school?

Chadwick (2012) addressed the implementation gap following the Dearing Report (2001). Chadwick (2012, p.3) developed the concept of a distinctively Christian ethos and signified its importance in establishing a unique brand of schools in the education marketplace. Chadwick viewed distinctiveness as more than the designation of Church schools and the use of Christian symbolism in the environment, seen as necessary in the Dearing Report. Instead, Chadwick

(2012, p.3) saw distinctiveness as entailing 'a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum. It was a means of ensuring a Christian ethos permeates the whole educational experience'. Chadwick (2012, p.3) enhanced the status of religious education within the curriculum and collective worship 'to allow pupils to engage seriously with and develop an understanding of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ.' The change represented a response to critics that Dearing's vision for Church education lacked attention to school leaders in developing Christian education ethos (Colson 2004; Street 2007a; Jelfs, 2008).

Inclusiveness

At the time of the establishment of the National Society in 1811, Church schools served the community by nurturing pupils in the Christian faith (Wright, 2013). Parker (2019, p.7) argued the confessional became a more marginal, problematic purpose of education with the advent of a public school system that organised religious schooling alongside a state-funded system. The separation of schooling from its religious roots was desirable in ensuring that religious minorities were not proselytised. Historically early education and early religion were synonymous; the liturgies, rituals, and rites of passage of religion were considered religiously educative (Parker, 2019, p.6). Dearing (2001, p.16) addressed the diverse nature of English Society and the requirement for a Church education to serve a multifaith community's needs, not just Christian families. Dearing (2001, p.12) aspired that Church schools should 'not be agents of proselytism,' expecting pupils to make a Christian commitment. Instead, school leaders should provide opportunities for learners to explore the Christian faith's truths in a Christian environment to enable choice over Christian commitment. In addressing perceptions amongst professionals about the inappropriateness of a 'confessional' model for Church school education, Cooling (2013, p.169) argued Dearing addressed Church schools' legitimacy.

In incorporating the domestic and general models of Church school education, the Dearing Report (2001) acted as a barrier in comprehending the nature and purpose of Church schools (Cooling (2013). Dearing (2001, p.60) encouraged leaders' autonomy in developing a diversity of approaches to Christian education ethos development. However, they needed to work through the tensions and practicalities in offering a distinctively Christian yet inclusive education ethos. Cooling argued that headteachers might experience anxiety when seeking to balance distinctiveness with inclusiveness in developing a distinctively Christian education ethos. Headteachers would not wish to create school communities lacking social cohesion, where particular groups felt they belonged to the community less than others. Green (2009c) identified

this issue in a study of Christian education ethos in a City Technology College (Section 3.3.4). These tensions were relevant to the analysis of the headteachers' perspectives on education ethos development in my research.

Elbourne (2013) suggested that a focus on 'inclusiveness' was unhelpful to Christian ethos development. An emphasis on the 'narrative' underpinning life in Church schools would be more valuable. Elbourne (2013), like Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell (2016), argued there was no such thing as a values-free education. The content of the curriculum and its delivery was important in ethos development. He suggested that leaders reflect on pupils' experience from a Christian perspective to ensure they could responsibly influence pupils and act with integrity. Leaders should communicate the nature of their influence transparently. Acting with integrity characterised an authentic approach to leadership (Chapter 2). Leaders could enrich pupils' collective worship experiences, engagement in the learning environment, and contributions to the school community.

Importance of Christian values

Both Dearing (2001, p.60) and Chadwick (2012, p.18) emphasised the importance of school leaders' flexibility in developing Christian distinctiveness reflective of their unique contexts and responsiveness to their communities. However, Chadwick (2012) prioritised leaders making their school's character explicit and recognisable in the education marketplace. Chadwick (2012, p.18) argued that leaders adopt and implement core principles and values to create a unique brand, uniting all Church schools within the Christian mission. These were the 'Gospel values of loving God and one's neighbour', which should reflect pupils' conduct, relationships with others and God's world (Chadwick, 2012, p.18). They would provide the school community with a language for discussing the school's education ethos. School leaders' action in adopting these values would represent a uniting of the Church's position and strengthen its presence in educational provision. The National Society (2013a, p.1), in its model ethos statement for Church schools, recognised Church school ethos would 'always be difficult to define.' Nonetheless, the ethos should encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote Christian values through pupils' experience.

The National Society commissioned Norcross (2014) to construct a Christian Values for Schools website. Norcross defined fifteen values, referenced the Biblical extracts, and related them to the SIAMS 2013 framework. The purpose was to stimulate leaders' reflections on the influences of the values on school life. Case study examples of school development of a Christian values-based ethos provided leaders with inspiration and reflection models. Norcross mapped the

values to Elbourne's (2013) concepts of belonging, rootedness, and narrative to help leaders comprehend Christian school education ethos. The website's purpose was to help school leaders utilise a set of values within a Christian tradition, derived from Scripture, to develop the school's education ethos. In so doing, the website supported practitioners in taking forward the Chadwick agenda. It provided a practical approach to helping leaders, which was lacking in implementing the Dearing Report.

For the 2013 SIAMS, the National Society amended the 2009 SIAS criteria to make the Church's agenda explicit by emphasising the importance of Christian values in ethos development (National Society 2013b). School leaders were made accountable for the impact of the school's value system on the school community. Inspectors visiting schools made judgements about the extent to which the values were distinctively Christian while also representing shared human values. They examined how community members made links between the values and Biblical teaching and the school's effectiveness in ensuring Christian values impacted community life. They considered how learners recognised the importance of values to those of other faith traditions and those of none.

Church leaders could, however, face issues with implementing an ethos focused on Christian values. Elbourne (2013) viewed values as abstract concepts. He advocated a focus on 'belonging' over Christian values to draw attention to developing specific relationships. Elbourne raised essential issues relevant to headteachers in my research. He believed headteachers faced challenges in embedding Christian values. First, community members had to recognise and accept that school values represented Christian values. Secondly, leaders needed to tackle issues about teaching the values, communicated from a distinctively Christian perspective, and embed them in the school ethos for adoption by staff and pupils. Elbourne (2013) warned that values derived from the Christian tradition might not be exclusive to Christianity and be viewed as common or universal values. In preference to values, he deemed a focus on belonging was important. He recognised multiple sources of belonging that could result in tensions between different educational philosophies and priorities. Leaders would need to commit to the common good and work at resolving potential value conflicts.

Under the Education Act 2002, leaders of all schools had a statutory obligation to promote fundamental British values as part of a broad and balanced curriculum to secure pupils' holistic development (DfE, 2014). Ofsted inspectors considered pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development when forming a judgement concerning a school's overall effectiveness (Ofsted, 2015). Inspectors looked for acceptance and engagement with the

fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They also evaluated pupils' development and demonstration of skills and attitudes, enabling them to participate in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain (Ofsted, 2015). A question for my research was how leaders might amalgamate two value systems into the school's education ethos and whether they prioritised Christian values in education ethos development. Another question concerned the meaning and importance of different types of values in pupils' education experiences.

3.1.2 Theme 2: Nature and purpose of Christian education

Chadwick (2012), like Dearing (2001 p.9), emphasised the contribution of religious education and collective worship to developing a distinctively Christian education ethos. Chadwick (2012, p.13) raised concerns about schools' religious education standards, the status of RE, and the implications of its exclusion from the English Baccalaureate. This raised questions about the status leaders in my research gave to RE in the curriculum, including the attention given to Christianity relative to other religions as Christianity underpinned both schools' foundation. There was no statutory requirement on academies and Free Schools to include religious education. Leaders could opt out of locally Agreed RE Syllabuses (Parker, 2015, p.6). Potentially school funding agreements might make it an obligation. An initiative stemming from the Chadwick Report (2012) was the Church of England Education Office developing the website *Understanding Christianity* to influence the teaching of Christianity in schools (www.understandingchristianity.org).

While the National Society controlled the types of religious education in Church schools and measured its effectiveness in SIAMS, the Free School was not under the influence of the Church of England. The leaders had greater freedoms to decide the nature and content of Christian education. I drew on Astley's (1994, 2018) framework for Christian education to understand leaders' visions for Christian education's nature and purposes. Astley (1994) proposed three models for Christian education: education into Christianity, education about Christianity, and education in a Christian manner. Education into Christianity represented nurturing pupils into the Christian faith, where pupils could learn about the value, feel, and experience of Christianity. Education about Christianity was that which pupils typically encountered in religious education lessons. They learned about Christian beliefs and values and reflected on their importance in their lives and the lives of others. Education in a Christian manner was about formation through the school's experiences for pupils to live and serve in a Christian way. Both Dearing (2001) and Chadwick (2012) emphasised that pupils in Church schools should learn about the nature of

Christianity as a religion. They should also receive education in a Christian manner, including engaging in Christian practices across all aspects of their experience.

Clark and Woodhead (2015) outlined three models of religious education, which helped identify acceptable models in state-funded schools in diverse modern Britain: instruction, formation, and education. Instruction in religion in schools was inappropriate as pupils may not critically question alternative views. It was appropriate outside schools where young people received instruction in a specific religious or non-religious tradition. Formation was suitable for state-funded schools as it enabled induction into a religious way of life while allowing the pupils to critique and question Christianity. Authentic leaders would need to communicate transparently the nature of the formation of pupils, particularly the kind of Christian education the school offered. Because of its appropriateness to a diverse, multifaith society, Clark and Woodhead's preferred approach was education. This approach provided a critical, dialogical approach to studying religion. In a school with a Christian foundation, leaders would need to enable pupils to acquire knowledge of Christian values and traditions and understand the Christian beliefs system underpinning them. Using this approach, pupils would develop the skills concerned with critical values appraisal and appreciate the importance of values in peoples' lives.

Cooling (2018), using Clark and Woodhead's classification, argued all types of education were formational: there was no neutral position. He distinguished between instructional and formational approaches to religious education. Instructional practices were inappropriate because they ignored pupils' agency, questioning, and critique of faith positions. Formational methods could be understood by using a responsible hermeneutical learning model. It was where pupils learned to interpret Biblical texts from a range of perspectives. This approach could open their minds to a diversity of views and prepare them to make a positive contribution to society. The distinction between instruction and formation was important when interpreting leaders' views in both research studies. In earlier work, Cooling (2010, p.66) offered the metaphor of 'the tent of meeting' to understand faith schools' distinctive nature. He used the model of St Ethelburga's Church, in the City of London, which was destroyed by an IRA bomb in 1993. When rebuilt, the Church sought to become a safe place where Christian hospitality was encouraged, and people met to share their interpretations of religious texts. Church schools could set fears of others' views aside by offering safe, inclusive spaces for pupils to engage freely with religion.

The spiritual dimension of ethos and spirituality

Dearing (2001) and Chadwick (2012) attended to the importance of leaders establishing an ethos for exploring and developing spirituality. The Education Act 1944 placed a statutory duty on schools to promote pupils' spiritual development. The Education Reform Act 1988 reinforced the obligation to ensure the curriculum promoted spiritual, moral, cultural, and physical development to prepare pupils for adult life's opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences. Ofsted (2012) judged the effectiveness of this requirement. SIAMS also considered this requirement in a Church school context (National Society, 2013b). Leaders in my research schools faced defining what was meant by spirituality in the context of Christian school education and how the community should fulfil its statutory responsibilities (Morris, 2017). Although researching spirituality was not the thesis's focus, I was interested in how ethos influenced pupils' experiences. In the research, I was interested in investigating what mattered to pupils in their schools' education. School leaders could develop practices to enable pupils to reflect on their 'relational consciousness.' They could recognise and make sense of who they were, whom they connected with, and what mattered to them.

Hay and Nye (1998; 2006) offered a 'relational consciousness' model for interpreting children's perspectives on spirituality, based on how young children spoke about their spiritual experiences. Hay and Nye (1998) viewed children as possessing a natural spiritual capacity expressed through three sensitivities: awareness-sensing, mystery-sensing, and values-sensing. The central concept of awareness-sensing described children as having a unique sense of attentiveness to the present. Mystery-sensing, based on their capacity to be present, made every moment rich in possibility and imagination. Value-sensing referred to children's ability to experience different emotions, sense what was ultimately valuable in their context and respond to those of higher value.

3.1.3 Theme 3: Leadership of and accountability for Christian education

For Church school education, the importance of leadership and accountability was a consistent theme in Church policy. In 2017, after completing the data-collection phase of the research, the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership (Cefel) was established in recognition of the complexities and ambiguities associated with Church school leadership. Cefel aimed to develop leaders in education working towards the Church of England Education Office's (2016b) vision for education based on a Christian view of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

In a market-based, high-performance-high-accountability education system, leaders with Christian faith in research schools could face challenges balancing their accountability to God for their actions and those demanded by externally imposed accountability systems, such as Ofsted (2012). Dearing (2001) recommended that headteachers committed to developing Christian ethos should lead Church schools. Dearing did not go as far as recommending they should be communicant members of the Church of England. Dearing (2001, p.60) recommended that headteachers had the autonomy to develop a 'distinctive style' of leadership to capitalise on their strengths. However, he considered Church school leadership entailed religious and spiritual leadership. Dearing (2001, p.60-61) implied personal faith, beliefs, and values would be necessary for leadership approaches, which could comprise a form of lay ministry complementing the ordained ministry.

Dearing (2001) saw three leadership forms as relevant in a Christian context. These were servant, invitational, and transformational leadership. As servant leaders, headteachers could encourage 'the educational and spiritual growth of pupils' (Dearing, 2001, p.60). As invitational leaders, they could welcome everyone into the school, offer reassurance and affirmation, recognise the value of individuals, and encourage the community to share in a Christian notion of fellowship (Dearing, 2001, p.60-61). As transformational leaders, they would provide the school with a clear sense of Christian purpose. They would establish the school's tone, ensure Christian values permeated the school's life, nurture the development of a Christian community, and foster spiritual growth.

Dearing's selection of the servant model fitted well with the transformative nature of the Church's vision for Church school education: pupils' educational and spiritual growth to benefit the good of society. Greenleaf (2002) saw servant leadership as helping the socially disadvantaged. Leaders were responsible to followers and should nurture, defend, and empower them by attending to their needs and aspirations and sharing their pain and frustrations (Yukl, 2006). Obtaining person-centred outcomes indicated successful servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), which was well-suited to Christian service. Individuals should grow as people, become healthier, wiser, freer, and more likely to serve others (Chapter 2). Invitational leadership emphasised the importance of leaders securing trust and acting with integrity (Stoll and Fink, 1996).

Following the Academies Act 2010, the future of Church schools would be different. There was a requirement for a new form of leadership than that proposed by Dearing (2001). In having greater independence from local authorities, leaders could face fresh challenges when working

with other educational providers and organisations providing services to schools. Leaders might need to resolve value conflicts between the parties involved in education to preserve the school's distinctive education ethos.

Chadwick (2012, p.32) and the Archbishops' Council (2013) recognised headteachers' increased accountability for academic standards, reflected in Coalition Government policy (DfE, 2010). The Archbishops' Council (2013) placed importance on leaders' accountability to the Church for the quality of pupils' educational experiences, academic achievements, and an education ethos that enabled pupils' holistic development:

Fulfilling human potential rightly requires a focus on progress and achievement, excellence, and high quality of educational experience, but also through offering a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and person of Jesus Christ. How this is done will be determined by local context, but this offer should run through the life of the school like words through a stick of rock (Archbishops' Council, 2013, p.6)

The expectation of leaders was the pursuit of academic excellence within a Christian context. In my research, questions arose about the influence of these accountability frameworks on leaders' development of education ethos. Leaders in research schools would need to envisage what excellence looked like in a Christian context. Church Academy leaders had to contend with the performance criteria of two external inspection frameworks: SIAMS and Ofsted. At the time of Dearing (2001), SIAMS did not exist, and the local authority played a more significant role in supporting schools. With the weakening of the local authority role following the Academies Act 2010, the Church became more accountable for enhancing its schools' academic standards. The aspiration was that over 90% of Diocesan schools should be graded good or better in both Ofsted and SIAMS (Archbishops' Council, 2013, p.3).

The question arose about the Church Academy's leaders' perspectives of the DBE's influence on the school's education ethos development within my research. Chadwick (2012) and the Archbishops' Council (2013) placed a greater focus than Dearing (2001) on expectations for high-quality leadership at all levels of the Church to support leaders in providing high-quality education. Chadwick (2012) noted that DBEs needed to focus more on Church schools' ethos and performance. The Archbishops' Council (2013) proposed restructuring DBEs to support schools and make them accountable for the quality of provision in Church schools.

3.1.4 Theme 4: Formation of pupils

Since 2015, the Church has promoted character development to enable people to flourish in all areas of their lives. There was a policy shift from the Dearing (2001) and Chadwick (2012) focus on an education ethos focused on Christian values towards one focused on virtues. The assumption was that schools had made strides in developing a values-based ethos that articulated their Christian identity. This new policy would enable a focus on the behaviours and actions that define individual pupils, teachers, and leaders (Church of England Education Office, 2015).

The Church of England Education Office's (2015) approach to character education raised questions concerning good character and approaches for character development in schools. The Coalition Government committed to England becoming a global leader in teaching character (DfE, 16 December 2014). While the Government required schools to teach fundamental British values, the Church of England Education Office considered these values were not uniquely British. Character education in its schools should not focus solely on these values (Church of England Education Office, 2015).

Genders (2012), the Church's Chief Education Officer at the time, believed 'the true success of our education system could be measured by the character that was formed in each child' (Genders, 2012, p.20). He argued that if the education system focused on developing pupils' true character, dignity, and self-esteem, they were more likely to achieve their potential. For Genders (2012, p.29), the notion of obliquity represented a vital influence. He derived this notion from Kay (2011), who argued that some organisational goals were better achieved by focusing on other, more important goals. A focus on the purpose of character development would enhance pupils' achievement. Character education needed setting in the context of what it meant to be human, and Jesus' teaching would shape pupils' characters (Church of England Education Office, 2015).

Church policy on character education gained importance after the completion of the data-collection phase of my research. It helped me make sense of leaders' experiences of Christian education ethos development. 'Effective' Church school leaders were re-conceptualised as leaders who recognised 'the critical interdependence' of academic excellence and character development and held them 'in a dynamic and empowering tension' (Cefel, 2017, p.9). Cefel (2017, p.18) viewed character development as 'central to enabling excellent learning experiences within the classroom' (Cefel, 2017, p.18). Cefel (2017) advised leaders to employ

long-term perspective to character formation rather than pursue quick fixes to raise educational standards. Nonetheless, the approach included developing performance virtues in the context of pupils learning to live well together.

Education for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

The Church of England Education Office (2016b) established a theological rationale for Church school education. Although this did not influence leaders' development of ethos in the research studies, it developed my understanding of Christian education. It brought together the themes found in the earlier policy documentation. Character education was placed at the heart of the vision for education, building on the assumption that Church schools possessed a mandate for securing pupils' transformational outcomes. There were expectations that leaders would promote academic rigour and a rounded approach to personal development rooted in collective worship and the school community's practices.

The purpose of education was to embrace 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). The vision stipulated that an 'excellent' education within a Christian context should focus on four aspects: wisdom, knowledge, and skills; hope and aspiration; community and living well together; and dignity and respect. Collectively, these represented the 'ecology' of the fullness of life (Church of England Education Office, 2016b, p.7). The publication of the Church's vision initiated a discussion on what these four aspects looked like in practice and the nature of an educated person.

The vision required a substantive revision of the SIAMS (2018) framework to hold school leaders accountable for implementing the Church's 2016 vision. There was an abandonment of the four questions underpinning previous SIAMS (National Society, 2013b). The revised framework appeared to strengthen leaders' autonomy in developing a distinctive and inclusive school vision for Christian education relevant to the school's context. However, it increased their accountability for grounding the vision and associated values in a theology rooted in a Christian narrative (Church of England Education Office, 2018, p.1-2).

The emphasis on education for the common good implied that leaders should educate pupils in the community and share effective leadership, teaching, and learning practices across schools. Successful implementation of the Church's vision suggested the need for inclusive, democratic, and humane approaches to education leadership.

Summary

The review of policy relating to Church school education from 2001 indicated that the Church gradually strengthened its control over school leaders' development of Christian education ethos. This control potentially imposed limits on leaders' autonomy concerning Christian education ethos development. The Church articulated an agenda for what mattered in Christian education, which defined what was meant by Christian distinctiveness. Changes to the SIAMS criteria between 2009-2013 reflected the Church's agenda for excellence in Christian education. The expected compliance with the SIAMS inspection criteria enforced leaders' accountability for establishing a distinctively Christian education ethos. In complying with the SIAMS criteria, school leaders would promote a recognisable brand of schools.

When I engaged in data-collection, the Church advocated a distinctively Christian ethos based on Christian values exemplifying the Christian narrative. Church school leaders had to both comprehend and communicate the Biblical origins of values. Leaders in the research schools potentially faced challenges in conveying the meaning and importance of the school's Christian values among the school community members. The emphasis was increasingly on leaders' enabling pupils' holistic development, inclusive of their academic achievement. Leaders also appeared to face the tension between developing a distinctively Christian school ethos and one inclusive of all faiths. This tension related to how the Church's balanced the domestic and general functions of Christian education.

3.2 A research perspective on Christian education ethos

A limited number of studies are concerned with leaders' experiences of Christian ethos development and pupils' education experiences within a Christian ethos. Most qualitative studies are ethnographic studies focused on exploring the nature of ethos. I analyse the research under six themes and discuss the issues relevant to my research:

1. Lack of clarity over the nature of Christian distinctiveness
2. Influence of the headteacher's values and learning habits on Christian education ethos
3. Influence of externally imposed accountability systems on Christian education ethos
4. Contribution of distinctively Christian pedagogy to Christian education ethos
5. Influence of sponsors on development of Christian education ethos
6. Pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos.

3.2.1 Theme 1: Lack of clarity over the nature of Christian distinctiveness

This theme examines five research studies that identify limitations to leaders' capacity to conceptualise Christian distinctiveness. All but one (Colson, 2004) were doctoral studies. Colson (2004), Street (2007a), and Jelfs (2008) found that Dearing's (2001) vision for Church school education had little impact on leaders' development of Church school ethos. Leaders lacked awareness of the distinctiveness of their schools. These studies raised the issue of leaders' abilities to articulate a clear theology and philosophy for their aspired education ethos, which was relevant for my research. Green and Cooling's (2009) review of research studies into Christian ethos highlighted shortcomings in headteachers' comprehension and capacity to articulate the distinctiveness of the educational provision in Church schools. Saunders (2015) provided a personal perspective as a Church school headteacher on how he sought to address shortcomings in the Dearing Report.

I was interested in making sense of the origins of school values and leaders' strategies for embedding them in classroom practices within my research. Street (2007a) interviewed ten Anglican voluntary aided secondary school headteachers. Street (2007a) found that the headteachers recognised Christian values provided the framework for school practices but could not distinguish Christian values from those held by other schools. Street (2007b, p.147) concluded they lacked strategic direction on the nature of Christian distinctiveness and access to mechanisms for analysing the nature of Church school leadership and development.

Colson (2004) investigated four headteachers' perspectives of their roles in transmitting values in Church schools. These headteachers viewed the schools' core purpose as service to the local community, implying a focus on the Dearing (2001) service model of education. Colson found the headteachers saw themselves as ultimately responsible for defining school values. Governors played a marginal role despite the emphasis in education policy documentation on their strategic leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, the headteachers identified collective worship as the principal means of values transmission. Colson did not discuss headteachers seeking to communicate values through their pedagogical leadership or awareness of how school values might influence pupils' identity development.

Jelfs (2008) surveyed 45 Church schools and undertook ethnographic studies of three primary schools in one Diocese. The purpose was to investigate how the Church primary schools understood, organised, and demonstrated their distinctiveness. She found schools did this in two ways: incorporating a religious dimension into the school's life and focusing on developing

relationships underpinned by love, care, and respect. However, she concluded that schools lacked a clear theology and philosophy for education, which limited their comprehension of the Christian school identity. Besides, she found little evidence of leaders developing their pedagogical practices in 'distinctive ways' (Jelfs 2008, p.182). She concluded schools complied uncritically with the dominant educational discourse without debating associated educational ideas and practices. They did not engage in any sustained way with understanding what it meant to be a Church school. Jelfs (2008, p.191) argued that the findings indicated 'an underlying paradigm at odds with Christian beliefs, principles, and values', which compromised the distinctive Christian character of schools. Jelfs emphasised the need for school leaders to make school values explicit in school and curriculum practices and for them to analyse the values and discourses influencing their leadership. She recommended that leaders situate their educational practices within global perspectives on education and promote metacognitive learning approaches. I understood that such approaches would enable pupils to reflect on the meaning and purpose of Christian practices and values in their lives.

Saunders (2015) wrote a reflective first-person account of how he incorporated spirituality, ministry, and theology of education into a Church primary school headship. His objective was to offer a Christian sense of purpose to the community and nurture its spiritual growth. He considered Dearing's threefold classification of leadership inadequate in providing headteachers with the means of promoting a community's spiritual growth and a Christian sense of purpose.

3.2.2 Theme 2: Influence of the headteacher's values and learning habits on Christian education ethos

The second theme examines research concerning the significance of the headteacher's theology, learning habits, and values for school Christian education ethos development. In my research, I was interested in interpreting the influence of the headteacher's values on ethos development.

Through a statistical analysis of the SIAS and Ofsted reports of one hundred Church schools, Green, S. (2015) identified a positive relationship between school ethos and educational outcomes judged by Ofsted (behaviour, attendance, and achievement). In an ethnographic study of one Church of England secondary school involved in the initial analysis, he found the headteacher's values, theology, and actions influential in school ethos development. Stakeholders attributed the values and learning habits 'espoused and lived' by the headteacher as representative of the school's ethos and contributing to pupils' academic success (Green 2015, p.208). These values were compliance, diligence, and resilience. Green (2015) associated

compliance with submitting to a higher authority but did not discuss the significance of this finding in the context of a democratic society.

Green (2015) found the headteacher held a clear vision for Christian education ethos, which members of the school community could interpret through his leadership behaviours. The lack of in-depth attention given to pupils' voices relative to other stakeholders limited Green's research. Green (2015) reported having only a few minutes to talk with individual pupils during break times and lesson times. In my research, I used creative data-collection methods within IPA to strengthen the voice of pupils. My research raised questions about how pupils made sense of the school's Christian education ethos and their perspectives of the expectations leaders placed on them concerning their academic achievement.

3.2.3 Theme 3: Influence of externally imposed accountability systems on Christian education ethos

I derived the third theme from research centred on the influence of externally imposed accountability systems on leaders' development of a Christian education ethos. I include two doctoral studies by Lumb (2014a) and James (2018). These were important to my research. The Church Academy leaders experienced the SIAMS before my fieldwork commenced. It meant leaders reflected in my interviews on how the SIAMS influenced their approaches to developing Christian education ethos within a performativity context.

Lumb's (2014a) year-long ethnographic study of one Church primary school's spiritual dimension elucidated insights into the 'double-tension' and complexities a headteacher faced in responding to two differing accountability systems. Lumb argued Ofsted prioritised performativity and control, whereas SIAMS prioritised creativity and spirituality. Lumb concluded the headteacher's vision and discourse were significant in responding to this double tension. However, he ultimately prioritised Ofsted requirements over SIAMS. The school was awarded an outstanding grade in each inspection. The headteacher sought to control the pedagogy to achieve the pupil performance standards required by Ofsted. He permitted gaps in curriculum time to explore spirituality as required by SIAMS using the Philosophy for Children pedagogy. He also sought to control the school's discourse underpinning the school's ethos so that the community understood the ethos as a 'take care school.' Leaders expected pupils to look after others and comply with the ethos by doing their best work. Tight control of language led to pupils seeking to provide the right answers to questions about ethos. Lumb argued the school's control over the discourse was at odds with the notion of spirituality, which should

enable the development of pupils' personal language to explore the meaning of life. The findings indicated pressures on teachers' compliance with external accountability criteria influencing education ethos development and, ultimately, pupils' behaviours.

The research findings provided valuable insights into the headteacher's leadership strategy for developing Christian education ethos. Through the Academies Act 2010, the Government intended to strengthen leaders' autonomy in developing education ethos. Lumb's (2014) findings indicate how leaders could feel constrained within a system of accountability requiring compliance with Government and Church policy.

James (2018) provided important insights into how the power relations associated with SIAMS consciously and unconsciously influenced the behaviour of four leaders of two Church of England primary schools before, during, and after SIAMS. The methodology employed differed from Lumb (2014), using narrative inquiry instead of ethnography. James (2018) found that while leaders expressed a preference for a system holding them to account, they experienced discomfort in the personal and professional compromises needed to ensure the school's success in a performativity context. James concluded that leaders appeared to resort to fabrications and cover stories to present a positive image of the school's performance to ensure successful judgments in SIAMS. While not generalisable, this research raised questions about the leaders' strategies for managing the school's responses to inspections in my research schools.

3.2.4 Theme 4: Contribution of distinctively Christian pedagogy to Christian education ethos

The fourth theme focuses on the use of *What If Learning*, a distinctively Christian approach to education that enabled teachers to link their teaching to the values underpinning the school's Christian education ethos (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). Using this approach, teachers could reimagine established curriculum content to enable their pupils to experience a Christian vision of what it means to be a person. In my research, this pedagogy's use was essential to the Christian Free School headteacher's strategy for developing a Christian school ethos (Chapter 6). I was interested in leaders' perspectives on this pedagogy, including the chair of governors' and the headteacher.

The approach offered leaders a whole school strategy for Christian education ethos development. Christian curricular approaches tended to lack influence in England (Green, E. 2012). It was possibly due to schools adhering to the statutory National Curriculum before the Government introduced the academies' agenda. In my research, headteachers, free from the

National Curriculum requirements, had the opportunity to devise innovative pedagogical practices.

Cooling and Cooling (2013, p.9) summarised the *What If Learning* pedagogical tool stages. The first stage, *Seeing Anew*, enabled teachers to consider the ultimate purpose of their teaching and reframe the lesson content from a Christian perspective. In the second stage, *Choosing Engagement*, learners experienced the practical and language aspects, which the teacher designed to be of social, spiritual, or moral significance. In the third stage, *Reshaping Practice*, the teacher changed the environment or classroom practices to create opportunities for empathy and reflection. The *What If Learning* website, designed to support teachers in using the approach, presented examples of how lessons could be reframed within a Christian *telos* across the curriculum to aid the development of faith, hope, and love (whatiflearning.co.uk).

What If Learning took inspiration from Smith (2009), Smith and Smith (2011), and Wright (2010). Smith (2009, p.32) was concerned about the nature of ‘worldview talk’ misconstruing Christian education’s nature. While recognising the significance of worldview, Smith considered analysis of worldview required considerable cognitive skills. At the same time, Christian education overemphasised the transmission of knowledge and Christian beliefs (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). Smith saw liturgies, habit-forming practices as central to education and identity formation. Liturgy was a ‘hearts and mind’ strategy for personal formation. This pedagogy trained individuals as disciples through their engagement in repetitive practices, which held their hearts and aimed their love towards the Kingdom of God. Smith (2009) believed that what individuals loved defined their identity and not merely what they knew. Humans were teleological creatures, driven by their vision for human flourishing. He viewed virtues as developed through the practice of habits that aided positive identity formation and became second nature once acquired. The imitation of those modelling a ‘Christ-like life’ enabled the development of virtues (Smith, 2016, pp.18-21). He argued that learning needed to focus on practices that allow humans to love and not just think. For headteachers seeking to implement *What If Learning*, the implications were that they needed to establish a shared vision of education for human flourishing. They needed to consider the desirable virtues in pupils and design school practices to enable their formation.

Smith (2000) drew on Wenger’s (1998) work on communities of practice, which explained how community members could work together by engaging in shared practices to fulfil the community vision. Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice provided a theoretical framework for comprehending leaders’ experiences of their leadership and pupils’ experiences of their

education (see Chapter 4). Smith (2000) used Wenger's (1998, p.176) illustration of a conversation between two stonecutters to convey how people could differ in their imaginations concerning a task's ultimate purpose. When asked about the task, one responded, 'I am cutting this stone in a perfectly square shape,' while the other replied, 'I am building a cathedral'. Smith (2016) reimagined the purpose of foreign language teaching so pupils could offer hospitality to strangers rather than think of furthering their interests as tourists. Smith and Felch (2016, p.6) argued that teachers and pupils needed to reflect on the reasons behind their actions as the vision they adopted would shape their character. The implication for school leaders was the need to encourage teachers and pupils' reflections on the purposes of school practices and values to enable a shared imagination.

Wright (2010), like Smith (2009), viewed character formation as critical in enabling a Christian way of living. He took a virtue-ethics approach to character development (Wright, 2010), which underpinned the Christian pedagogy of *What If Learning*. Wright argued that people's understanding of eschatology, in terms of the ultimate destiny of individual souls, influenced their practical theology. Teachers could be faithful to teaching about The Kingdom of God and signpost others to the Kingdom.

Two funded research projects investigated the influence of *What If Learning* on teachers' pedagogical practices in Church schools (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016; Church of England Education Office, 2016a). Their findings indicated that teachers could use the approach creatively to reframe their lessons from a Christian perspective but experienced challenges with the approach. I was a researcher for the second project. My investigation of teachers' uses of the approach informed my interpretation of this approach in the Free School.

In the first study, researchers observed lessons and conducted interviews with fourteen secondary school teachers using the approach across three state-funded secondary Church schools. Three insights were pertinent to my data analysis. First, the geography and mathematics teacher described their experiences of reframing the lessons from a Christian perspective as 'weird'. The mathematics teacher considered that she was 'shoe-horning' and 'strong-arming' God into the middle of her maths lesson, which violated her professional responsibility to teach mathematics (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016, p.88). Secondly, it was the first time most teachers reflected on the connection between the Christian faith and learning. Thirdly, teachers' prior assumptions about teaching in a 'Christianly way' impacted their pedagogy. Cooling, Green, Morris, and Revell (2016) found that teachers faced challenges in using the approach. They perceived *What If Learning* as either 'too Christian focused' to be

professionally legitimate or not Christian enough. Recognising pedagogy as distinctively Christian presented a challenge. Teachers questioned whether they should tell the pupils that lessons were Christian ethos lessons. To be appropriately Christian, teachers perceived this entailed instructing pupils in Christian truths and persuading them to accept these. They thought this was an unethical practice in schools. Teachers wanted ready-made examples to implement lessons rather than having to devise their own Christian inspired experiences for pupils.

The findings raised questions about the meaning teachers gave to Christian distinctiveness and whether leaders should force teachers who did not identify themselves as Christians to use *What If Learning*. A recommendation for leaders seeking to adopt the approach was that they addressed teachers' underlying assumptions about developing a Christian approach to education and created 'space and time' for teachers to plan, work, and reflect on their experiences with colleagues (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). Teachers found that teamwork stimulated the improvement of their imaginations of what they 'were about' as part of a Church school (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016, p. 174).

In the second study, teachers from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 3 used *What If Learning* in twenty Church schools in four Dioceses. The research responded to the Church's aspiration that pupils in its schools learned to live well with others in preparation for life in a diverse British society. The focus was on using *What If Learning* to develop the Christian virtue of hospitality amongst pupils (Church of England Education Office, 2016a). Teachers reported that not only did its use enable the development of pupils' hospitable traits, but it also strengthened the classroom ethos. Teachers perceived numerous benefits for pupils, including developing their communication and analytical skills, perseverance, empathy, respect for diversity, and self-confidence. In line with the first study, teachers experienced challenges in using the approach. These included balancing the use of this approach with other demands concerning the curriculum and pressures to meet expected subject-specific pupil-progress measures (Church of England Education Office, 2016a). The findings highlighted the significance of strong leadership in establishing this approach across the school and the importance of leaders, enabling colleagues to engage in joint reflection on using the approach.

3.2.5 Theme 5: Influence of sponsors on the development of Christian education ethos

This theme focuses on the issue concerning the interests of sponsors in education ethos development. There were questions concerning sponsors' influence and whether these were in pupils' best interests (see Chapter 2). Two research studies by Green, E. (2009c) and Pike (2010)

provided valuable insights into the sponsors' motivations for education and their influence on how staff and pupils experienced the school's education ethos. The studies were relevant to my first study, which focused on leaders' development of Christian education ethos in a Christian Free School, established and sponsored by a group of Christian churches.

Green (2009c) undertook a 16-week ethnographic case study of a City Technology College (CTC) with a Bible-based ethos. The purpose of CTCs was to raise educational standards in areas of urban deprivation by enabling businesses to sponsor educational provisions. This study was the first study of a CTC sponsored by a non-denominational Christian foundation. The theological positioning held by the sponsoring organisation was reformed or conservative Protestant Christian (Green, 2012, p.398). Green (2009c) explored how staff, school managers, and pupils experienced the school's aims and ethos by observing lessons, assemblies, and team meetings and interviewing a range of staff and pupils. The findings raised questions about the strategies used to embed school ethos and revealed a gap between the espoused ethos of leaders and that experienced by pupils.

Green (2012, p.395) used Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) concepts of field, habitus, symbolic power, and social capital to inform the analysis. Habitus focused on the assumptions held that influenced the participation of people within the school. A significant finding was that the religious habitus of the sponsors was not reproduced in the student culture. While school leaders sought to establish an inclusive ethos through the study of the Bible, the outcomes led to the formation of a segregated community as experienced by the pupils and staff. Pupil perceptions were that while Biblical teaching was relevant in religious education classes, assemblies, and tutor prayers, it was not relevant to the broader curriculum (Green 2009c).

Green (2009c) emphasised the significance of core values in providing the structure and discourse for establishing school practices. The mission statement espoused seven core values, which the sponsor deemed good human values with which people of different theological positions could work. These values underpinned the school's approach to discipline, uniform code, and school routines. The core values conveyed an image of the 'ideal' pupil, which shaped pupils' attitudes and dispositions. Rather than resisting ethos, pupils appeared compliant with rules as they enabled them to learn and succeed (Green, E. 2009c). The findings of Green, S. (2015) replicated this, where stakeholders valued compliance as a way of promoting self-discipline and an achievement-focused environment.

The second study was a small-scale study of Trinity Academy, designated in 2007 as England's most improved academy (Pike, 2010). The philanthropic sponsor was Peter Vardy, founder of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation (ESF). Pike (2010) claimed that the combination of business sponsorship, core values, and Christian ethos was responsible for transforming pupils' opportunities and life-chances. Data collection included lesson observations, interviews, and student and staff surveys. The findings conveyed the powerful sense of the sponsor's influence over the purpose of education: the pursuit of educational excellence (Pike, 2010). Vardy's leadership strategy derived from his transforming less successful businesses into successful ones and his Christian faith. Vardy said, 'as a Christian myself, I feel a responsibility to help others and put something back' (Pike, 2010, p.142). The principal prioritised character formation over academic achievement, believing one informed the other (Pike, 2010). While Pike (2010) provided limited evidence on student interpretations of the school's ethos and values, he noted pupils perceived the core values mostly in philosophy, theology, and ethics. They held varied perceptions about the sources of the values. Opponents of schools with a faith foundation, such as the British Humanist Association (now called Humanists UK) (2014), claimed that Church schools' high performance was due to them admitting pupils from socially privileged classes. Pike ruled out control over school admissions as influencing pupil achievement because it was non-selective on the grounds of faith or aptitude (Pike, 2010). However, Pike (2010) could have presented a more balanced range of evidence to support the claims made about school values' influence on pupils' achievement. Further, there was scope to explain how he concluded that sponsors' values represented the pupils' best interests.

These two studies indicated the advantage of listening to sponsors, leadership, and pupils concerning the school's intended and experienced education ethos. I was interested in determining any potential dissonance between the headteacher's espoused ethos and that of the sponsor or between leaders' espoused ethos and the pupils' experienced ethos.

3.2.6 Theme 6: Pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos

Studies that explored pupils' experiences of their education in state-funded schools with a Christian foundation included those by Deakin-Crick (2002), Green, E. (2009c), Pike (2010), and Hemming (2017). Only Hemming (2017) employed creative data-collection methods to emphasise pupils' voices. Hemmings' work was relevant to my research. It highlighted the value of creative data-collection tasks such as those I used to elicit pupils' perspectives of their educational experiences and school identity. Both Hemmings (2017) and Deakin-Crick (2002) indicated how school values underpinning ethos influenced pupils' experiences.

Hemming (2017) presented ethnographic case studies of stakeholder responses to ethos values and religious practices in two rural Anglican primary schools, a voluntary aided Church of England school and a voluntary controlled Church in Wales school. Year 5-6 pupils constructed a collage to represent their school through paired interviews and small group work. The collages enabled pupils to illustrate the significance of religious symbolism in the school environment and school values and practices as part of the school's ethos. Hemming (2017) concluded that while pupils 'valued' the school's values and some experienced religious practices positively, they appeared to lack clarity about the relationship between school values and school rules. Interestingly, non-religious pupils perceived prayer as a compulsory practice (Hemming, 2017). Hemming's observations indicated that some pupils did not enjoy prayer and religious practices due to 'boredom factors' or the development of non-religious identities.

The study provided insights into how staff communicated the school's values to pupils. Staff indicated school assemblies and collective worship enabled discussion of the Christian nature of the values and their relationship to Bible stories. From the perspective of children's rights, Hemming (2017) raised questions about the relationship between religion, rules, and behaviour management. Pupils' capacities to exercise freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in faith-based schools was particularly relevant to my research (UNCRC 1989, Article 14). Hemmings questioned whether autonomous pupils could value a mandatory practice of collective worship and whether the enforcement of prayer undermined and counteracted its spiritual purpose. The findings had implications for leaders seeking to embed Christian practices in pupils' experienced ethos. He suggested that adults provide religious guidance on prayer and promote pupil voice in developing prayer and collective worship.

Whereas Pike (2010) focused on the transformational aspect of values on pupils, Hemming (2017) provided evidence of the influence of school's exploration of the Biblical origins of values in enabling pupils to comprehend the nature of the ethos, reflective of the requirements of National Society' criteria for SIAMS.

Deakin-Crick's (2002) small-scale action-research study into a voluntary aided Church secondary school investigated how spiritual and moral values inform the school's distinctive ethos and practices, particularly spiritual teaching, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) education and citizenship education. The findings were that while members of the community recognised they lived the values in school processes, they were less aware of the teaching of values through the curriculum. By introducing the community's core values explicitly in lessons, the findings suggested that teachers perceived this promoted pupils' spiritual and moral vocabulary,

engagement in learning, and critical thinking. Teachers indicated that it added a new dimension to their teaching. The pupils' perceptions were that these were some of the best lessons they had experienced. The study indicated the significance of exploring the school's espoused values in teaching and learning in enabling and embedding education ethos and the potential impact of education ethos on pupils' learning experiences.

3.3 Summary and implications for the research studies

The review of the research on school leaders' development of Christian education ethos, both qualitative and quantitative, indicated that studies were limited in number and focus. Few studies provided detailed insights into the types of challenges leaders faced in education ethos development in schools with a Christian foundation from leaders' perspectives. Furthermore, few studies provided rich insights into pupils' experiences of the Christian ethos created by leaders. This finding justified my research study's focus and use of an IPA methodology to provide detailed insights from leaders of a Church Academy and Christian Free School concerning leaders' unique experiences of developing Christian education ethos. The empirical basis of the knowledge about leadership in schools with a Christian foundation could only be seen as partial. In Chapter 5, I explain how I sought to use creative data-collection methods to maximise pupil participants' voices in data collection and analysis. It was to provide an original aspect relating to the research in the field.

Previous research indicated that Church policy might not have the intended impact on leaders' development of Christian education ethos. Consequently, policy directions might remain unrealised. Within schools, the headteacher's values appeared to influence the school's vision for Christian distinctiveness and strategies for its implementation. Leaders could, however, face tensions between contradictory goals, policy, or legal requirements, such as tensions between the provisions of two different accountability frameworks SIAMS and Ofsted. The implications for the headteachers in the research schools were that they needed to develop an inclusive, high achievement-focused Christian education ethos while emphasising the leadership of learning at all levels in the community. Previous research indicated the issue of a potential gap between the espoused ethos of leaders and that experienced by pupils, which was an essential focus of my research.

Based on the literature review in this Chapter, I identified aspects for investigation from school leaders' perspectives relevant to Research Question One. This question considered leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos:

- Leaders' visions for the school's Christian ethos and its constituent values; how they communicated the meaning of the values; and how they embedded the values in school practices, the curriculum, and pedagogy
- The contribution of religious education and worship to the school's Christian ethos
- The management of potential tensions between providing a distinctively Christian and inclusive education ethos
- The nature and purpose of Christian education and leaders' aspirations for pupils
- The management of potential tensions between the Ofsted and SIAMS accountability frameworks

Based on the literature review, I derived aspects for investigation from pupils' perspectives relevant to Research Question Two. This question considered pupils' experiences of education ethos:

- The meaning pupils made of the school's education ethos, its constituent values, and school practices
- What mattered to pupils in their education
- Pupils' perspectives of the expectations placed on them by the school
- Nature of the relationships the pupils encountered.

Chapter 4

Analytical Framework

4.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present the theoretical framework I used to make sense of leaders' development of Christian education ethos and pupils' perspectives of their education in that school ethos. I used a combination of:

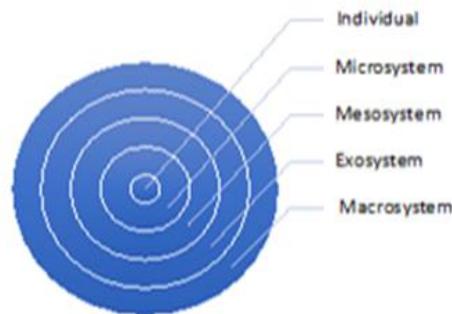
- a. Bronfenbrenner's Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006),
- b. Wenger's (1998) communities of practice (CoP),
- c. Lukes' (1974; 2005) dimensions of power.

My position was that learning was a social process, and participants' experiences of their school formed only part of their lifeworld. Participants' personal qualities interacted with the broader context to inform their development, identity formation, and perspectives on education or leadership (Chapter 2).

4.1 Bronfenbrenner's PPCT theory of human development

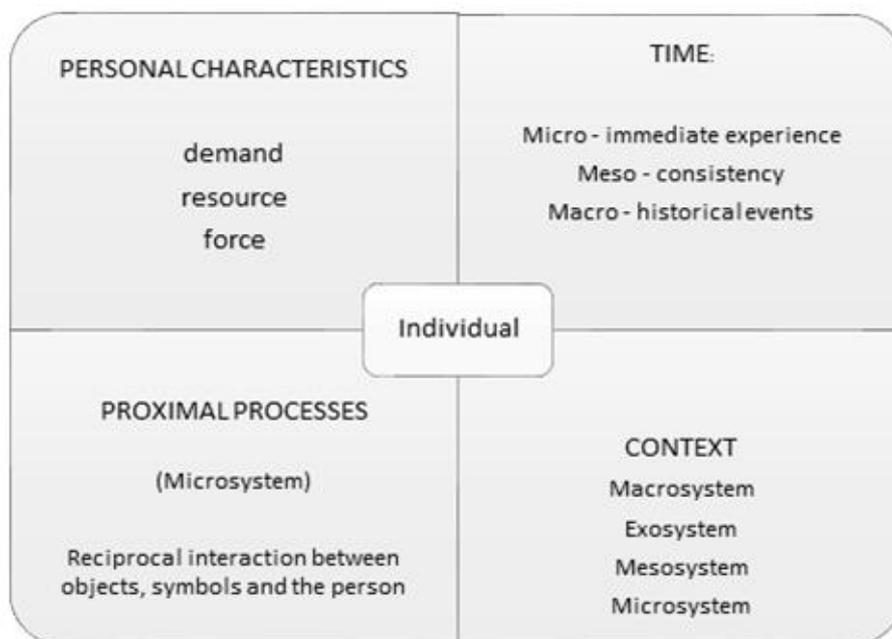
I used Bronfenbrenner's model of human development. It was to consider two aspects. The first was the influence on pupils' development of families, peers, school leaders, the neighbourhood, and societal values. The second was how various sources of values could influence leaders' formation of vision for education ethos. Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) suggested learning and development resulted from the interaction of four factors: personal characteristics, proximal processes, context, and time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In England, his theory-informed multi-professional networks of support for young children and their families within the Sure Start programme (Katz and Valentine, 2009). Bronfenbrenner's original theory, the 'ecological theory' of human development conceptualised four interactive contexts contributing to a person's development (Darling, 2007, p.204). These contexts were the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner arranged these around the individual as a series of layers, like a Russian doll (figure 4.1a).

Figure 4.1a The Context: Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems influencing development



Bronfenbrenner (1989) later critiqued this model’s overemphasis on the role of context in human development relative to that of the active participant. By the 1980s, his theory included ‘proximal processes’ as central to human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1985, 1994, 1995, 1999; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci; 1994; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner encompassed proximal processes as one of the four components in the PPCT model (Section 4.1.1). He suggested that human development occurred through the joint dynamic interaction of four factors: proximal processes, characteristics of the person, the context in which learning took place and the timing of the learning experiences (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Figure 4.1b presents a visual summary of the PPCT model.

Figure 4.1.b Visual representation of the Person-Process-Context-Time model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005)



4.1.1 Proximal processes

Proximal processes, constituting 'the engines of development', could influence peoples' learning trajectories (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998, p.996). These progressively more complex reciprocal interactions occurred between the active, evolving individual and the people, objects, and symbols within the environment. By engaging in practices and interpersonal relationships, leaders and pupils made sense of their worlds, understood their places, and changed the prevailing order (Tudge, Mookova, Hatfield and Karnik, 2009). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) emphasised the significance of the regular occurrence of specific interactions over extended periods to affect personal development. Within a school context, pupils could interact with teachers, leaders, peers, and parents. They might interact with religious artefacts and aspects used in their worship, learning or play.

4.1.2 Person

In this research, I explored leaders' aspirations, personal values, and beliefs and how they informed their visions for the school's Christian education ethos. By aspirations, I meant their ambitions to achieve, be successful or meet goals. I considered how leaders and pupils felt they related to others and the practices in which they engaged. A person's characteristics and beliefs were important in evoking differential responses to and from the environment. Bronfenbrenner (2005) named three characteristics influencing social interaction: demand, resource, and force. Demand characteristics, such as age, gender, skin colour and physical appearance, could determine another person's instantaneous reaction, expectations, and level of engagement. Force characteristics concerned personal dispositions, such as temperament, curiosity, motivation, and persistence. In my research, I interpreted motivation as being concerned with the underlying reasons why people strived to achieve or become successful in their endeavours. One person might aspire to achieve their goals or gain power, whilst another might give up easily. Resource characteristics concerned mental and emotional resources, determining a person's desire to change their environment and circumstances. They might influence their access to social and material assets, such as educational achievement and nourishment (Houston, 2015).

4.1.3 Context

Four systems constituted the contextual component of the PPCT model: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). The microsystem was the inner core of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. It represented leaders' and pupils' immediate physical and social environment (the school). In the microsystem, the types and direction of proximal processes were significant in human development. Pupils could engage in face-to-face interactions with peers, teachers, and leaders. Leaders and pupils could participate in a range of microsystems, past and present, external to the school, such as their family, local church, and friendship groups. As pupils matured, they potentially became part of an increasing number of microsystems, increasing the complexity of their proximal relationships. Proximal processes were bi-directional, implying the systems influenced the individual, and the individual might, in turn, influence change in the systems.

The mesosystem comprised the links and processes occurring between two or more contexts in which the person interacted (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Through analysing the pupils' data, I found interactions between the home and school influencing pupils' development (Chapters 7 and 9). These interactions were not a focus of the research.

The exosystem represented a system encompassing events and decision-making in which the individual did not directly participate. However, the outcomes could indirectly influence individual experiences. In this thesis, the pupil exosystem represented school leaders' visions for the school's education ethos, the types of education offered by the school, and their aspirations for the school community members. It included leaders espoused school values as well as their intended structures, practices, and policies. The exosystem influenced the experienced ethos or conditions for learning in the school, namely the pupils' microsystem.

The macrosystem constituted the outermost system of an individual's environment. It represented the values and beliefs of society influencing the other systems. In Chapter 2, I argued that the leaders operated within a school that was part of a broader social system. In pupils' and leaders' macrosystems, educational ideologies, legislation, and policies could influence educational provision in schools. For example, the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced a market ideology. The Education Schools Act 1992 increased school leaders' accountability for educational standards. The Academies Act 2010 enabled the academisation of schooling and increased academy leaders' autonomy over aspects of education (Chapter 2).

The influence of religious beliefs, values and practices associated with Christianity formed important influences in schools with a Christian character (Chapter 3).

4.1.4 Time

The final element of the PPCT model was time. Throughout a person's lifespan, both the person and their world changes. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) distinguished between micro-time, meso-time and macro-time as influences on human development. Micro-time concerned specific activities or interactions; meso-time concerned the extent to which activities consistently occurred over lengthy periods. Macro-time described changing events that happened in society, which influenced a person over their lifetime. Previously, he termed the latter the 'chronosystem.'

4.1.5 Application of Bronfenbrenner's theory to the research

The complexity of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory of human development potentially made research design and data analysis problematic. The theory implied all factors of social influence and their interactions needed identifying to understand each participant's perspectives. Tudge, Mokkova, Hatfield and Karnik's (2009), following a review of a limited range of studies using Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development, established researchers either did not make explicit the version of his theory or over-relied on earlier versions, focusing solely on contextual factors influencing human development. I interpreted school leaders' and pupils' perspectives by focusing on both the developing and contextual influences. Within the field of education, social work and health, the application of this theory helped explain the influences of context on people in varying circumstances despite its complexity (Houston, 2015; Smith, 2002). Bronfenbrenner's theory helped contextualise the factors influencing pupils at school and their unique perspectives of education. Smith (2002) utilised the ecological model to construct an intervention programme to enable young pupils to transition from the nursery to school. Stivaros (2007) used Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological model to elucidate Year 6 pupils' learning experiences in a primary school.

In this thesis, I used Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model to show the diversity of social influences on pupils' and leaders' perspectives and identity formation in their schools. A critique of this model is that it did not fully explain how school leaders influenced pupils' development and perspectives through the interaction of the pupil exosystem and microsystem. The model inadequately explained how the distribution and use of power, within and between the social systems, affected peoples' perspectives and behaviours. I sought to investigate how school

leaders utilised their influence to embed the school's Christian education ethos and how social structures might constrain or enable their autonomy. I used Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power to interpret the leaders' uses of power and influence within the school and power within society acting on school leaders' formation and implementation of their visions for school education ethos. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's theory did not fully explain how the microsystem's practices and values might transform pupils' identities. For this reason, I incorporated Wenger's (1998, 2002) communities of practice into the theoretical framework to complement the use of Bronfenbrenner's theory to better understand the mechanisms for transforming pupil identities.

4.2 Communities of Practice

Wenger (1998) defined a community of practice (CoP) as a group of people who pursued a joint enterprise and developed a shared repertoire or established ways of doing things over time through mutual engagement in practice. This conception enabled me to gain a more in-depth comprehension of the influence the values, artefacts and practices established by leaders within the microsystem aspect of the school's context could have on pupils. Members of a community, through their interactions, deepened their expertise and knowledge and developed unique perspectives on their endeavour (Wenger et al., 2002). They might share insights and advice, discuss aspirations and needs, share ideas, and help others solve problems. They might also develop a shared sense of identity.

Not all communities are a community of practice. Three characteristics needed to be present:

1. The domain: A shared domain of interest of mutual passion, bringing members together to define its identity.
2. The community: In pursuit of their interest, members interact with each other and learn together.
3. The practice: Members develop a body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, and documents, which they share and develop together (Wenger, 2004, p. 13-15).

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the conception through the notion of legitimate peripheral participation using research into workplace learning. Wenger (1998) further refined the concept by applying it to a range of organisations, such as schools, higher education institutions, businesses, and professional associations (National Council of Teachers of English, 2011; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger-Trayner, 2015). In this thesis, I saw each school as a unique CoP, with leaders and pupils sharing a domain. Within the school, I acknowledged that other smaller

CoPs could exist. Examples included the year group the pupils belonged to, the entire pupil population, the school's governing body or Trust, the founders of a school, the leadership team, and the senior leadership team.

Wenger (1998), like Bronfenbrenner (2005), focused on learning as a collective, relational, and social process. Learning entailed participation in the practices of social communities, experience, meaning-making and constructing identities relating to these communities. Learning constituted a process of doing, becoming, and belonging. This approach was at odds with some models of learning, which emphasised how learning altered mental states of individuals or brought about behavioural change through stimulus-response. Learning constituted identity formation through participation in the community's practices instead of knowledge made available through instruction.

In applying the concept of CoP to analysing leaders' and pupils' experiences in the research, I argued they learned through active engagement with practices and the environment they experienced. Learning within a CoP implied intentionality but might also result from unexpected outcomes of shared practices. Wenger (1998, p. 5) identified four aspects to learning, applicable to research participants:

1. Meaning: A way of talking about an ability to experience life and the world as meaningful, both individually and collectively
2. Practice: A way of talking about sharing resources, ways of acting and perspectives sustaining mutual engagement in action
3. Community: A way of talking about the social configurations in which social enterprises are worth pursuing, and personal participation is recognisable as competent
4. Identity: A way of talking about how learning transforms people and creates histories of becoming in the context of the community

4.2.1 Engagement, participation and the negotiation of meaning

Engagement as a social practice was an essential aspect of Wenger's community of practice. Wenger (1998, p.47) considered practice indicated 'what is said and what is left unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed'. The practice could include the language, tools, documents, images, symbols, roles, regulations, and procedures generated and experienced in schools. It could consist of intentional practices and ways of doing things implemented by school leaders.

It extended to the implicit relations developed amongst community members, its tacit conventions, underlying assumptions, rules-of-thumb, and shared worldviews.

The concept of participation was central to a community of practice. Participation described a person's experience of social practice. It was an active process that involved 'doing, talking, thinking, feeling and belonging' (Wenger, 1998, p.56). Practice shaped each person's identity by providing legitimacy to membership and determining the extent to which they could shape their community. When pupils and leaders engaged in school practices, they negotiated the meaning of such practices. These meanings could 'extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret, modify or confirm – in a word, negotiate anew – the histories of meanings of which they are part' (Wenger, 1998, pp.52-53). The negotiation of meaning involved not only participation but also the complementary process of reification. In this process, people documented and gave structure and form to the meaning of their experiences. Therefore, school-life for pupils and leaders became a continuous process of 'negotiation of meaning' (Wenger, 1998, p.53).

4.2.2 Learning as identity formation

Wenger (1998) argued that a person's identity represented a negotiated experience. Individuals defined who they were by how they experienced themselves, participated and reified themselves within a community of practice. Recognition and interpretation of the familiar, understandable, negotiated, and useful were important (Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998, p.215) argued that learning was more than accumulating skills and information. It transformed who people were, representing a 'process of becoming.' People could learn to handle themselves as community members, as they experienced competence and could be recognised as competent (Wenger, 1998). Wenger acknowledged that people had multiple identities arising from their engagement in the practices of numerous CoPs. Therefore, Individuals might need to reconcile aspects of different practices. Wenger regarded the notion of identity as fluid and changing during a person's life.

As people participated in a CoP, they expressed their belonging through three modes of identification: engagement, imagination, and alignment (Wenger, 1998, 2002). Engagement consisted of members doing things together, sharing experiences and knowledge. The imagination involved people constructing images of themselves, their communities, and the world in orientating themselves, reflecting on their situation and exploring possibilities. Alignment consisted of members collaborating, following directions or co-ordinating actions

towards shared goals. Members might align themselves with the expectations, standards, or values of the community.

4.2.3 Boundaries and brokering

For Wenger (1998), a CoP had boundaries separating it from other CoPs with differing repertoires, histories, and narratives. I did, however, perceive the spatial notion of defining the boundaries as problematic. For example, the headteacher might lead the school whilst also being a member of the school's governing body. There was an issue of placing governors in, at the edge or just outside a community of practice. Wenger (1998) suggested that when people crossed boundaries from one CoP to another, they could transfer some aspects of their practice. Newcomers began as peripheral participants. They could move to the community's centre and become full participants through involvement in the community's activities and understanding its functioning. In this research, for example, this could apply to new pupils or leaders joining the school. Whilst Lave and Wenger (1991) only recognised the inbound journey of a newcomer to a more experienced member, Wenger (1998) identified further trajectories of participation. I identified an outbound trajectory applicable to Year 6 pupils leaving their primary school in Study 2.

4.2.4 Leadership in communities of practice

Through my leadership experience, I appreciated that schools had fluid, continuously changing, and more ambiguous boundaries than the model suggested. Wenger's (1998) model emphasised the learning that happened in a CoP rather than learning that could occur by leaders belonging to multiple CoPs. In the government's self-improving school system, leaders could play a significant role in boundary-crossing and brokering knowledge between different CoPs. The openness to new forms of practice was essential in developing innovative practices and preventing stagnation of inefficient or ineffective ways of working.

Roberts (2006) argued the necessity of understanding the power dynamics of CoPs and the negotiation of meaning. I concurred with such a view because schools have members with varying authority, age, and expertise. The model suggested that members with full participation might yield more power in developing community practices than peripheral participants. However, there were potential issues in leaders complying with external policy demands, externally imposed accountability criteria and varying stakeholder expectations (Chapters 2 and 3). These influences could affect leaders' capacity to develop innovative practices in Christian education, solve practice-related problems, and share knowledge. Leaders in the research

schools might face tensions about which forms of knowledge were most worthwhile in providing Christian education (Chapter 3). School governors or sponsors might remain peripheral participants in the exosystem, but exert authority in developing policies, practices, and the ethos of the community of practice. For the community of practice approach to work effectively, the model suggested that school leaders in the research would need to facilitate community members' knowledge-sharing capabilities in developing and implementing the vision for Christian education ethos. They would need to build trust, security, and connectedness amongst community members, stakeholders, and across different institutions in the self-improving school system (Section 2.2).

4.3 Lukes' dimensions of power

Lukes (1974; 2005) offered a comprehensive approach for analysing how leaders could exercise power over individuals or groups. I used his dimensions of power to make sense of leaders' development of school education ethos and pupils' experiences of that education ethos. Lukes (2005, p.34) focused on the 'conflictual aspect of power - the fact that it is exercised over people.' He presented three dimensions of power: overt, covert through agenda setting and power over the thoughts and desires of others. In 2005, Lukes adjusted his conception of power to include power as capacity, the power to do something. He acknowledged that power over others was not necessarily negative. When exercised in a relationship of dependency, it could be 'productive, transformative, authoritative and compatible with dignity' (Lukes, 2005, p.109).

I used Lukes' (1974) dimensions of power in preference to Foucault's (1978; 1990; 1991) notion of power. Lukes (1974; 2005) enabled the identification of the sources of power and types of influence power could have over others. In contrast, Foucault (1983) conceived power as relational and productive. Rather than being a mechanism of an institution, group or individual wielding power over others, Foucault (1990) viewed power as localised, diffuse, and ubiquitous. He claimed power controlled individuals, leading to their formation through a range of discourses and practices. Individuals learned how to self-govern or police themselves (Foucault, 1990). External surveillance devices enforced compliance. In these studies, these external surveillance devices related to the accountability frameworks of Ofsted (2012) and SIAMS (National Society, 2013b).

Power as decision-making

Lukes' (1974) first dimension, power as decision-making, represented individuals or groups intentionally using power to modify or control the behaviour of others. Power was overt in that

it was visible in the relations between people. Lukes identified this dimension in the work of Dahl (1957; 1961). It viewed power as policy-making that affected the lives of others: "A' exercises power over 'B' in a manner contrary to 'B's interests' (Lukes, 2005, p.37). An example of this could be the headteacher holding the positional authority with the necessary expertise to express policy preferences for managing pupil behaviour. Participating in decision-making could reveal the headteacher's interests through their policy preferences. This dimension of power was open to scrutiny and amenable to legitimisation.

Power through control of the agenda

Lukes' second dimension, covert power, originated from the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963 and 1970). Power was not solely about decision-making but also about establishing or controlling the agenda. Setting an agenda prevented specific issues from being considered (Lukes, 1974). It entailed keeping conflicts of interest hidden from those whose interests could be damaged. It could involve manipulating or coercing others. An example could entail the headteacher's vision setting the agenda for education ethos development, reinforced through communicating espoused school values and practices. In the English education system, Ofsted (2012) and SIAMS (2013) criteria for school inspection established standards agendas for leaders to comply with if the school was to be judged successful. However, tensions could exist between conflicting authorities with different agendas for education ethos.

The power that shapes thoughts, values and desires

Lukes (2005) argued that the first and second dimensions focused on overt behaviour. These dimensions provided insights into the process of making decisions. However, they offered little insight into what made individuals adopt political stances, except for the assumption they would act rationally based on their interests. Lukes' third dimension was a subtle, invisible form of power that shaped thoughts, values, and desires. Lukes (2005, p.27) referred to this form of power as the most 'supreme' exercise of power - 'to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have – that was to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires'. O'Cain and Prokhovnik (2015) argued that this form of power was effective when individuals saw the power acting over them as being in line with their interests and wishes.

Within the two studies, I used all three dimensions of power to interpret leaders' experiences of developing Christian education ethos and leaders' influences on pupils' experiences of their education (Chapters 6-9). Concerning the third dimension, the headteachers could use power to inspire pupils and other leaders into adopting the school value system. It would underpin its

educational ethos and lead them to believe that demonstrating such values-related behaviours was in their best interests. Central Government and the Church held value positions, implicit within their political agendas for schools. These could influence the value positions of headteachers, which could ultimately affect the educational experiences of pupils. I discussed the dimension of power in leadership in Chapter 2 and the Church's influence over education in Church schools in Chapter 3. In Chapters 7 and 9, I analyse pupils' data to explore the effect of the performativity agenda and that of leaders on pupils' experiences of their education.

Exit, voice, and loyalty

While not a significant component of the theoretical framework, I found Hirschman's (1970) conceptions of exit, voice, and loyalty helpful. It enabled exploration of how leaders could exercise power in response to unsatisfactory situations, policies, and values in a school. Exercising voice entailed speaking up and trying to remedy the issues. Alternatively, individuals could exit the school without trying to fix things or because they felt their voices were not heard. The other option entailed individuals exercising loyalty through remaining, which might be involuntary if there was no scope for an exit. This loyalty could result in giving up voice because the possibility of influencing decisions was minimal, and the cost of voicing concerns was too high. In the second study, the Church Academy leaders indicated that the school should exit the local authority to become an academy. The purpose was to enable their autonomy. However, they lacked the option of exiting the Church of England family of schools when dissatisfied with the SIAMS process.

4.4 Summary

In this Chapter, I provided the theoretical framework I used to understand the complexity of leaders' development of Christian education ethos and pupils' perspectives of their educational experiences in the school's ethos. Reflection on the data using this framework could enable the analysis to move away from a descriptive to a more profound, interpretative stance. It was characteristic of engagement with Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) IPA's double hermeneutic.

As the core framework, I employed Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development to explore the social influences on participants' perspectives. Within the microsystem, I situated and used Wenger's (1998, 2002) model of CoP to make sense of the collective, relational, and social processes of learning within the school community. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development enabled exploration of the influences on leaders' and pupils' experiences beyond their school, particularly aspects related

to values and laws in society. Wenger's concept of CoP placed insufficient emphasis on these macro-influences. Wenger's (1998, 2002) model emphasised how leaders could enable community members to understand the tacit knowledge associated with the school's ethos. I used Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power to make sense of the power aspects of leadership. It allowed exploration of how leaders sought to use power to develop education ethos and the identification of the sources of power in establishing agendas for education in schools.

Chapter 5

Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

5.0 Introduction

The research aimed to make sense of school leaders' perspectives on developing a Christian education ethos and pupils' experiences of their education in that school ethos. I discuss the rationale for the research methodology, its underpinning theoretical framework, and data collection methods. I also illustrate the data analytical processes. In Chapters 6 to 9, I present and discuss the findings.

I begin by explaining why an IPA methodology was the appropriate methodology for the aims of the research. Second, I discuss the research design and assumptions underlying my positionality, which included my view on children's engagement with research. I consider matters relating to access to school participants and outline the data collection methods. Third, I discuss the consequent ethical issues. Fourth, I reflect on how criteria for judging quality in qualitative research informed the research's design and implementation. Finally, I discuss data-analytical processes.

5.1 Methodology

There are three main research paradigms: interpretivism, positivism and critical realism (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I adopted interpretivism. All research paradigms embrace three dimensions, which underpin the design, conduct and analysis of social research.:

1. Ontology: the nature of the reality under investigation;
2. Epistemology: the nature of the relationship between the enquirer and that reality;
3. Methodology: the way of gaining knowledge about the world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In interpretivism, social reality concerns people's perceptions, experiences, and feelings. People make sense of events, contexts and situations through their social interactions and act based on their interpretations (Schwandt, 2003, in Andrews 2012, p.40). There are multiple interpretations of and perspectives on each event or situation. Reality is complex. Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty argued that the world is already there for interpretation (Crotty, 2011, p.44). However, culture shapes how individuals perceive objects, events, values, and their significance (Crotty, 2010; Andrews, 2012). I sought to understand the subjective world of human

experience, which entailed examining situations through the participants' eyes (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

In contrast to interpretivism, researchers adopting a positivist paradigm seek to comprehend and construct laws and rules that govern the physical world and human behaviour. Knowledge is deduced through scientific methods and is measurable. Phenomena studied are reduced to their simple elements. Positivist researchers value objectivity and controllability. They seek to prove or disprove hypotheses using quantitative approaches to research (Ryan, 2018). Studies typically use large samples. A central limitation of adopting the positivist approach is the researcher's capacity to penetrate individuals' private, lived experiences.

A third research paradigm, critical realism, explores individuals and groups' emancipation in society. Researchers focus on understanding situations and phenomena to transform individuals and society to bring about a more just, egalitarian society. The aim is to eradicate illegitimate use of power to enable the practice of individual and collective freedoms. Critical researchers have the agenda of uncovering the interests at work in situations and interrogating the legitimacy of the interests in the service of equality and democracy. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) viewed interpretative and positivist paradigms as 'technicist'. They seek to understand and render more efficient existing situations rather than question and transform them.

I adopted social constructionism as the view of knowledge underpinning the research. Knowledge is created, subjective, and given significance by the social interactions between individuals (Berger and Luckman, 1991). Andrews (2012) understood that the experience of society comes through socialisation, which constructs, sustains, and reproduces meanings. Personal identity originated from the social context, and significant others could mediate an objective view of reality. Reality becomes meaningful to an individual, internalised through the medium of language (Burr, 1995).

Researchers seeking to understand participants' experiences become part of the research setting. The researcher's values and beliefs inform the qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Consequently, I needed to be open to participants varying interpretations of the school's Christian ethos. Besides, there was a need to acknowledge that different researchers may interpret the data differently.

5.1.1 Overview and use of an IPA methodology

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) falls within an interpretive research paradigm. An IPA methodology was consistent with my research's purpose: to make sense of a small group of leaders and pupils' lived experiences within two different schools through a process of in-depth reflective inquiry. This interest in a small group of leaders' and pupils' experiences led me to adopt Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) IPA framework. Smith et al. provided helpful guidance on sampling, data collection and analysis. IPA is 'concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience to participants and how participants make sense of that experience' (Smith, 2011, p. 9).

IPA offered a method and an analytical approach to understanding how people experience a phenomenon. IPA is a relatively new psychological-based qualitative method. Since Smith (1996) first introduced it, IPA has grown in popularity (Howitt and Cramer, 2008; Eatough and Smith, 2018). Its use is found extensively in medical psychology and health research. However, through a review of school leadership literature, I established it was gaining popularity in school leadership research.

Influenced by Heidegger, IPA has its roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Phenomenology provides a philosophical approach to studying human experience and what it means to be human. Hermeneutics provides the theory of interpretation. Ideography addresses the 'particular': an understanding of how a given phenomenon, such as an event, process, or relationship, is understood from the perspectives of 'particular people in a specific context' (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.29). An ideographic approach aims for commitment to an in-depth, detailed and finely textured analysis of lived experience. While IPA researchers view participants as experiential experts, there is an acknowledgement that interpretation requires rich engagement by the researcher and participants. Smith (2004, p.40) described the process of IPA as the researcher engaging in a 'double hermeneutic' approach to analysis. Participants try to make sense of their experience (the first hermeneutic layer), upon which the researcher provides an interpretation (the second layer). To enable the sense-making process, the researcher also needs to engage with the hermeneutic circle, which entails moving between the parts and the whole of the investigated experience (Peat, Rodriguez, and Smith, 2019). I discuss and exemplify the nature of this interpretation process further in Section 5.5.

While the researcher's preconceptions, experiences, and beliefs form the basis for understanding participants' worlds, the researcher needs to engage in reflexivity. It is the

process of evaluating researcher influences on the research process. The researcher needs to be aware of such influences to enrich the understanding of participants' experiences rather than them acting as obstacles to interpretation (Peat, Rodriguez, and Smith, 2019). Reflexivity also requires reflection on interactions with participants during data collection.

The methodology's effectiveness depends on three aspects: the participants' abilities and willingness to articulate their experiences adequately; the researcher's reflexive capacity; and the researcher's ability to analyse and communicate these interpretations (Chamberlain, 2011, p.51). The researcher needs to demonstrate sensitivity to context, facilitate positive researcher-participant interaction, and produce an in-depth interpretation to ensure quality in research (Section 5.4).

I considered four possible qualitative methodologies: IPA, discourse analysis (DA), grounded theory and narrative. These overlap in specific ways and potentially complement each other (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). IPA, discourse analysis (DA) and narrative consider the use of language crucial in describing the experience. The researcher also needs to demonstrate theoretical sensitivity: the ability to understand the subtleties and nuances in data (Singh, 2003). The differences relate to the inferences made during data analysis and the purposes of the analysis. IPA interprets the nature of human experience based on detailed first-person accounts. DA explores the resources and strategies people use within discursive practices (Howett and Cramer, 2008) and the effect linguistic constructions have on understanding phenomena from a power perspective (Holt, 2011). Data analysis in IPA focuses on the sense individuals make of their experiences through the themes emerging from the data. In DA, the analysis results in discursive representations (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), identifies categories of meaning and experience in the data. It is useful when analysing large amounts of data and generating new theories about processes and practices (Glaser, 1978, cited in Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). Narrative approaches explore individuals' stories and how the structure of the narrative influences their experiences (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

IPA was the most appropriate methodology to address the research aims: to generate and make sense of rich first-person accounts of leaders' and pupils' experiences. I was not concerned with developing new theories about phenomena, which would result from the use of grounded theory. I did not seek to investigate the structure of individual narratives, which would come from adopting a narrative approach. Smith and Osborn (2003) argued that IPA is beneficial in investigating complexity, process, and novelty. In Chapters 2 and 3, I established that Christian

school leadership was a complex endeavour in a performativity context. Moriah (2018) found IPA invaluable when investigating how headteachers' leadership preferences and capabilities influenced inclusive education in a Caribbean school environment. Moriah (2018) argued that IPA enabled the exploration of serious leadership issues and was adaptable for use in various contexts. It embraced the researcher's differing positionality as either 'insider' or 'outsider' and emphasised participant voice (Moriah, 2018, p. 7).

Up until the 1990s, research into educational leadership focused on using positivist approaches. Consequently, the characteristics of efficient and effective organisations or leaders tended to be studied independently of human will, purpose, and values. Greenfield and Ribbins (1993, pp.139-140) argued such approaches emphasised 'the epiphenomena of reality rather than the phenomenological force of that reality itself.' Data from such methods could be 'hard' and often 'impotent, irrelevant, or misleading'. Such approaches lost 'human intention, value, commitment – human passion and potential' (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p139-140). There was a potential to lose human will and choice, which amounts to the 'sheer power of people pursuing their purposes' (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p.140). Using an IPA methodology in this research offered the opportunity for capturing the emotional dimensions of school leadership and its complexities. These aspects included leaders' passions, frustrations and motives driving decision-making. In reviewing research on Christian school ethos (Chapter 3), I found most studies either employed a mixed methodology encompassing ethnographic case studies (Jelfs, 2010; Green, 2015) or were solely ethnographic case studies of an institution, incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives (Green, 2009c, Hemming, 2017). Ethnography requires prolonged immersion in the field to observe and comprehend cultural practices and how knowledge is communicated (Nolas, 2011, p. 22). I sought a fresh approach to research to uncover aspects of importance in leaders' and pupils' lived experiences.

The research questions, informed by the literature review, chosen methodology and pilot study outcomes, were:

1. How do school leaders experience the development and implementation of a vision for Christian education ethos in a Christian Free School (study one) and Church of England primary academy (study two)?
2. How do pupils experience their education in the school's ethos (studies one and two)?

5.1.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as a form of philosophy, seeks to understand and interpret human experience driven by Heidegger (1927/1962), Sartre (1943; 1948) and Merleau-Ponty (1962). For my study, it was essential to understand the existential and hermeneutical branches of phenomenology. It was because they underpinned my IPA methodology. They transformed the transcendental or descriptive phenomenology established by Husserl (1931) (Spiegelberg, 1994; Howitt and Cramer, 2008, p.374). They initially influenced the phenomenological research methodology (Langdridge, 2007).

Transcendental Phenomenology

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology entails examining human experience to explore the underlying, fundamental qualities of an experience (Denscombe, 2011; Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Husserl (1931a; 1931b) argued the basis of all meaning-based constructs of the world lay in the relationship between consciousness and reality, which he termed 'intentionality'. Conscious experience held meaning for individuals: consciousness was always consciousness of something (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.12; Spinelli, 2005). Consciousness could involve observation, memory, or judgement. An individual could have ideas or images which together constituted meanings of things or events.

Husserl (1927) argued that reflection was essential in understanding the qualities of experience. He argued humans should 'go back to the things themselves', the experiential aspects of consciousness, and consider the obstacles that could influence the nature of experience (Husserl, 1927, in Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.13). Revealing the essential qualities of experience entailed examining every aspect. Husserl (1931) postulated that humans were generally unreflective concerning routine tasks. He developed the phenomenological method of 'bracketing' to enable self-conscious reflection on experience. The process entailed disengaging from the activity and attending to the taken-for-granted experience (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.13). Attention is focused on the perception of the object or event.

Researchers seeking to describe the essence of experience faced challenges in facilitating participants' expressions of their lifeworlds and then conveying these experiences as authentic or uninfluenced by personal bias. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009, p.14) likened the analytical process, 'eidetic reduction', to a series of lenses representing different modes of thinking or reasoning about a phenomenon. The researcher followed three steps in data analysis. First, the researcher engaged in a rigorous self-examination process to set aside initial bias, beliefs,

prejudices, expectations, and assumptions about the studied phenomena. Second, the researcher used the rule of description, describing concrete experiences rather than explaining them. Finally, the researcher employed the equalisation rule or rule of horizontalism. The researcher treated items as having equal status, which reduced bias and enhanced accuracy in data analysis. Schutz (1973) likened the researcher's role to that of a stranger comprehending how members of society made sense of events, uncluttered by assumptions that formed part of everyday thinking about these things.

In my research, I viewed phenomenological reductionism as not entirely achievable (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1964; Heidegger 1962,1927). I could not produce an altogether authentic or 'pure' description of a participant's experience because interpretation always features in descriptions (Spinelli, 2005; Denscombe, 2011). IPA proposes participants' experiences, and the researcher's interpretations are subjective (Jeong and Othman, 2016). Heidegger (1962/1927) noted that whenever a person interpreted an event, their individual experiences, assumptions, or preconceptions influenced that interpretation.

Therefore, I employed reflexive research strategies. These considered my positionality as a researcher and influence on the research (Langdrige, 2007). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p.14) explained the importance of researcher reflexivity: 'Researchers are in the world and of the world'. The experiences, values, selection of paradigm and inductive processes brought to the research influenced interactions with participants and shaped the research context and interpretation of the findings. They proposed that researchers should understand them and account for subjectivity rather than trying to eliminate researcher effects in social research. Dey (1993, pp.63-64) supported this view: 'the danger for researchers lies not in them having assumptions but in them not being aware of them'. Walford (2001) asserted, correctly in my view, that researchers should continuously review the evolution of their ideas. It required reflection on their decision-making and articulation of the values and assumptions implicit in their research. In previous Chapters, I explained my position on leadership in a performativity context. I presented my view of the nature of school education ethos and Christian education ethos. I reflected on the research design and set out my perspectives in this Chapter. I documented my encounters with participants and reflections on developing my thinking during my research journey in a research journal. The journal informed my interpretation of participants' perspectives (Chapters 6 to 9) and an analysis of my personal development as a researcher (Chapter 10).

In summary, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology sought to describe lived experiences. I reflected on Husserl's aspiration that researchers make transparent their preconceptions, values, and experiences to reduce bias in data collection and analysis. I chose, however, to adopt a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to research. Hermeneutic phenomenology aimed to reveal and interpret the meaning of the experience. It also appreciated the significance of temporality. I used Heidegger, Gadamer, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty's perspectives on hermeneutical phenomenology to inform my research methodology.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Heidegger (1962/1927) developed Husserl's abstract conception of seeing the world. While Husserl addressed processes, such as perception, awareness and consciousness, Heidegger focused on explaining the nature of existence and how the world appeared to humans and was made meaningful (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, pp.16-17). Rather than using the term 'human beings', Heidegger (1962) used '*Dasein*' to indicate the unique way in which humans existed and embedded themselves in the world (Misiak and Sexton, 1973; Spinelli, 1989). Through their existence, humans encountered others. Language, cultures and histories in the existing world influenced the meaning individuals attributed to life (Heidegger, 1962/1927).

The hermeneutical underpinning enabled researchers to produce insightful accounts of participants' experiences rather than surface-level descriptions (Peat, Rodriguez, and Smith, 2019). Heidegger argued that the 'appearance' of things could be ambiguous and deceptive. While things could have visible meanings, they could also have hidden meanings (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.24). Wisniewski (2013, p.29) summarised Heidegger's notion of phenomenology as 'capturing that which shows itself in the very way that it shows itself'. *Phenomenon* is the Greek word for appearance. *Logos* means 'illuminating' or 'bringing something to light' (Heidegger, 1962, p9). As an IPA researcher, I sought to understand what something was like from the participant's perspectives by being empathetic, but I also asked critical questions when analysing the data. I desired to ascertain what participants sought to achieve and whether something was going on in their experience, which they were less aware. I discuss this further in the next Section on hermeneutics.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) shared Heidegger's commitment to understanding Being and the quest for a more contextualised phenomenology. He argued that the embodied nature of humans in their world shaped their perspectives. The implications for IPA researchers were that while researchers could observe and experience empathy, they could not share another's experience

entirely. It was because their experience belonged to their own embodied experience in the world (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Sartre (1948) emphasised humans' developmental nature and placed significance on what was absent as much as what was present in defining the nature of a person and their lived experiences.

5.1.3 Hermeneutics

The second major underpinning of IPA comes from hermeneutics. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneuein*, which means interpreting or understanding (Crotty, 2010). Hermeneutics originated from the method used to interpret the meaning of Biblical texts. It could be used to analyse lived experiences. The analyst projects a perspective on a text and revises this by examining the meaning of constituent parts concerning the whole text and the importance of the entire text relating its components.

Heidegger (1962/1927) linked phenomenology with hermeneutics. He argued the way things appeared or were covered up required critical examination. Heidegger expounded a view of truth as disclosure, an uncovering process related to the quest for Being. Initially, people possessed a rudimentary, implicit understanding of Being that needed making explicit and developing to understand the meaning of Being itself (Crotty, 2010, p.980). Heidegger (1962/1967, p.195) termed this pre-understanding of being 'fore-structure'. People brought to an encounter their fore-structures, consisting of prior-experiences, assumptions, and preconceptions. They looked at and made sense of new stimuli through the lens of their prior experience (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.25).

Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1989) conceptualised a complex interactive relationship between the interpreter and the interpreted. They considered using the hermeneutic circle encouraged researchers to analyse data by looking at the parts relating to the whole, which required dynamic, non-linear modes of thinking (Gadamer, 1989). Smith, Flowers, and Larking (2009, p.28) discussed a range of relationships for exploration within the data:

The part	The whole
The single word	The sentence in which the word is embedded
The single extract	The complete text
The particular text	The complete oeuvre
The interview	The research project
The single episode	The complete life

The researcher moves back and forth through various modes of thinking about the data rather than systematically completing one step after another (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). I discuss and illustrate ways in which I built up layers of interpretation in Section 5.5. To some extent, my experiences of data analysis led me to concur with Gadamer's (1989) view that humans could only discover the nature of their preconceptions during the interpretive process.

In IPA, it was possible to accomplish the double hermeneutic using two types of hermeneutics: the hermeneutics of faith and suspicion (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Ricoeur (1974) perceived interpretation as concerned with deciphering hidden meaning within apparent meaning (Ricoeur, 1974 cited in Eatough and Smith, 2018, p.198). In employing the hermeneutics of faith, researchers could empathise and imagine what it was like to be the participant. They could attempt to make explicit the implicit meanings of expressed experiences. In employing the hermeneutics of suspicion, researchers could be critical of what participants say and seek meaning for participants in ways beyond what they might be willing or able to do (Eatough and Smith, 2018). Participants might consciously censor disclosure of unacceptable feelings because of contextual constraints (Bar-On, 1996, in Josselsen, 2004). I sought to use an empathetic approach, or the hermeneutics of faith, to understand what the experiences were like for participants. I also adopted the hermeneutics of suspicion. I asked critical questions when analysing the data to establish if participants did not intend to disclose something or were unaware of something (Smith and Osborn, 2003). I also analysed participants' accounts using the interpretative framework I outlined in Chapter 4.

5.1.4 Ideography

The third influence on IPA is ideography. Ideography concerned understanding what was concrete and particular to participants while maintaining their integrity (Eatough and Smith, 2018). I sought to analyse each participant's data in turn. I experienced tension in attempting to demonstrate individuals' unique voices while also seeking to represent the views of the leadership or pupil group in the interpretative account for each group. I desired to manage this tension by including extracts from each participant's responses, when relevant, in the themes underpinning the interpretative accounts. I could also indicate any alternative perspectives when possible (Chapters 6-9).

5.2 Research design and data collection methods

In this Section, I discuss the research design. I explain my views concerning children's engagement in research and consider the studies' context and duration. I set out the sampling

techniques, recruitment of participants and the stages of the research. Then I discuss data collection methods. I reflect on the pilot study's methodology, what I learned, and its influence on developing the research design, data-collection methods, and interpretative process. In Section 5.3, I consider how I addressed the ethical challenges.

5.2.1 Working with children in research

I viewed the pupils as experts in their own experiences. I promoted pupils' voices and ensured their engagement with research was educationally worthwhile. Historically children lacked a voice in the writings of sociologists, historians, and anthropologists, who relied on adults to account for children's experiences (Bucknall, 2014, p.71). There were issues when adults spoke on behalf of the pupils. They based their accounts on their values and interests (Fielding, 2004). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) acknowledged children's fundamental right to voice their opinions on matters affecting them. I sought to uphold this convention, attend to pupil welfare, and address concerns over the power imbalance between myself and the pupils as an adult researcher. To gain rich data and comprehend pupils' unique perspectives, I sought to share part of the research process with pupils. While pupils did not have complete control over the research design, data collection and analytical techniques, I aimed that they participate in the research process by collecting, analysing and discussing their data in response to a series of elicitation tasks. The research was done with the pupils rather than done to them (Kellet, 2010).

Models describing increasing levels of pupils' participation in tasks were useful in explaining the nature of pupils' engagement with the research. Hart's (1992) 'ladder of participation, which addressed power and partnership issues when working with pupils, ranked pupil participation in a ladder: the higher the rung of the ladder, the greater the level of engagement. I represent the types of engagement visually in at table (Figure 5.2a). I positioned pupils' participation in my research on the fifth rung of the ladder (Figure 5.2a): 'consulted and informed'. I designed the tasks and involved the pupils in making decisions about collecting data and its analysis. Fielding (2001) suggested four types of pupil engagement: students as data sources, active respondents, co-researchers, and researchers. The term co-researchers best-described pupils' role in my research. I identified the tasks I wanted to explore with the pupils. I involved them in collecting the data and co-constructing the meaning of their lived experiences in conversation with them.

Figure 5.2a: Table illustrating pupils’ participation in tasks (adapted from Hart’s (1992) ladder of participation)

Rung on the ladder	Description	Degrees of participation
8	Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults -Adults offer their expertise and ideas to the children for consideration	
7	Child-initiated and directed - Children lead the task, whilst the adults are available	
6	Adult-initiated, shared decisions – Adults initiate the task and share the decision-making with children concerning its implementation	
5	Consulted and informed – Adults design the task, consult and inform children about the process. The adult takes the children’s views seriously.	
4	Assigned but informed – Adults assign children tasks and inform them about the reasons for their involvement	
3	Tokenism – Children’s involvement is tokenistic	Non-participation
2	Decoration – Adults use children as decoration	
1	Manipulation – Adults manipulate children	

There were challenges in empowering pupil voices. Their perceptions of adult authority could prevent them from speaking openly about issues (Hill, 2005). Pupils could also be suggestible to adult persuasion or say what they think I wished to hear as an adult. As an outsider to the school, I believed the pupils would speak openly. The articulation of their experiences would be facilitated by me adapting the semi-structured interviews associated with IPA by using more creative data-collection methods. The use of interviews could restrict responses to the topics I raised, and their responses could depend on their comprehension of the questions asked and their expressive language skills. I designed two tasks to foster inclusion, pupils’ creative expression and wellbeing (Section 5.2.7).

5.2.2 The studies’ contexts

I conducted the pilot study in a small, rural Church of England primary school with an established long-serving female headteacher. Study 1 took place in a secondary Christian Free School within the first two years of the school opening. The headteacher was new to headship. The school had

approximately 200 pupils on roll and doubled in size in the second year. I conducted Study 2 in a primary Church Academy. The headteacher was well-established, with 17 years of headship at the school. The school was expanding its school roll. A new two-form entry junior department was opening the year after the data collection phase. In Studies 1 and 2, I employed the same data collection and analytical procedures with leaders and pupils. I improved on the methods used in the pilot study (Sections 5.2.7; 5.2.8). Given the time constraints to conduct the research and interpret in-depth the perspectives of leaders and pupils, I deemed a longitudinal study inappropriate.

5.2.3 Securing access to participants

Negotiating access to the research participants required preparation, diplomacy and building trust between myself as the researcher and the gatekeeper, each school's headteacher. Gatekeepers are those with the power to permit entry to undertake the research (Punch, 1994). Like Walford (2001, p.34), I viewed access as 'an incremental continuum'. First, I sought permission to enter the site, followed by building trusting relationships with participants. As a former headteacher, I predicted correctly that leaders continuously subject to scrutiny by Ofsted and the public would have concerns about the risks of attracting negative publicity. I was prepared to discuss this issue.

There was value in drawing on personal contacts and networks in negotiating access. In the Church Academy, a parent acquaintance persuaded the headteacher to consider the research. Access to the pilot study participants and Free School participants stemmed from my meeting with the headteachers at staff development sessions. However, personal contacts were not always fruitful. A governor I knew expressed excitement in the research but could not convince the headteacher to participate. Despite my making several efforts to contact the headteacher, I could not speak with him. The headteacher of another school initially agreed but withdrew before I collected data because of an Ofsted inspection's impending pressures. This action reinforced the importance of planning to undertake studies in more than one school in my research design.

Project briefing sheets and personalised letters sent to prospective leaders via the headteacher explained the research's aims and scope. Although required for ethical clearance purposes, they helped me gain access to participants as headteachers could identify the benefits for the school community. The headteachers of all three schools I accessed found the offer of a report on parents, pupils, staff, and governors' perspectives valuable for its contribution to school

development. During the research phase, leaders' feedback on the research process consistently reinforced the value of research in enabling participants to reflect on their educational practices. The Free School deputy headteacher sent an email outlining my report's usefulness in providing evidence for the school's Section 48 inspection.

5.2.4 Sampling of participants

To obtain rich, first-person accounts of participants' experiences, I employed a small homogenous sample of leaders and pupils in each school (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). The aim was to attend to the particularities of each participant before emphasising convergence and divergence of perspectives across the group during data analysis (Eatough and Smith, 2018). The leaders and pupils were separate samples in each study. I analysed each data set separately and included their views in different interpretative accounts.

The original research design included exploring a small group of parents' perspectives on education in each school. The parent sample was a homogenous, purposive sample. Purposive sampling, also called judgement sampling, entailed making deliberate choices of participants based on the qualities they possessed (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). While I interviewed and analysed parents' perspectives using focus group interviews, I decided to exclude the data as it did not add to the thesis's originality. Besides, not all parents in the Church Academy sample could attend the focus group due to the interview clashing with the parents' first-aid session. I included the protocol for conduction of the parent focus group in appendix A.

The leaders' sample was purposive. I selected the headteacher, deputy headteacher, chair of governors and middle leaders responsible for RE or collective worship because of their positional authorities in the school. Furthermore, I made a judgement concerning the significance of their leadership in developing Christian education ethos. In the pilot study, I included an interview with an additional leader, the school eco-team leader. Leaders and pupils emphasised the importance of Christian value stewardship to their school community. I sought to explore the importance of stewardship to the community in greater depth. The school, situated within a rural community, had won a national eco-school award for enabling pupils' exploration of environmental issues, including fracking and climate change. In the Church Academy, I selected the Year 6 teacher as an additional participant due to the significant role she played in Year 6 pupils' lives. At the Free School, I included the art and design leader as I established the Year 7 pupils placed value on art and design in their elicitation tasks. I summarise the constituent

sample of participants in each school in a table (Figure 5.2b). I include further information on the sample of participants for each school in Studies 1 and 2 in Chapters 6 to 8.

To recruit a homogenous group of pupils, I established inclusion criteria. Except for the pilot study, all pupils would have year group experiences in common. I selected Year 6 in the Church Academy as these pupils would have an overview of their experience at the school over several years. I sought Year 7 pupils in the Free School as this was the Year group attending the school when I started the data collection. Ideally, I sought a group of pupils of mixed gender, cultural diversity and achievement who would be willing to participate and feel confident working with peers and myself. Pupils who could articulate their unique experiences confidently were necessary for each study. I did not include pupils whom school leaders perceived would be anxious through their engagement or be at risk for child protection reasons. In the pilot study, I selected pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 with the intent of evaluating how pupils of different ages and potentially differing receptive and expressive language skills responded to the tasks.

While I established inclusion criteria for pupils' selection, the recruitment strategy for pupils and parents might have introduced bias into the samples. By discussing the sampling and asking a specified school leader to assist me in recruiting the parents and pupils, the leader may have nominated participants who might present the school positively. In hindsight, greater rigour might have resulted from me visiting the classes and talking to groups of parents, explaining the tasks, and recruiting the pupils myself. However, I did provide the research information letters to the school leader to assist with the recruitment (Appendix A).

Employing such a sampling strategy ensured that the knowledge generated was tentative and specific to the sample group. I selected each participant for their capacity to provide rich accounts of their perspectives. I intended that the sample was not representative of all leaders and pupils in each school, and an alternative sample could have produced different data. I recognise that in study 2, I had an imbalance in the gender mix in the pupil group. I did not plan this. I recognised the interpretative account, therefore, emphasised the voice of male pupils.

Figure 5.2b: Table detailing the number and types of participants I employed in each study

Type of participant	Pilot Study: Number of participants in the Church School (14)	Study 1: Number of participants in the Free School (13)	Study 2: Number of participants in the Church Academy (14)
Leaders	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher (female) • Eco-school leader (female) • RE leader (female) • Chair of the governing body (female) 	5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher (male) • Deputy headteacher and music and inclusion leader (male) • Chair of governing body/Trust (male) • Art and design technology leader (male) • Collective worship, RE and humanities leader (female) 	6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher (male) • Deputy headteacher (male) • Chair of the governing body (female) • RE leader (female) • Collective worship leader, member of the senior leadership team (SLT) (female) • KS2 Leader, Year 6 teacher and member of SLT (female)
Pupils	6 pupils (Year 1 – 6)	4 pupils (Year 7)	6 pupils (Year 6)
Parents	4 (all females)	4 (all females)	2 (all females)

5.2.5 Data collection methods

I employed two main data-collection methods in each study:

- Individual interviews with school leaders
- Elicitation tasks and group discussions with pupils

5.2.6 Interviews

Typically, IPA researchers employ semi-structured interviews, which requires the preparation of questions to guide the discussion. I favoured interviews with school leaders that were more unstructured than semi-structured. The reason was to enable participants to provide rich

reflective accounts of experiences of importance to them. I used prompt sheets that specified topics for discussion (Appendix B) but was open to unexpected issues introduced by participants. An example was enabling the Church Academy headteacher to express his views about the SIAMS process, which appeared to significantly influence leaders' development of Christian education ethos (Chapter 8). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009, p.58) suggested that in IPA interviews, participants should have every leeway to take the interview 'to the thing itself', being the expert on the phenomenon of interest.

Similarly, Eatough and Smith (2018, p.196) argued that a researcher should treat participants as the 'experiential experts' when seeking to understand their perspectives. Structured interviews with pre-determined questions were thus inappropriate. Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008, p.217) advised that schedules can form a sound basis for discussion without prescription and should not limit or override the participant's expressed interests. Preparing appropriate topics for discussion enabled me to be a sensitive, empathetic, and responsive listener.

I conducted individual, face-to-face interviews on school premises in spaces chosen by the participants to assure comfort and privacy. Each lasted between 30 and 70 minutes. With the consent of participants, I audio-recorded all interviews on a portable digital recording device. I transferred the recordings to a work computer and anonymised each file to promote data security.

5.2.7 Pupil elicitation tasks

To enable pupils to articulate their educational experiences with clarity and to foster high-quality researcher-participant interactions, I designed a photo-elicitation task and a series of three 'draw and write tasks' (DWTs). The DWTs explored these aspects:

- a. What it was like to be a pupil at the school;
- b. What made their school special; and
- c. What they would like to achieve, which would make their school proud of them.

Pupils undertook individual DWTs in a group context. I explained what each task entailed and invited them to ask questions to clarify their understanding. In thinking about what made their school special to them, I explained that this might include aspects that were important to them personally, appealed to them, or they perceived to be distinctive. On completion, pupils shared and discussed their tasks with the others in the group. I could ask questions of each pupil during the group and invited other pupils to comment or ask questions of each other. Each session in

Studies 1 and 2 lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were audio-recorded on a portable recording device.

I based the DWTs on the approach Williams, Wetton and Moon (1989) used to investigate children's perceptions of what made them and kept them healthy. I presented each pupil's response to the DWTs for the two studies in appendix I. I was confident that the draw-and-write tasks would yield quality data. I used such tasks to explore children's conceptions of different phenomena in schools, such as their bullying experiences during national anti-bullying weeks and how they perceived themselves as learners. Furthermore, I gained good responses from pupils in the pilot study. I made minor modifications to the tasks used in the pilot study to promote the pupils' engagement in analysing their data (Section 5.2.10). I introduced a diamond nine analysis into the photo-elicitation task so that pupils could analyse nine photographs, which replaced their exploration of four photographs in the pilot. I also extended the time I spent in conversation with pupils in Studies 1 and 2.

The photo-elicitation task required pupils to photograph what they valued most about their school using a digital camera when taking me on a tour of the school. For practical purposes, and to minimise disruption to school activities, I split the pupil group into two sub-groups to take the photographs. A group discussion followed this activity when pupils presented their findings. The pupils analysed their data. They reviewed all the photographs taken, selected nine to illustrate what they valued most about the school and wrote captions for each photo. They arranged the photographs in a diamond nine shape to prioritise their significance. Captioning provided insight into what pupils wished to communicate about the photographs and reasons for taking them (Derbyshire, MacDougall, and Schiller, 2005). Digital photography was advantageous because pupils gained instant access for purposes of analysis.

The overall strategy for data collection resembled the 'Mosaic approach' devised by Clark and Moss (2001, 2005). Clark and Moss (2005) used photo-elicitation alongside their observations of and interviews with children to gain new insights into young children's views of their early childhood environments. Photo-elicitation has grown in popularity as a means of facilitating the pupil's voice. Newman, Woodcock and Dunham (2011, p.74) used photographs with pupils aged between 10 and 11 years and follow-up interviews to understand their stories about places they considered significant at school. Similarly, Jorgenson and Sullivan (2010) invited pupils to photograph themselves and family members working with technology at home. They discussed what the images meant to pupils to draw out family-technology relationships from their perspectives. In Chapter 3, I discussed how Hemming (2017) engaged pupils in making a group

collage of their school to investigate their understandings of school values and religious practices. The researchers in these studies emphasised the importance of children communicating the meaning behind their visual data. Also, I concluded from the review of research into Christian education ethos in Chapter 3 that few studies provided rich insights into pupils' experiences of the Christian ethos created by leaders (Section 5.3). The use of creative data-collection methods to maximise pupil participants' voices in data collection and analysis could provide an original aspect to research in the field.

There were differences in pupils' engagement with the DWTs across the samples. The Year 7 Free School pupils completed the tasks studiously and were more eager to explain their drawings to the group. In contrast, the pilot sample pupils and the Church Academy sample talked as they drew. They described their drawings' distinctive features, provided narratives about what was happening in their pictures, or commented on each other's drawings as they proceeded. The maturity and work ethic of the Year 7 pupils or the location for task completion may have contributed to their quiet way of working. We used the headteacher's office in his absence as the only available free space in the school. These pupils were noticeably more talkative and at ease when discussing the photo-elicitation tasks in an area more familiar to them.

The photo-elicitation tasks raised ethical issues concerning pupil anonymity and data protection. Pupils took photographs in a public space, including people other than research participants. This presented issues concerning the ownership of images, their potential use in the thesis, subsequent publications, and publication rights. Gaining everyone's permission in the photos for publication, the photographers and the school could prove problematic. I decided, therefore, to exclude photographs from the thesis to protect pupil and school anonymity. This decision did not negatively impact the research as the pupils' interpretations of the pictures were of value in the analysis. By accompanying pupils on the school tour, I could ensure people consented to be in the photographs and understood the task's purpose. Staff and pupils were willing to be photographed. Teachers allowed pupils access to their rooms, which was indicative of the supportive ethos and mutual respect amongst staff and pupils in all schools.

5.2.8 Summary of the data collected in each school

I undertook unstructured observations of pupil participants engaging in school practices to contextualise the findings and deepen my interpretation of participants' experiences. Examples included lessons, break times, and collective worships.

Using Gold’s (1958) classification for the observer's role, as either complete participant, participant-as-observer, observer-as-participant and complete observer, my role fluctuated between complete observer and observer-as-participant. My presence was known to the community. I participated in collective worship as participant-observer. When observing lessons, I gained the consent of the teachers. I placed them at ease by explaining that I was not judging the teaching quality but was interested in understanding pupils’ experiences of their education. In two cases, I agreed to circulate and engage as a participant-observer to enable the teachers to feel more comfortable. I aimed to be as unobtrusive as possible. I observed pupils during their breaks from the side of the playground. I made notes during or as soon after the observations as possible, such as after collective worships when I was a participant-observer. I recorded these in a research journal. I separated descriptive and reflexive comments.

In the physical environment, I observed aspects pupils had shown me or photographed on the tours of the school. These included displays of school values, learning habits, school events, presentations of pupil learning and reward systems.

When preparing to visit a school, I consulted secondary source materials. The DfE website provided information about the Church Academy’s performance. The school websites provided access to policies, such as the behaviour policy, Ofsted and SIAMS reports discussed at interview, school values and mission statements. I requested access to policies or curriculum plans participants shared or discussed at the interview from the participants and noted these down in the research journal.

Figure 5.2c Table providing a summary of the data collection in each school

Data collection methods	Pilot School	Free School	Church Academy
Interviews with leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parent focus group	One	One	One
Pupil elicitation tasks: Three draw-and-write tasks Pupil tour and photo-elicitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One session • In pairs (one session with each pair) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One session • Three sessions (two sub-groups and one together) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One session • Three sessions (two sub-groups and one together)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch up discussion in the new school year and review the data 	
Observations (field notes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One collective worship • One RE lesson • Lunch breaks and school routines • School eco-team meeting with pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One collective worship • One form time • One DT lesson • Lunch breaks and school routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two collective workshops • Lunch, breaks, school routines • Two Year 6 lessons (English and mathematics) • Reception class lesson (RE)
Documentary evidence was used to deepen my interpretation of participant perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website • Displays of pupil learning outcomes/values • Policies: RE • Examples of pupil learning outcomes in RE • Previous Ofsted and SIAMS report • Local Church magazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website • School improvement plan • Founders plan for the school: School's educational brief • Displays of pupil learning outcomes/values • Examples of planning for collective worship and RE • Pupil newsletter • Newspaper reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website • Displays of pupil learning outcomes/values • Policies: RE, PSHE • Examples of pupil learning outcomes in RE • Ofsted and SIAMS reports • Local Church magazines

5.2.9 Stages in the data collection processes

I completed the data collection in three phases.

Stage 1 (April 2014 - end of June 2014)

I piloted interviews with leaders and the elicitation tasks with pupils in the Church primary school.

Stage 2 (May 2014 – end of March 2015)

I interviewed leaders' and engaged pupils in the elicitation tasks in the Christian Free School. The pilot interviews overlapped with those starting at the Free School. However, I judged there were benefits of engaging the Free School leaders in the research while they were in their first year of the school opening. I could investigate the decisions leaders made about the vision for a new school and the means by which leaders sought to establish the school's education ethos.

Stage 3: Study 2 (January 2015 – end of July 2015)

I interviewed leaders and engaged pupils in the elicitation tasks in the Church Academy. Within each study, I conducted the pupils' tasks early in the research to avoid my interactions with the headteacher from influencing my interactions with pupils. In the second interview held with the headteacher, I shared the pupils' data to determine the headteacher's interpretation of the data within the context of the school, which provided another layer of understanding.

5.2.10 Learning from the pilot study

In this sub-section, I discuss the pilot study: its methodology, data collection and analysis, what I learned and its place in informing the development of the thesis.

Pilot study methodology

The pilot study took place in a smaller than average-sized rural Church of England primary school. The school had 100 pupils on roll between 3 and 11 years of age. The pupils' ethnicity was predominantly British White. I employed an IPA methodology but encompassed a pluralistic approach to data collection. I anticipated that such an approach could provide a more holistic insight into participants' lived experiences than interviews alone. I piloted pupil elicitation tasks, one-to-one interviews with school leaders, and a focus group with parents. I observed the interactions between leaders and pupils using participant observation within the school. The generation of a wealth of data led me to evaluate the contribution of each data-collection method to my interpretation of participants' lived experiences.

Learning from the interviews with school leaders

During the pilot study, I trialled differing approaches to interviewing leaders and discussion topics, which helped me gain confidence and expertise in interviewing. I learned to customise interviews with leaders' roles and the school's context. I interviewed four leaders. I summarise their details in Figure 5.2d.

Figure 5.2d: Table providing information about the leaders (Pilot School)

Position	Gender	Religiosity as described by the leader	Time in post
Headteacher	Female	Communicant member of the Church of England	8 years
Eco-school team leader/KS2 teacher/Science leader	Female	Church of England	4 years
Chair of Governors/ Foundation Governor	Female	Church of England	3 years
RE Leader/Early Years Leader	Female	Communicant member of the Church of England	11 years

I found more open-ended schedules enabled the collection of leaders' aspirations, desires, feelings, and belief systems. They also enabled leaders to discuss their challenges in leading education ethos development, share their achievements and reflect on the meaning of the school's values and practices. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) argued a skilful interviewer guided participants towards specific themes without steering their opinions. I followed Smith and Osborn's (2003) advice on the framing of questions. I sought to exclude leading questions and jargon. Introductory questions invited leaders to describe their roles, which I found helped put them at ease. Following any descriptive responses, I used prompts, analytical and probing questions, which were useful in eliciting further detail or clarifying any points made. I included evaluative questions to elicit emotional responses to situations, critical incidents, or issues they raised.

I appreciated how the skills, sensitivity, and quality of the researcher and participants' interactions determined the quality of the data and insights gained into participant lifeworlds

(Brinkman and Kvale, 2005, p. 174). With practice, I found I improved my skills, sensitivity, and confidence as an interviewer. To fully comprehend the meaning of what was said, I observed and recorded facial expressions and bodily gestures in a research journal (Brinkman and Kvale, 2005, p.175).

A tension I encountered when interviewing leaders concerned making decisions about how much information to disclose about myself to enable the participant to bring to life aspects of their leadership. My initial approach was to maintain a more objective stance and not to comment on aspects I empathised with as a former headteacher. I learned acknowledgement of their feelings or situation helped build rapport and establish trust. I found I could share in the delight of their achievements without being too judgemental. I wanted participants to express their feelings, motivations, and goals on their terms. On occasions, I disclosed more personal aspects after the interview in response to questions about the research, which indicated the value of informal extended discussions and the need to record observations in a diary.

I held two interviews with the headteacher. The second interview was not initially part of the research design. It happened due to the first interview having to finish earlier than expected. I could explore issues covered in the first interview in greater depth. The headteacher also appeared to be more relaxed due to the development of a trusting researcher-participant relationship. I built the second interview with the headteacher into the research design for Studies 1 and 2. I used an incentive to promote the headteacher's engagement, the opportunity to view the outcomes of the pupils' tasks.

I used simple inductive thematic analysis to analyse the leaders' data in the pilot case study. I read each participant's transcript and created codes for terms and phrases that appeared essential to individuals. I collated the codes and extracts across the participant's group and electronically documented these in a chart that I designed in Excel. I clustered codes to derive the overarching themes. The analysis enabled me to reflect on the types of language leaders used to describe their leadership experiences and aspects of importance to them in developing the school's Christian education ethos.

I include a table of themes for the leadership group (Figure 5.2e). The themes provided an overview of the group's experience of developing and implementing a Christian vision for education ethos in a school graded as 'outstanding' in SIAMS.

Figure 5.2e: Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Pilot School leadership group

The vision	Challenges in developing and implementing the vision	Strategies for implementing the vision
Being a worshipping Christian community	Raising the profile of RE and the place of Christianity within RE	Everyone participates in collective worship
Building a sense of community	Promoting engagement and reflection in worship	All teachers teach RE as a core subject
Achieving more to sustain 'outstanding' in SIAMS	Addressing tensions between academic excellence and inclusion	Building partnerships with the local community, church, and diocese
Children living their lives through Christian values	Teaching children the language of spirituality	Embedding school values in curriculum and school practices

The findings opened up potential lines of inquiry for Studies 1 and 2, including the importance of the headteacher's values and personal faith affiliation in school education ethos development. The findings also highlighted the importance of the school's unique context on education ethos development. I became interested in the headteacher's challenges and effective strategies for embedding a Christian school education ethos. Succeeding at Ofsted and SIAMS were essential to the headteacher and chair of governors. Leaders, however, thought that the next SIAMS would be a more rigorous process due to changes in the inspection criteria. Sustaining an 'outstanding' grade and demonstrating excellence would be a central challenge.

The headteacher and RE leader, both committed Anglicans, took their faith and the faith foundation of the school seriously in their school leadership, teaching and service roles. They spoke comfortably about the school values as representing Christian values. The headteacher appeared to possess solid Christian literacy. She designed pedagogical approaches for the teaching of Christianity within RE, which she trialled and promoted amongst schools within the local diocese. The headteacher placed prime importance on improving the status and quality of RE, collective worship, and prayer within the school to develop the school's Christian education ethos. Leaders described the governing body as supportive of the school's ethos. However, the headteacher indicated the need to resolve the tension between high expectations for an inclusive ethos and academic excellence. I was interested in leaders' views about any tensions

they experienced in developing an ethos focused on high academic achievement and inclusion in Studies 1 and 2.

Within RE, the headteacher sought to strengthen pupils' comprehension of Christianity as a religion and devoted more time to exploring Christianity. The attention leaders placed on RE and collective worship in education ethos development indicated their responsiveness to the Church's expectations to put Christianity at the heart of the curriculum and pupils' educational experiences (Chadwick, 2012) (Chapter 3). The headteacher ensured all teachers, including those on job-share appointments, taught RE. They could share ownership of this critical subject's development and work collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE.

The headteacher perceived collective worship contributed to the school's Christian distinctiveness. She sought to make worship a more reflective and participatory experience for pupils. She expected all staff to attend collective worship, despite staff members having varied religiosities and sought to lead by example in modelling active reflection. She acknowledged improvements in the teaching of RE and delivery of collective worship but was tough on her achievements. She recognised the importance of continuously maintaining high standards in RE and collective worship. A central challenge concerned teaching the pupils the language of spirituality. She acknowledged that pupils could describe what they valued but were less successful in expressing why they valued things and the differences made to their lives and those of others.

Leaders aimed to embed five school values in all school practices. These would enable community members to understand what the community stood for. These values were: belonging, stewardship, forgiveness, compassion, and inspiration. The RE leader perceived they contributed to the school's Christian distinctiveness. Teachers were beginning to explore the values through big questions and a Christian approach to teaching and learning called *What if Learning* (see Section 3.2.4). The RE leader considered the staff would work towards embedding this approach in their teaching throughout the curriculum. The potential use of *What if Learning* became an aspect of inquiry in Studies 1 and 2. A key strategy for communicating the values was a school values display positioned in the hall, a communal area accessed by parents, staff, and community playgroup.

Since taking up the position of headteacher eight years ago, the headteacher worked tirelessly to develop open, hospitable relationships between the school, local community and the local church. She learned that the villagers felt the school did not belong to them, with over 70% of

pupils attending the school from outside the village. The headteacher, parent group and chair of the governing body considered the headteacher had experienced success in promoting the school's value to the local community.

Learning from the elicitation tasks undertaken with pupils

The tasks worked effectively with a small group of six participants. I outline the pupil participants' details in Figure 5.2f. I learned about the meaning pupils attributed to school practices, artefacts, spaces within the school, and the people they valued in their education. Pupils as young as six years of age could successfully capture the importance and meaning of the school values and Christian practices to the school community in their tasks. The tasks also provided insights into their emotional states, their interpretations of the school's atmosphere or climate, and the types of interactions they experienced with staff and peers. These insights could have been hard to elicit using other data-collection methods. The photo-elicitation captions enabled pupils to reflect on their reason for taking the photographs and critically convey what mattered most to them in the school. Figure 5.2g outlines the two superordinate themes and the constituent themes derived from the analysis of the pupil tasks.

Figure 5.2f: Table providing information about the pupil participants (Pilot School)

Name	Gender	Declared religiosity	Year group
Alex	Male	Christian	Year 6
Evie	Female	Christian	Year 5
Liam	Male	Believed in God	Year 4
Harry	Male	Christian	Year 4
Wilfred	Male	Believed in God	Year 3
Tessa	Female	Believed in God	Year 1

Figure 5.2g: Table demonstrating the two superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Pilot School pupil group

Me at school	School practices
How I feel at school	Collective worship every morning
Friends, helpers, and special people	Playtimes
Doing well and pleasing my teacher	The eco-code – everything we need to do to save the world and use less electricity
	Growing plants, poly-tunnels and caring for animals
	Playing music

Pupils were highly attentive to the use of Christian artefacts in their school’s physical environment and collective worship. Three pupils drew their experiences of attending collective worship in the draw-and-write tasks as an aspect that made their school unique. I include two examples of these by Evie and Alex (Figure 5.2h). Alex depicted the horseshoe seating arrangement used. Leaders referred to this as family grouping or pupils sitting in houses. Alex, Evie, and Liam all drew the collective worship table, which helped them be reflective. Evie drew a cross, candle and leaves on the table. Through attending school worship, I could comprehend the importance of the worship table and the seating arrangements in pupils’ experiences.

Evie photographed the cross as an aspect she valued in her school in the photo-elicitation task. She was aware that every room in the school had a cross and that some crosses had Jesus on them. These reminded her of Jesus and his crucifixion. They also helped her remember how important Jesus was in her life and that Jesus was ‘always there for us’ (Evie). She photographed a collage she was making of ‘God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Father’ for display purposes. She valued this artwork as it helped her think about God’s importance in her life.

Pupils emphasised the importance of environmental education and outdoor learning at school. They connected this to the school’s Christian value of ‘stewardship’. Harry creatively captured the school’s ‘big green finger’ in his draw-and-write task (Figure 5i). Discussion of his picture revealed how he viewed the school’s eco-school status as important to the school community. He also discussed his responsibility for caring for the school environment and the planet. Evie indicated that she also valued her role in stewardship. She photographed the school eco-code on the school notice board as an aspect of value to the school community. Her caption stated, ‘It tells you everything you have to do to save the world and use less electricity’.

The language of 'unique' was challenging for pupils to comprehend in the pilot study. In addition, the change focused pupils' reflections on their current school rather than making demands on them to consider other schools. All but one pupil in the pilot study had not experienced education at another school.

I simplified the third DWT. In the pilot study, I phrased DWT3 'something I want to achieve when I leave my school that would make my school proud really proud of me'. I changed the phrasing to 'something I would like to achieve that would make my school really proud of me'. The pilot study data analysis indicated that young pupils' current aspirations were more insightful than references to their potential future careers. For example, pupils' tasks showed their desire to achieve academically or comply with their teacher's instructions. Alex drew himself, gaining recognition for working quietly. Tessa illustrated herself gaining recognition for 'doing exactly what the teacher says.' I sought to encourage participants to focus on their current aspirations rather than make projections about their futures.

Through using photographs, captions and DWTs, pupils could exercise some control over the interview's agenda. The tasks excited pupils of all ages. They were eager to discuss their responses and answer questions posed by other pupils and me. The types of comments or questions the pupils asked each other provided insights into aspects that interested them in their education. Analysis of the pilot study data indicated that I should increase my time with the pupils in Studies 1 and 2 to gain rich insights into their interpretations of the data. In addition, I should encourage interactions between pupils. I adjusted the research design. The photo-elicitation activity's success led me to invite headteachers to undertake this task in Studies 1 and 2 to enable me to gain insights into what they valued in their schools.

In Studies 1 and 2, pupils selected, analysed and shared nine photographs instead of four in the pilot to facilitate discussion of a range of aspects they valued in their schools. Analysis of all the pilot study photographs indicated six broad categories across the group. The first three represented religious artefacts, celebratory artefacts, and school artefacts such as books and the school bell. The fourth category represented friends, helpers, and people that were special to them. The fifth category was related to pupils experiencing a sense of community. The photographs included the village green, school playground, and friendship bench. The final category represented the school value stewardship. The pictures showed the school eco-code, poly-tunnels used to grow plants, harvested produce, individual plants pupils tended, and animals they looked after. I was left curious about the value pupils placed on some photographs not explored in depth.

By comparing the data sets of pupils and leaders, I investigated the relationship between leaders' aspirations for education ethos and pupils' experiences of the school's ethos. The caring relationships leaders sought to develop amongst pupils, their stewardship of the planet, and the value leaders placed on Christian practices within the community were evident in the pupils' tasks. Pupils generally described themselves as feeling happy at school and well looked after. However, the smallness of the school left two pupils experiencing mixed emotions. One pupil drew himself feeling exposed on occasions with no place to hide when he got told off. Another pupil experienced a sense of embarrassment when he felt unable to adequately articulate his response to a question directed at him in collective worship.

I adopted Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time model of human development to make sense of the different influences on pupils' educational experiences. I explained this in Section 4.1. The nature of the relationship between leaders' aspirational education ethos and the school ethos experienced by pupils became a significant aspect for investigation in this thesis. I built-in time to share the pupils' tasks with headteachers during the second interview in Studies 1 and 2 as the headteacher in the pilot study was so interested in viewing the findings. I sought to find out how the headteachers in both studies reacted to and made sense of their pupils' perspectives.

5.3 Ethical issues

I underpinned the research with a robust ethical code to prevent participants from experiencing any potential distress or harm. I found that BERA (2011 and 2018) guidelines, relevant data protection legislation and Canterbury Christ Church University's ethics procedures were helpful. Before starting the research, the University Ethics Committee granted the research full ethical clearance. The feedback was that the application was thorough and required no amendments. I consider the ethical challenges faced and how I addressed them. Through researcher reflexivity, I monitored these issues throughout the research process.

Informed consent

I gained voluntary, informed consent from all research participants. I made all participants aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. The project information sheet provided details of the nature, purpose, and scope of the study. It also identified the role of participants. It explained my access to the data, its use in the research and its safe storage. Participants could read the information and ask any questions before consenting to engage. The headteachers shared the project's focus and information sheets in staff briefings. In letters customised for

parents, I communicated the purpose of interview/pupil tasks and topics. (See Appendix A for copies of letters, project information sheet, and consent forms).

The headteacher provided written consent for my access to the school and participants. Leaders provided written consent for interviews and any lesson observations undertaken. All parents or carers with parental responsibility provided written consent for their children's participation in recognition of pupils' legal status as dependents and their potential vulnerability. Gaining pupils' informed consent was a fundamental right of all pupils irrespective of age and ability (Kellet, 2010), but it was challenging. Alderson (2104) recommended that researchers take time to assess each pupil's competence, experience, and confidence to provide consent. I established that all pupils were confident to provide their consent at the start of each research encounter. All children provided informed consent. However, I respected one child's decision not to participate in the Free School without meeting her, even though her parents had provided written consent for her participation. Pupils also consented to the headteacher viewing their tasks. No participants withdrew from the studies once they commenced.

Care of participants

Before I began data collection, I risk-assessed participants' engagement with the research. Risks to professionals engaging in research could be severe and include potential breakdowns in workplace relations, loss of jobs or reputation and legal risks (Coady, 2010). Emotional harm to participants, such as anxiety, embarrassment, depression, mistrust, or loss of self-esteem, could be hard to identify and require researcher reflexivity during researcher-participant interactions (Kellet, 2010). I was mindful of the need to ensure the safeguarding needs of pupils. I put measures to support pupils who might experience any discomfort or anxiety to safeguard their wellbeing.

The types of topics for discussion were unlikely to cause distress, embarrassment, or discomfort. However, I made participants aware they could decline to answer questions if they had reservations. Mindful of the status differential between the pupils and myself, I sought to put pupils at ease and minimise a feeling of obligation or pressure to participate.

Specific issues the pupils raised required a sensitive response. While one pupil shared his sadness about the loss of a grandparent, others spoke openly about their experiences of bullying. I avoided asking questions that might cause children anxiety or detrimentally influence their relationships with peers. Monitoring pupil gestures and silences helped ensure they did not experience discomfort (Roberts-Holmes, 2018). I confirmed the pupils felt supported

concerning any bullying issues raised and were confident of their resolution. Before the photo-elicitation task, one child expressed anxiety about competing in his first chess match after school. It was necessary to discuss his feelings and gain the reassurance that he still wished to participate.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data protection

Taking measures to enable the anonymity of schools and participants was a challenge but necessary. As far as possible, I sought to protect participants' privacy and prevent them from experiencing potential harm. To avoid identifying schools and participants, I used pseudonyms for pupils, referred to leaders by their roles and referred to the schools as the Church Academy and Free School. I discussed specific issues associated with the photo-elicitation tasks, which produced photographs of the school and community members in Section 5.2.8. In the report I prepared for each headteacher, I presented the findings for the group of school leaders, parents, and pupils. I excluded any reference to the leaders' roles and anonymised all quotations. I reassured participants about safe and secure data storage to ensure confidentiality (BERA, 2011 and 2018).

When working with children, there may be occasions when confidentiality needs breaching to prevent them from experiencing significant harm, such as children disclosing abuse (Coady, 2010, p. 77). While I did not experience any such issues, I planned to report any concerns to the headteacher as the Child Protection Officer. I had full Disclosure and Barring Service clearance. Headteachers permitted me to interview pupils without another adult being present, indicative of the trust they placed in me as a researcher.

5.4 Assessing and addressing quality in the research

A range of guidelines exists for assessing quality in qualitative research (Smith Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Yardley, 2000; Guba, 2004). Yardley (2000), in Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.180), offered four broad criteria for establishing and assessing quality in qualitative research: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) recommended applying this framework to IPA studies. In this Section, I consider the extent to which the research met these criteria. I used Guba's (1998) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to help establish trustworthiness.

Sensitivity to context

Sensitivity to context requires attendance to the nature of the research context and existing literature on the phenomenon and participants (Yardley, 2000). In Chapters 2 and 3, I demonstrated sensitivity to context by discussing the literature used to inform the study. During data collection, I attended to ethical issues, matters of informed consent and placing participants at ease to facilitate dialogue, demonstrate empathy and build trust (Kacprzak, 2017). In the first encounter with pupils, I used an ice-breaking activity and inclusive, multi-model data-collection methods with pupils to build rapport, encourage engagement and put them at their ease. I invited pupils to talk about a hobby or personal interest, beginning by sharing my interests in art.

I was aware of the power imbalance between myself and the participants. I sought to reduce this by holding interviews with leaders at their choice of venue. I enabled pupils to control the interview agenda by using their task outcomes to guide the group discussions. In Chapters 6 and 9, I analysed participants' perspectives and related them to the socio-political context and previous literature in the field. My headship experience, together with my comprehension of the literature on school leadership and the nature of Christian education ethos (Chapters 2 and 3), helped me make sense of the issues or challenges leaders faced in their contexts.

Commitment and rigour

Commitment is achievable through the researcher's in-depth engagement with the phenomenon studied and competence development in the methods used (Yardley, 2000). The data-collection techniques I used demonstrated commitment to an IPA methodology, which connects with sensitivity in context. I analysed their transcripts or tasks in-depth to determine the themes in the analysis and to learn about individual participants (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Through studying what constitutes effective data-collection procedures and undertaking a substantive pilot study, I developed my confidence and expertise as a researcher and refined the data-collection procedures.

Rigour concerns the study's thoroughness, which relies on the sample's appropriateness to address the research questions, quality procedures, and completeness in data analysis (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p.181). While I recruited a small sample of participants I considered spoke knowledgeably, confidently, and willingly about their experiences, I acknowledged above (Section 5.2.4) that including leaders in recruiting pupils may have introduced bias into the research.

To gain in-depth accounts of their experiences, I used questions to probe participants' responses. A second interview with each headteacher enabled further exploration of issues arising in the first interview. Transcribing the interviews promoted familiarity with the data. I followed a dynamic, systematic, and iterative process to data analysis, which produced a nuanced analysis. Readers could learn about the generic themes underpinning all participants' lives (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). I provided relevant verbatim data extracts from various participants to support each theme in the group's interpretative account (Chapters 6 to 9).

Transparency and coherence

Rigour linked to transparency; readers needed information about the decisions guiding the research process, the conduct of the research and analytical procedures to appraise the interpretative process. I made explicit decisions informing the sampling of participants, choice of data-collection methods and construction of the tasks or interviews. I recorded the conditions in which I undertook the research and how the pilot study influenced the final procedures. I made notes about the research encounters in a research journal, which informed my interpretations of participants' perspectives. In writing-up the study, I adhered to the principles of IPA. I indicated in the narrative accounts whose perspectives I included in each theme. I exemplified individuals' voices in verbatim extracts to enable the comparison of participants' views (Kacprazak, 2017, p.57).

Impact and importance

Impact and importance required the study to present something interesting, meaningful, or valuable. In Chapter 3, I justified the need for research investigating leaders' experiences developing Christian education school ethos and pupils' experiences of their education in that ethos. The study has importance in the current educational context and personally engaged participants. A literature review in Chapter 3 indicated a shortage of publications on pupil perspectives of Christian education, which is an essential aspect of this thesis. In Chapters 6 and 8, I discussed leaders' challenges in embedding a Christian vision for education ethos in their unique contexts.

Ensuring trustworthiness in research

As well as using Yardley's (2000) criteria to inform the research design and evaluate the quality of the research, I used Guba and Lincoln's (1994) criteria for judging trustworthiness in research. It corresponded to criteria used to judge quality used in positivist studies (Guba (2004), cited in Shenton, 2004, p.64):

- a. Credibility (in preference to internal validity)
- b. Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)
- c. Dependability (in preference to reliability)
- d. Confirmability (in preference to objectivity)

Guba and Lincoln (2010) argued that ensuring credibility in research was critical in ensuring trustworthiness as it deals with the truth and accuracy of the analysis. In IPA, the emphasis is on the researcher interpreting participants' perspectives accurately and conveying the complexity of the phenomenon studied. In both studies, I employed the use of participant checking. All leaders received transcripts of the interviews to check for accuracy and provide feedback. With pupils, I asked questions to check what they were seeking to portray when viewing their task outcomes. On reflection, there was scope for improvement through building a more robust verification process into the research. I might have met leaders for a debrief and let them comment on the interpretations I made of their experiences before I completed the thesis write-up (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). I did, however, keep a research journal and engage in researcher reflexivity to ensure credibility. I documented my preconceptions and values and how they influenced the research process. Presentation of examples of my analysis to my supervision panel, PhD students and conference delegates enabled feedback on the transparency of my interpretation of the data. I found this was useful in challenging the plausibility and acceptability of my findings (Peat, Rodriquez, and Smith, 2019).

Transferability concerns the applicability of findings from one study to other contexts (Guba, 2004). In IPA studies, the findings are specific to the small sample of participants in a specified context. In each study, it was inappropriate to imply how the findings and conclusions might apply to leaders or pupils in other schools. However, I did seek to provide enough information about the contexts and phenomena investigated to enable readers to determine each study's relevance to their circumstances. Nevertheless, I appreciated the tension in providing a thick description of the context and participants. I purposely sought to reduce information to maintain anonymity.

Dependability concerned the extent to which the study could be repeated by other researchers and produce consistent findings. The information on the sampling, data collection and analytical methods provided a sufficient audit trail for other researchers to repeat the studies and track the themes' emergence (Section 5.5). In IPA, however, different researchers could interpret data differently and generate alternative themes, as they apply their preconceptions to the data-

analytical process. While structured interviews promote replication, flexible, more open-ended agendas tailored to participants' roles and maturity make replication problematic.

Confirmability concerned measuring the extent to which the researcher's interpretations were derived from the data (Shenton, 2004, p.72). In the interpretative accounts, I presented robust data utilising each participant's quotations to compare their perspectives. In Chapters 2 and 3, I set out my assumptions, values and beliefs about Christian education and leadership and their influence on the research design. Through keeping a research journal, I could include reflexive comments on how my thinking influenced the research. I noted any materials leaders presented during the interview to illustrate their leadership activities and perspectives. I listed these in Figure 5.2c.

5.5 Data Analysis

In this Section, I demonstrate how I analysed participants' experiences. I begin by providing an overview of the process for analysing the leaders' data. I explain how I analysed each leader's interview transcript separately and derived themes for each leader and the group of leaders. I present tables of the themes for leaders in Studies 1 and 2. I explain and exemplify the process for analysing the pupils' tasks and derive themes for the group. I present tables of themes for the pupil groups in Studies 1 and 2. In the summary Section, I reflect on the analytical methods used. I exclude the presentation of the parent focus group analysis as they did not contribute to the thesis's originality.

By moving from a descriptive to an interpretative stance, I sought to reveal the intentions and meanings of participants' experiences. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) encouraged healthy flexibility in analytical development as IPA does not have a single analytical method. IPA has a set of common principles and processes, including a commitment to understanding each participant's point of view. The processes include:

- Intense reflective engagement with data gained from each participant to fulfil IPA's ideographic commitment,
- Identification of inductive themes for each participant,
- The seeking of patterns across the participant group,
- Use of a whole-part-whole analysis, characteristic of the hermeneutic circle,
- Use of existing theory and concepts to further explore the data and produce a deeper level of interpretation.

To understand each part of every participant's experience, I looked at all the data. To understand the whole, I looked at all the parts (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). This process characterised the use of the hermeneutic circle. For example, I looked at the meaning of each task for each pupil separately and then returned to looking at each task as part of the complete data set. I identified relationships between different tasks. Furthermore, I reflected on each member's contribution to understanding the phenomenon from the perspective of the pupil or leadership group.

5.5.1 Analysis of interview transcripts

I used Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) framework for transcript analysis, starting with the headteacher's transcripts. During my research journey, I trialled analysis of the Free School leaders' data using NVivo 10. I found that the outcome was unsatisfactory. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's framework provided a more complex, fluid, iterative and multi-directional form of analysis. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) framework for analysis consists of 6 stages:

Stage 1: Reading and re-reading

The first stage entailed listening to the audio recording, reading the transcript several times, and interrogating the text. I annotated the transcript with my initial impressions of the rapport and tone of the interview. I noted questions about the text.

Stage 2: Initial noting

This second stage entailed a detailed exploration of the participant's transcript and annotating it with descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments. I highlighted words, phrases, or explanations emphasised by the participant while attempting to interpret their experience (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009, p.88). These included relationships, values, outcomes, events, and places that mattered to the participant. For example, the Free School headteacher used the metaphor '*Christianity the DNA of the school*' to emphasise his intention to put Christianity at the school's heart. I made conceptual comments, which reflected the meaning I made of what the participant said. In this example, I noted this was part of the headteacher's vision for Christian education. I looked beyond specific incidents to gain an overarching understanding of what was said. I illustrated this analysis using an interview extract with a Free School leader (Appendix C).

Stage 3: Identifying emergent themes

At this stage, with the research questions in mind, I reduced the transcript’s volume by producing concise statements, which captured essential elements of the text. Emergent themes reflected not only the participant’s original words but also thoughts concerning my interpretations. In some instances, I highlighted concise words or phrases for each Section, capturing the theme's meaning. For the Free School headteacher, the first emergent theme concerned the influence of the headteacher’s faith on his headship. (See Appendix D for an example list of emergent themes for the first interview with the Free School headteacher).

Stage 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

At this stage, I provided an overall structure to the analysis by looking for relationships and patterns across themes and organising them into clusters. I gave each cluster of emergent themes a name to create a range of subordinate themes. I then identified groups of superordinate themes and provided each with a name, which reflected the conceptual meaning of the subordinate themes in the group. I tabulated the superordinate and subordinate themes for each participant. Figure 5.5a represents an example table for the Free School headteacher.

Figure 5.5a: Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for the Free School headteacher

Creating a Christian education ethos which was new and different	Inspiring and influencing commitment to my vision	Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership	Frustrations of implementing What If Learning
The aspiration to create something new and better Education as social justice Christianity as the DNA of the school My duty as a Christian leader	Building stakeholder trust in myself as a headteacher and the school Influencing the development of, and commitment to school values What if Learning as the means of embedding	Managing tensions between excellence and Christian distinctiveness Striving for RE as a subject in its own right Managing parental perspectives on critical thinking	Frustration with the implementation of WIL Fear of failure Supporting staff in the use of WIL

	Christianity in school and classroom practices		
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Stage 5: Moving to the next case

I demonstrated commitment to ideography by analysing each transcript separately. I sought to bracket the headteacher’s emergent themes and be open to the emergence of new themes and subordinate themes for each participant. I repeated steps 1-4 for each participant.

Stage 6: Looking for patterns across participants

I identified any patterns and relationships across participants, which entailed looking at connections between the superordinate and subordinate themes for all participants in the data set. For example, I produced a table of superordinate and subordinate themes for each group. For example, I incorporated the subordinate theme for the headteacher’s ‘aspiration to create something new and better’ into the subordinate theme for the leadership group ‘beliefs and values underpinning the school vision’. I found the deputy headteacher and chair of governors shared the headteacher’s motivation and enthusiasm about establishing a Christian education ethos from scratch. Figure 5.5b represents the superordinate and subordinate themes for the Free School leaders’ group.

Figure 5.5b: Table demonstrating the superordinate themes and subordinate themes across the Free School leadership group

Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference	Inspiring commitment and building a community	Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership	Challenges of implementing What If Learning
Beliefs and values underpinning the school vision Education as social justice Christianity at the heart of the school	Embedding values in school and classroom practices Building a sense of community Importance of worship	Limits to leadership autonomy Tensions between excellence and Christian distinctiveness	Reflections on WIL Building staff knowledge and expertise

		Nature and purpose of RE	
		Managing parental perspectives on critical thinking	

I tabulated the presence of each superordinate and subordinate theme in each participant's data (figure 5.5c). Finally, I produced a table, which included transcript extracts from the group members for each subordinate theme. I referenced the line number in the transcript to refer back to it when writing the narrative account for the group. I selected quotations, which reflected the theme and for their capacity to enrich the narrative account. I present this table of themes with transcript extracts for Free School leaders in Appendix E.

Figure 5.5c: Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate theme in each school leaders' interview transcript (Free School):

Superordinate themes and subordinate themes	HT	DHT	CGB	DTL	REL	Present in over half the group
Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Beliefs and values underpinning the school vision	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Education as social justice (transformation of lives)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Christianity at the heart of the school	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Inspiring commitment and building a community	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Embedding school values in school and classroom practices	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Building a sense of community	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Importance of worship	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Limits to leadership autonomy	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Tensions between excellence and Christian distinctiveness	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Nature and purpose of RE	Y	N	N	N	Y	N

Managing parental perspectives on critical thinking	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Challenges of implementing <i>What If Learning (WIL)</i>	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Reflections on the use of WIL	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Building staff knowledge and expertise	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

5.5.2 Analysis of the Church Academy leaders' data

I present two tables to summarise my analysis of the data for the Church Academy leaders:

1. A table that shows the superordinate and subordinate themes for the group (Figure 5.5d).
2. A table which indicates the representation of the themes within the leadership group (Figure 5.5e).

I include a table of themes for the group with examples of transcript extracts in Appendix F.

Figure 5.5d: Table showing the superordinate themes and subordinate themes for Church Academy school leaders

High standards with a caring Christian ethos	Embedding a Christian way of living	Critical incident: Managing and responding to SIAMS
Putting children first	An eye on everything that's worth doing	Feeling aggrieved about SIAMS
Doing our best for others	Staff as role-models	Finding out what Christian distinctiveness means
Becoming an outstanding school	Building relational trust	Matters of faith, RE and collective worship
Serving parents and the community	Living our lives through values	
Promoting happiness	Creative ways of learning	
Educating the whole child		

Figure 5.5e: Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate themes in each leader’s interview transcript (Church Academy)

Superordinate themes and subordinate themes	HT	DHT	CWL	REL	ML	CGB	Present in over half the group
High standards with a caring Christian ethos	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doing our best for others	X	X	X			X	
Educating the whole child	X	X	X	X	X		X
Putting children first	X		X				
Serving parents and the community	X	X		X	X	X	X
Promoting happiness	X		X	X	X	X	X
Becoming an outstanding school	X	X			X	X	X
Embedding a Christian way of living	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Building relational trust	X	X			X		X
Living our lives through values	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
An eye on everything that’s worth doing	X		X	X			X
Staff as role-models	X	X	X	X		X	X
Creative ways of learning	X	X	X	X	X		X
Critical incident: managing and responding to SIAMS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feeling aggrieved about SIAMS	X	X	X	X		X	X
Matters of faith, RE and worship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finding out what Christian distinctiveness means	X		X	X	X	X	X

5.5.3 Analysis of pupils’ perspectives of their education

In this sub-section, I explain the analytical process for pupils’ data. I followed the principles of IPA. I progressed from analysing each pupil’s data to searching for patterns and connections across the pupil group. I used Freeman and Mathison (2009) framework to interpret visual

images to explore the tasks from different perspectives. I found this process worked well in the pilot study, and the framework did not require any changes for Studies 1 and 2. Freeman and Mathison suggested focusing on the subject matter, image creation and response of the viewers. All three modes of analysis were relevant as pupils shared and discussed their tasks in the peer group discussions. The notes I made for each task assisted with the formation of the themes for each pupil. I noted down any differences between pupils. In Chapters 7 and 9, I present the interpretative accounts for the pupil groups.

Stage 1: Analysis of the DWTs

I analysed each DWT using the range of readings. I recorded relevant observations and interpretative comments in a DWT analytical table for each pupil for each task in line with IPA. Through listening to the audio recording and interrogating the transcripts for the discussion of the DWTs, I could add depth and breadth to pupils' interpretation of their own experiences. I analysed emergent themes for each child, which I recorded at the base of each table. I looked for possible recurrence of the themes across each pupil's tasks and then across the pupil group. (Figure 5.5f represents the completed analysis of Simon's first DWT as an example. Appendix I includes the DWTs for all pupils).

Subject matter

In analysing the subject matter, I included the following readings when relevant:

- **Literal reading:** In analysing the subject matter, I recorded the physical features of the image/task, such as the people, symbols, and words the pupil places in the image.
- **Biographical reading:** I considered how the image related to my growing interpretation of the pupil's experience of school practices.
- **Iconic:** I reflected on how the image could relate to more significant ideas, events, values, and cultural constructs.
- **Psychological reading:** I interpreted the intended states of mind or emotions the pupil depicted.

Image Creation

I included these readings:

- **Editorial reading:** I examined any values or knowledge I perceived the creator was seeking to communicate.

- Technical reading: I examined the design features in the DWTs, such as the use of scale, symbolism, and orientation of images.
- Empathetic: I reflected on any shared experiences amongst the group using the focus group transcripts and my notes in my research journal.
- Indexical: I considered how the image related to time and place.

Focus on the audience/viewers

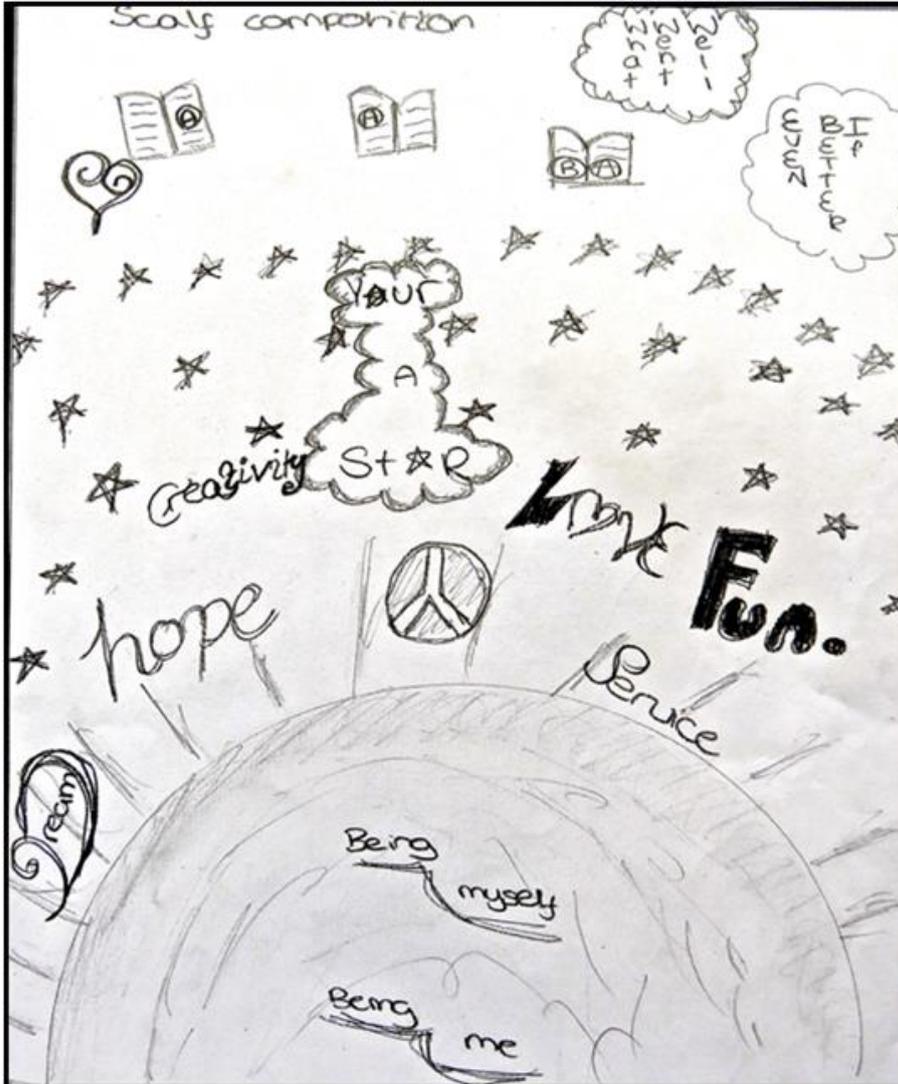
- Impact: I considered the impact the image had on myself, others in the group, and the headteacher examining the data.

Figure 5.5f: Extract from a completed DWT analytical table for Simon (Free School pupil)

Simon	Focus of analysis	Draw-and-write task 1: <i>Myself at school and what it is like to be a pupil at my school</i>
The focus of the subject matter	Literal reading	<p><i>-Image: Sunshine with 'Being myself, being me' written on it. Above the sunshine are three-word clouds: 'you're a star', 'What went well' and 'even better if' on another.</i></p> <p>Other information: Rows of small five-point stars; a love heart; 3 small books are open, marked with an 'A' on two and 'AB' on the third; a symbol.</p> <p><i>-Other words: 'Self composition, creativity, hope, love, fun, service, dream'.</i></p>
	Biographical reading	<p><i>-Image may depict how he feels he is performing at school.</i></p> <p><i>- Achievement matters to him – the stars may link to him achieving these for independent reading/maths (The stars are on the wall in the school hall).</i></p> <p><i>-What went well and even better is linked to the school assessment system/marking – These programmes seem to have helped him learn. He explains that he gets support with his learning at school.</i></p> <p><i>- He emphasises peace.</i></p>
	Empathetic reading	<p><i>- Sense of enjoyment of school (fun), personal achievement, growing self-belief. He aspires to achieve/has hope for success in the future.</i></p>
	Iconic reading	<p><i>- School values stated: love, service.</i></p> <p><i>- Focus on achievement may link to school value excellence?</i></p>

		-Conveys knowledge of school systems for recognising achievement.
	Psychological reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible pride in growing achievements. - Indicates a high state of well-being, relaxed (being myself). - Sense of enjoying school (fun). - Belief in self – indicates aspiration to achieve/hopeful of the future.
Focus on image creation	Technical reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Variation in the scale of images: sun with light beams is vast. -Information is organised in layers radiating from the sun. -Use of words and symbols to depict achievement (stars). -Link to DWT2 – Is this a sign for peace? -In DWT 2, he uses the dove, the Christian symbol for peace.
	Editorial reading	-Awareness of the school’s focus on achievement and school values. School ambience: safe, caring, enabling.
	Indexical reading	-Image is linked to him recognising changes in his well-being and achievement after he transitioned from primary to secondary school.
	Spectatorship reading	-Viewers face the sun/page.
Focus on the audience	Impact	-Influence on me: Indicative of HT’s vision for Christianity being the DNA of the school and leaders’ aspirations for pupils to achieve holistically. Leaders provide helpful feedback to enable achievement. Ethos positively influences his sense of belonging and learning aspirations.
	Summary of themes	-Being myself, love, friendship, service, personal achievement, recognition of achievement, aspiration and hope.
	Superordinate themes	-Sense of belonging; Excellence in everything; Making dreams come true.

Figure 5.5g: Simon's Draw-and-write task: What it's like to be a pupil in my school



Stage 2: Analysis of the photo-elicitation task

I analysed each pupil's photo-elicitation data. I completed a photo-ranking chart for each pupil using the relevant readings provided by Freeman and Mathison (2009). Figure 5.5h represents a completed chart. It represents Simon's ordering of his photographs from what he valued most about his school to what he valued least. I looked for recurring themes for each child within the DWTs and identified any new themes. I used my discussion of the photo-elicitation data with pupils to help me make sense of the meaning of their experiences. I recorded any links between each child's DWTs, the photo-elicitation captions and pupil group discussion transcript.

Figure 5.5h: An example of a completed photo-ranking chart for Simon (Free School Pupil)

Photo-ranking in the diamond nine (Simon)	Caption (Meaning to the participant)	Focus on the subject matter	Focus on image creation	Focus on the impact on pupils and researcher	Themes
1	DT and Art Room: This is my favourite room in the school as it is my favourite subject and I can be myself.	Class of children busy working in D.T. room with displays in the background.	-Emphasis placed on the child being himself- linked with the use of this term 'being myself- in DWT1.	-Link to DWT3 – career aspirations (art teacher) -Likes being creative - Favourite teacher.	Belonging /Being myself Enjoyment and creativity.
2	Cross: This expresses our own school and shows we are a Christian school. This symbol is important to me as well.	Close-up: sizeable wooden cross on the outside of the school building.	-Conveying the Christian identity of the school. -Refers to his faith, Christianity, being influential in his life.	- Awareness of the symbolic meaning of the cross. - This appears to matter to the community	Importance of the cross. Christian school identity.
3	Drums: This is my favourite instrument, and I really enjoy playing it. So, the school having one to play is good.	The drum kit in the music room	-Personal interest -Values facilities for learning.	-Other pupils share their enjoyment of music.	Creativity and enjoyment
4	Artwork: Having people art up gives them confidence as they know they are good.	Coloured pencil drawing of two faces in the style of comic art called 'in the car' displayed on the wall of the school	Indicative that confidence matters to him – link with DWT1 Likes having work valued	-Aspirations to achieve/do well at school. -Needs reassurance in learning. - Link to the occasion he performed a poem in front of the school on his	Recognition of achievement Confidence

				<p>induction day, which gave him confidence (I1).</p> <p>- Identifies confidence as an attribute school has given him (I1, L620)</p>	
5	<p>Uniform: This is really important as it is a nice school uniform and people are proud to wear it, and it is comfortable.</p>	<p>Close-up of part of school blazer with the school logo on the pocket, the school's name, and a cross.</p>	<p>Feels proud to be associated with his school.</p>	<p>-Assumption that proudness to belong to school is shared amongst pupils.</p>	<p>Belonging</p> <p>Being proud</p>
6	<p>Form room: This is the room where school begins, and you can begin your day and discuss any problems you have.</p>	<p>Children in the form room were sitting at desks arranged as individual units. The teacher is at the front of the class. Some turn around interested in photography.</p>	<p>-Needs to feel secure.</p>	<p>-Link to DWTs – feels that he has no worries at school.</p>	<p>Special places</p>
7	<p>Friendship: This is important to everybody in the school because everyone has friends and they support and comfort each other in all things.</p>	<p>Picture of a yellow smiley face with the word friendship written above it, displayed in a school corridor.</p>	<p>-Friendship matters in providing support and comfort.</p>	<p>-Shows concern for the wellbeing of others</p> <p>-Implies the community is inclusive and no one is isolated.</p> <p>- Signifies a caring community and the importance of</p>	<p>Friendship</p> <p>Support</p>

				peers in providing support.	
8	Tables for lunch: This is where you can meet your friends who aren't in your class and chat, and the food is really good.	Tables and chairs, empty, in the school dining room/worship hall. Display of the tree of hands is visible on the wall.	- Time for socialising and mixing matters.	-Socialising with friends is an essential aspect of his education. - Friendships developed across classes.	Friendship Special places
9	Basketball: This is where I spend my breaks playing with my friends and playing good games.	Close-up shot of a basketball ring and net in part of the school playground.	Play with friends matters.	-Watched him play a ball game in this spot at breaks	Friendship Special places
Emergent themes	Being myself, favourite room (special places), favourite subject, recognition of achievement, confidence, pursuing personal interests, being proud, friendship, special/safe spaces.				
Superordinate Themes	Sense of belonging; Making dreams come true; Excellence in everything				
Links to leadership data	Indicative of leaders wanting children to achieve holistically. Ethos created influences pupils' sense of belonging and learning aspirations.				

Stage 3: Generating themes for the pupil group

I clustered the themes to generate subordinate themes for the pupil group (see figure 5.5i). I organised the subordinate themes into superordinate themes. I produced tables to illustrate the connections and hierarchical relationships between the themes. I followed the process of organising themes advocated for IPA (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). I selected the superordinate themes because of their significance to the research questions and the potential to enrich the pupil group's narrative account.

Figure 5.5i: Table showing the superordinate themes and subordinate themes across the Free School pupil group

Sense of belonging	Valuing Christian symbolism, artefacts and practices	Excellence in Everything	Making dreams come true
Being myself	Worship and reflection	Excellence in everything	Hope and aspirations
Belonging	Use of the Bible	The School Way	Helping others
Being proud	Importance of the Cross	Giving and achieving one hundred per cent	
Friendship and love		Experiencing creativity and enjoyment	
Special places			
Christian school Identity			

Next, I produced a table to illustrate the presence of the superordinate themes and the subordinate themes within the group.

Figure 5.5j: Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate themes and subordinate themes within each pupil's data (Free School)

Superordinate themes (bold) and subordinate themes	Simon	Andrew	Jade	Joshua	Present in over half the group
1. Sense of belonging	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belonging	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Being myself	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Friendship and love	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special places	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Being proud	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Christian school identity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2. Excellence in everything	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Excellence in everything	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
The School Way	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Giving and achieving 100%	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Experiencing creativity and enjoyment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Valuing Christian symbolism, artefacts and practices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Importance of the cross	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Worship and reflection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Use of the Bible	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
4. Making dreams come true	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hope and aspirations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Helping others	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Finally, I produced a table of themes that included the superordinate and subordinate themes and illustrative data extracts for each subordinate theme (Appendix G). I referenced the DWT number to indicate the extracts origins. For example, under the superordinate theme *sense of belonging* and subordinate theme *being myself*, Simon wrote in draw-and-write task 1 (DWT1): ‘Being myself, being me’. I also used the number of the photograph and caption in the photo-ranking chart or interview line number to identify the context of the extract. For example, Simon ranked the photograph and caption concerning his school uniform as the fifth aspect he valued most about his school out of his nine chosen photographs (PRC5). This process provided evidence of transparency and rigour in data analysis.

I used the table of themes and data extracts to inform the writing of a rich, meaningful narrative of pupils’ experiences of their education in the school’s ethos (Chapters 7 and 9). To assist in this process, I produced a summary profile for each pupil to summarise his/her unique identity and experiences. I explored the relationship between pupils’ and leaders’ data to look for leaders’ influences on pupils’ perspectives of their education.

5.5.4 Analysis of the Church Academy pupils' data

I present the themes across the Church Academy pupil group in Figure 5.5k. The second table, Figure 5.5l, illustrates the superordinate and subordinate themes within the pupil group. (See Appendix H for a table of themes with pupil data extracts to represent each theme.)

Figure 5.5k: Table showing the superordinate themes and subordinate themes across the Church Academy pupils' group

Valuing school values	Special people, places and practices	Aspirations and achievement
Valuing school values	Special people	Effort
Friendship	Special places	Gaining encouragement
Compassion	Exploration of faith, God and religion	Having fun and enjoying learning
Trust	The cross	Doing something good and being successful
Forgiveness	Special Artefacts	
Happiness		

Figure 5.5l: Table illustrating the presence of the superordinate and subordinate themes within each pupil's data (Church Academy):

Superordina te theme	Subordinate theme	Owen	Sarah	Elizabeth	Shaun	Louise	Henry	Present in half the group
Valuing school values	Friendship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Trust		X	X			X	X
	Forgiveness		X	X			X	X
	Kind relationship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Happiness	X		X		X		X
	Compassion		X	X	X		X	X
Aspirations and achievement	Doing something good and	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	being successful							
	Gaining encouragement	X	X		X		X	X
	Effort	X			X			
	Having fun and enjoying learning		X	X	X	X		X
Special people, places and practices	Special places	X	X	X			X	X
	Special people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Special artefacts	X	X	X	X	X		X
	The cross		X	X	X		X	X
	Worship, singing and prayers			X			X	
	Exploration of faith, God and religions	X	X					

5.5.5 Reflections on the use of analytical processes and frameworks

Reflection on the development of an appropriate analytical framework: The pilot case study

In evaluating the pilot case study, I appreciated the need to challenge the meaning participants ascribed to their experiences. Therefore, I used the hermeneutics of faith and suspicion in Studies 1 and 2 (Section 5.1.3) to make explicit what was implicit within the data and to question the findings drawing on a broader knowledge of the topic. I considered this provided a richer understanding of the messages.

Experimentation with use of Nvivo10

I used electronic analysis of school leaders' data for the Free School using Nvivo10 by electronically coding key phrases as nodes. I started by coding the headteacher's transcripts and looked for recurrence of these codes across the school leadership data set while generating new codes for each participant. I sorted coded extracts into potential themes across the group. I

found it complicated and the analytical process not as fruitful as the approach suggested by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). I created an extensive list of codes, which took time to organise. I needed to interrogate what lay beyond the spoken words themselves.

Use of IPA

My interpretation of participants' experiences occurred through my unique, experientially-informed lens. Others engaging with the same data might arrive at differing interpretations due to variations in individual biographies and pre-conceptions. Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006, pp.105-113) argued that IPA could 'be easy to do badly, and difficult to do well' and demanded maintenance of a range of 'balancing acts'. I agreed with this view. I found the analysis challenging but rewarding. Through engagement with the double hermeneutic, I could give a substantive voice to participants' while also conveying my interpretation of their experiences using the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 4. I sought to balance the representation of shared perspectives across the participant group while highlighting the uniqueness of each participant's lived experience and voice. I welcomed the challenge to think about what each participant's perspectives meant in their context, even when developments in Christian education progressed after I had completed the data collection phase.

5.6 Summary

In this Chapter, I outlined the methodology, data collection and analytical processes I employed for Studies 1 and 2. IPA informed my collection and analysis of detailed, first-person accounts of school leaders' perspectives of developing a Christian education ethos and pupils' experiences of their education within the school's ethos. Incorporating the double hermeneutic enabled me to provide a substantive voice for leaders and pupils while also presenting my interpretations of their accounts. While I derived the emerging themes from the interviews and pupils' tasks, I used various information to contextualise participants' perspectives.

Hermeneutical phenomenology underpins IPA. Temporality and space matter when interpreting participants' experiences. Varied biographies could influence the meanings individuals make of shared experiences. The use of researcher reflexivity was important as my prior knowledge, assumptions, and experiences influenced research design, interactions with participants and interpretation of their perspectives.

Continuous attention to ethical responsibilities was essential to ensure participants' wellbeing and safety. The use of criteria for evaluating qualitative research was critical in informing my

research design and enabling researcher reflexivity. Central to a robust study in IPA was establishing credibility and trustworthiness in the data. My research expertise influenced data quality and analysis. The piloting of data collection and analytical processes was crucial in refining the research methodology and developing my expertise and confidence as a researcher.

Chapter 6

Presentation of Study 1

Part 1: Interpretive account for the Free School leaders and discussion of the findings

6.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present an interpretative account of the Christian Free School leaders. The account addresses Research Question One: leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos. In Chapter 7, I provide the interpretative account for the pupils' experiences of their education within the school's education ethos. I then discuss the findings and consider the influence of leaders' visions for school education ethos on pupils' educational experiences (Research Question Two).

In Section 6.1, I interpret the leaders' experiences under four superordinate themes for the group (Figure 5.5b; Chapter 5) in a manner typical of IPA without reference to the literature. I emphasise the headteacher's perspectives to reflect the research design and the headteacher's accountability for the school's performance. Leaders' views reflect their unique roles in developing the school's ethos. When presenting the voice of leaders, I include transcript extracts in italics. I make some minor changes to direct quotations, such as removing hesitation utterances or repetition to improve readability. I denote missing material using dotted lines in brackets (...). To preserve the school's and participants' anonymity, I remove identifying details about the participants and the school. I reference the quote from the transcript, using an abbreviation of the person (see abbreviations list), including the interview number where appropriate, followed by the line reference numbers.

In Section 6.2, I move to a higher level of interpretation. I discuss the account using the literature related to leadership and education ethos development (Chapters 2 and 3) and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 4. This framework constitutes Bronfenbrenner's Person-Process-Context-Time model of development, Wenger's communities of practice and Lukes' dimensions of power.

Introduction to the school and the leaders

A group of Christian Churches of varying denominations established the school, which opened to Year 7 pupils in September 2013. The school roll was 90 pupils in the first year and 240 in the second. The size was smaller than the average secondary school nationally. Pupil ethnicity was

predominantly White British. The school’s admission policy was inclusive of pupils of all faiths or no faith, with the admission of pupils with a Christian affiliation capped at 50%. The first Ofsted inspection, conducted after I completed the data collection, graded the school as ‘good’. The school’s Section 48 inspection, undertaken two years after data-collection, graded the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Christian character of the school on the influence of pupils as outstanding.

The sample of leaders was five. I interviewed the headteacher (HT), the deputy headteacher (DHT), chair of governors (CGB), RE leader/acting chaplain (REL), and design and technology/art leader (DTL). The chair of governors, a founder of the school, was instrumental in its establishment. He was the first chair of governors. The governors appointed the headteacher before the school opened. Previously he was an assistant headteacher in a voluntary controlled Church of England secondary school. The headteacher completed the Future Leaders Programme, a national two-year secular intensive leadership development programme designed to prepare senior leaders for headship of schools in challenging contexts. The deputy headteacher worked with the headteacher previously and was appointed before the school opened. The design and technology leader started when the school opened. The RE leader joined the school in its second year of opening.

Figure 6.0 Table providing information about the leaders (Free School)

Position	Gender	Religiosity as described by the leader	Appointment to the school
Headteacher	Male	Christian	Before it opened
Deputy Headteacher/ member of the senior leadership team	Male	Christian	Before it opened
Chair of Governors	Male	Church of England	Founder of the school
RE Leader	Female	Christian	New in the second year of the school opening
DT/art leader	Male	Christian	Just before it opened

6.1 Leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos

I derived four superordinate themes for the group of leaders:

1. Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference
2. Inspiring commitment and building a community
3. Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership
4. Challenges of implementing *What If Learning*.

6.1.1 Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference

The first superordinate theme explores the leaders' aspirations in establishing a Free School with a distinctively Christian education. Leaders placed Christianity at the heart of the school and sought to develop pupils holistically. In planning the school's opening, pupils' pursuit of high academic standards and Christian formation appeared essential to the headteacher and governors. The headteacher was familiar with *What If Learning* (Chapter 3), which was central to his strategy for establishing a distinctively Christian education ethos. At the time of his appointment, the headteacher believed he shared the governing body's vision for the type of school to be created. After the school opened, the headteacher and deputy headteacher experienced a growing disparity between their views on distinctively Christian education and those of the governing body.

Beliefs and values underpinning the school vision

The chair of governors considered his role pivotal in establishing the founders' vision for the school's education ethos. As a member of the school's steering group, he contributed to the plan submitted to the DfE for the school's opening. He described himself as a retired businessman. He regarded the school's establishment as a considerable accomplishment, '*a dream come true*', and an answer to his prayers (CGB, L86). He envisaged a secondary Christian Free School offering '*distinctively Christian*' education (CGB, L17) to fill a gap in state-funded secondary educational provision in the locality. His conception of what the school should be like stemmed from his knowledge of a Church school, which had a good reputation for being both '*academically excellent*' and '*distinctively Christian*' (CGB, L19-20). He wanted pupils at the new school to experience an education that '*celebrated*' the Christian faith, '*held Jesus high*' and '*nurtured*' pupils (CGB, L33-34). He considered '*Christian distinctiveness*' as the '*nurture of existing Christian children (...) a mission for children who were not yet Christian and who might never be Christian*' (CGB, L29-36). Pupils would experience Christianity through them meeting

Jesus in various ways: through the Bible, worship, community service, teaching and learning, restorative justice, and the school's atmosphere (CGB, L41-43). He placed '*Christian distinctiveness*' at the school's core. His analogy was '*a stick of rock*' with the Christian symbol of the cross running through its length (CGB, L45-46).

'We always said we wanted a Christian school where the Christian faith underpinned everything. It wasn't just assemblies; it was on the sports field; it was in the classroom; it was everything' (CGB, L48-50).

The chair recalled the steering group's decision-making concerning the school's mission. The school would be '*a force for good*' or '*a blessing to the community*', and '*pupils would be a force for good in the world*' (CGB, L52-58). His primary concern was that the school would '*have a very positive impact on the lives of individual pupils*' (CGB, L57-58). He suggested the school should be open to and in touch with the community's needs and influence the common good of society. He cited the school chaplain running a monthly parent prayer group to pray for families with difficulties within the limits of confidentiality (CGB, L60-64). The steering group encapsulated the school's vision and intended ethos in a single phrase that became the school's mission statement:

'Education for life in all its fullness' (CGB, L194-194).

The chair considered leaders faced the challenge of providing a Christian education that met a diversity of pupils' needs and addressed varying parental expectations. The governing body's preference was to serve the socially disadvantaged:

'We really want it to be a school which serves the disadvantaged, and there's an interesting balance because if you want to attract aspirational parents, you need to be offering something for the most able children, and if you want to serve the disadvantaged, that properly means you have to offer something for the least able children. (...) It's being a really excellent school for the children who are struggling academically' (CGB, L170-178).

Christianity at the heart of the school

Collectively, the headteacher, deputy and chair of governors aspired to place Christianity at the heart of the school. Initially, the headteacher's view was that he shared the same vision for the school's education ethos with the governing body. It influenced his acceptance of the headship:

'When I read the materials they have put together for the prospective headteacher, my thought was that these people had got it. I looked at it and thought what my heart and

vision for a school is, is what their heart and vision for a school is and so when we came together, it was quite easy' (HT, I1L58-62).

The headteacher used the metaphor of 'Christianity' being the 'DNA of the school' (HT, I1L38) to explain his vision for establishing a school that differed from other Church schools. He seemed anxious to avoid the school's Christian side being 'a bolt-on', peripheral to pedagogical practices (HT, I1L38-42). He encountered this approach to developing Christian education ethos when working in a Church school. He learned of and became inspired by, *What If Learning* as the strategy for embedding Christianity and the school's value system in school and classroom practices. (I discuss *What If Learning* in depth in superordinate theme 4). He considered its use would guard against the development of tokenistic approaches to Christian learning, including putting Bible verses within lessons.

'I wanted Christianity to be the DNA of the school (...). What I wanted to do here was something inherently different where our values and what we believed in as a Christian school would run through everything, we did so that it would affect the curriculum, it would affect how we deliver things, and it would affect behaviour systems (...) I wanted it to be real, that it would have a genuine impact on how we did things and therefore we did them better' (HT, I1L38-49).

The headteacher felt 'incredibly excited' about starting with 'a blank sheet of paper' and utilising his Christian faith and professional expertise to shape the Christian education ethos:

'I have personal faith. I'm a Christian, and I have been for a long time. Christianity and what I believe has always been part of what I am as a senior leader but to make that the core of the school rather than being on the edges and trying to change it was really an exciting opportunity (...). I, for a long time, have thought about what it means to be a Christian school and to receive a faith education, particularly in the secular environment (...) and knowing that here we were starting with a blank sheet that I could really make these things happen was just incredibly exciting' (HT,11L12-20).

The deputy headteacher likened his vocation to an artist starting from scratch with 'a blank canvas' (DHT, L6-7). He saw himself working collaboratively with the headteacher to create an 'atmosphere' that enabled the pupils to experience Christianity. He envisaged the Christian element of the school as 'the whole in which everything else sat.' Christianity would appear in all aspects of the school's work. He placed importance on experiential Christian education, which

stemmed from him experiencing Christianity as a choral scholar at an independent chorister school:

'This is kind of what we want in terms of how we want the school to be distinctive (...). To create an atmosphere and view it as something that is not directly taught didactically but is more about what children experience. For me, my experience of it was not so much through RE teaching or anything else but by being in the cathedral every day singing. There are lots of ways into it. There is this thing about, 'are you a Christian because you have the Bible stuck on the end of everything?' well probably not actually. That is quite superficial. We want this to be much more innate, and part of the culture of the school, and there are opportunities with worship and other things for the children to reflect and engage with, and we want this to be the background hum to everything (...). We did not want it to be compartmentalised; we wanted it to be the whole in which everything else sat really' (DHT, L132-142).

The deputy headteacher also placed importance on using *What If Learning* to make the school distinctively Christian (DHT, L109-115). The DT/art leader differed in his view of what constituted a distinctively Christian education. He identified as significant the teachers' *'freedom'* to talk about verses in the Bible in class worship, discuss and raise questions about these and singing songs in worship (DTL, L175-179).

Education as social justice

The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the chair of governors perceived education was about *'social justice'*. The headteacher and deputy appeared passionate about transforming pupils' lives as part of their *'Christian duty'* as leaders. The headteacher embraced this as his *'primary duty'*, in his role of the *'Christian leader'* of the school community (HT, I1L358). As some pupils saw themselves as having failed in their primary education, the community's goal was to *'make a radical difference to these children's lives'* (HT, I1L295-298). The headteacher believed education should prepare pupils for their societal roles. This entailed acquisition of appropriate academic qualifications. Consequently, the pursuit of academic *'excellence'* was significant to his view of pupils achieving success in their education:

'I think at the core, education is a justice issue, and so I wanted the school to make a difference to children's lives, which means I believe that children need to have an excellent education and therefore we need to be creating an education that means that children will have outstanding life chances (...). I believe that is a Christian thing' (HT, I1L32).

'We can make a radical difference to these children's lives by ensuring that they have the very best educational start and therefore supporting them to get great qualifications and to get further, and I see that as part of my Christian duty, and to be honest, I think that it is my first duty' (HT, I1L295-298).

'Excellence is one of my core drivers, which I believe is a Christian ideal, and I think children making progress is a matter of justice, and our children deserve to make great progress' (HT, I2L88-90).

The deputy headteacher, *'struck by the fullness'* of his independent education, wished to replicate the focus on developing social awareness, confidence and moral development, which went beyond ensuring pupils made *'progress through the education system'* (DHT, L52-57). He strived to *'broaden children's horizons'* (DHT, L58-63). The school community could demonstrate its *'love for children'* by helping them to have a successful life (DHT, L198-199). He identified service, in a Biblical sense, as an essential aspect of Christian education. Pupils experienced community service as part of the curriculum:

'It's about setting service in a kind of Biblical context, so it's not just about serving because it's a moral thing to do, it is about serving as Christ was a servant and getting children to understand that. Obviously, the whole image of Christ washing his disciples' feet is what it comes down to. It is about serving for its own ends as an expression of love' (DHT, L103-108).

Whilst the chair of governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher considered education from a social justice perspective, the other leaders did not speak of Christian education as social justice. The DT/art leader wanted the pupils to leave school as good, respectful human beings (DTL, 183-191).

6.1.2 Inspiring commitment and building a community

The second superordinate theme represents leaders' perspectives on inspiring commitment to the school vision and how they built relational trust amongst members of the school community.

Building a sense of community

The headteacher found the development and implementation of a shared vision for a Christian education ethos challenging. As a new headteacher in a new school, he appeared anxious to do the right thing. He described experiencing tension between two contradictory goals. On the one hand, he sought to demonstrate credible leadership by articulating his vision for the school to

secure stakeholders' trust in his leadership and confidence in the school's success. On the other hand, he sought to include stakeholders in developing the school's vision, so it became a shared vision. His considered his remit was to build on the founder's vision for the school. While he valued collaborative or inclusive approaches to leadership, his testimony suggested he recognised the practical limitations of such an approach at an early stage of the school's establishment:

'I was very aware of the risk of the vision being my vision and all the rest of it without including people being in the journey (...). There needed to be real clarity for people to buy into it (...). There needed to be enough flexibility to actually have these conversations and work with people (HT, IL176-80).'

'The challenge was the tension between being a clear leader (...) and being inclusive and including people in the journey (...). As the head of a brand-new school, people needed the security of a headteacher, who knew where they wanted to go, but then getting people to be involved. We found that quite difficult' (HT, I1L93-99).

The headteacher focused on developing and communicating the school's vision in the school's first year. He sought *'continually to be talking about it [the vision], involving people in it and trying to work it through (HT11, L82-83)'*. He used the school's first professional development session for staff and pupil induction meetings to build confidence in the school's vision. Part of his pupil recruitment-strategy entailed helping pupils and parents to visualise the school's future state. In developing the vision, he considered the school value system's formation required the engagement of others (HT, I1 L83-84).

The deputy headteacher considered the school's education ethos enabled a sense of community, representing *'something strong,' 'a brand that people can subscribe to'* (DHT, L306; 311-313). As inclusion leader, he was *'passionate'* about supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils (DHT, L353-4). He believed the ethos enabled pupils with special educational needs to *'thrive'* (DHT, L323). Successful in-year induction of pupils transferring from other schools mattered. He thought staff worked hard to restore the trust of pupils disillusioned by education in their former schools:

'Children don't see disability and difference here as they are all different in their ways' (DHT, L324-325).

Both the deputy headteacher and DT/art leader saw the school's expansion each year as presenting a potential threat to the established education ethos and were eager to sustain the school's atmosphere. The DT/art leader valued a collaborative ethos in his classroom, enabling pupils' self-confidence and teamwork. He wanted *'pupils working together to help each other'* (DTL, L257-261).

'You start thinking forwards to Year 8 and the new Year 7, and I don't want that really good ethos that they've got already to deplete (...). I would love it if all the staff were as close as they are now, which is really hard when you get more staff members (...). We talk about every student; we talk about all our subjects (...). I think that helps that good family feel and I hope that will continue' (DTL, L264-274).

Leaders sought to promote positive relationships between leaders, pupils, and parents (DHT, L79-86), facilitated by their visibility around the school. The deputy headteacher likened the quality of parent-school relationships to those typically experienced within primary schools (DHT, L69-71). He fostered communication with parents and responded to enquiries from parents interested in their children's education. He aimed to sustain such relationships but recognised this might prove challenging as pupil numbers increased. When possible, he and the headteacher met families at the beginning of the day. They ran the walking bus to build relationships with pupils and their families.

'We're trying to make the partnership happen (...). It sits at the centre of what we do here' (DHT, L86-88).

'It is about knowing students and families, which is so very good at primary. This is the stuff we want to preserve as time goes by' (DHT, L71-72).

For the headteacher, the deputy and the chair of governors, selecting the right staff was crucial in embedding the education ethos. The governors deliberately sought to engage a headteacher, deputy and chaplain who were Christians but were open to employing teachers from diverse faith backgrounds to enable high-quality teaching (CGB, L365-375). While the chair perceived the school initially attracted Christian staff, which helped establish the ethos, the staffing complement became more diverse as the school expanded. The deputy headteacher perceived the school offered *'breadth of experience'* and leadership opportunities but attracting ambitious leaders had initially proved a more formidable challenge than anticipated (DHT, L376-382).

Embedding values in school and classroom practices

The headteacher suggested he led the development of the school's value system in the first term of the school opening (HT, I183-84). Nonetheless, he recognised responsibility for the values rested with the school's governing body (HTI1, L175). He selected five memorable values to represent what the school stood for, influenced by his values. He described the school as having multiple layers of values. The school recorded these values in various documents written for different audiences such as parents, the churches and the national government (HT, I1L176-181). He communicated his choice of values in the school's diary and pupils' planning books.

'What I did was mapped from that what I thought we could have as our four or five values that were memorable, that children and staff would be able to work with and live with (...). As a school leader, you need something memorable that children can get a handle on, or it just becomes a document on a bookshelf, and I think that's where it was' (HTI1, L163-166).

The headteacher abbreviated the school value system to *'the TELLS'*: truth, excellence, love, leadership, and service. He regarded the process of developing the values as *'tricky'*, as they required justification and required consultation with pupils and governors (HTI1, L82-89, 232). He described his influence in this extract:

'It was a long process. I had a few key ones that are more implicit within those TELLS (...) 'excellence', 'relationships' and 'being 100% school' and 'no excuses' (...) which are the values I've pushed into any school I've been involved with. So, that's where I started from (...). We had some school children's conferences and things like this looking at it. We kind of developed those into something that looks similar to the TELLS. I then worked with these to find a word to put them in a bit of an order' (HT, I1L186-193).

The chair of governors perceived the 'X [Name of School] way' encapsulated the school's value system. He expressed concern that the headteacher had prematurely devised the values, which prompted the governors' intervention in the process as the values required governing body approval. His understanding was the headteacher had taken the values from the Church of England values for schools' website:

'The headteacher (Name given) prematurely came up with the school (name of school) way, and we said, 'hang on, this is our stuff, not yours'. We discussed it and agreed on a revised version of the school way (...). We really wanted to make sure it was right and was

what we wanted for the school (...). I don't want to see anything on the website or in the prospectus that isn't what we've agreed' (CGB, L402-411).

The headteacher appeared confident that communication of the values, known as the 'X [Name of School] way' helped the community conceptualise and embed the Christian education ethos (HT, I1L99-104). He expressed satisfaction with the established Christian education ethos:

'I think there is a clear understanding by every part of the community that our ethos is around the Trinity and those Christian ideals, the understanding of buying in around children being made in the image of God and therefore being important and special beyond measure (...). If you stopped any child in the school or member of staff and asked them what the ethos and what the school stands for, they would be able to tell you (...). I am pretty happy with where we are for 18 months in' (HT, I2L8-18).

The headteacher explained how the values guided school policy formation. He made them explicit in the school's behaviour policy. They constituted the community's code of conduct and communicated expectations for 'excellent behaviour' (HTI1, L210-220). He sought to influence staff adoption and role-modelling of values through including them in staff job descriptions. 'Having the right values' made it 'easy' to reference them in the school's work (HT, I1L229-231). He expected the values to inform curriculum planning, worship, form periods and the fostering of positive relationships.

'In terms of behaviour management (...) we don't really have rules but what we have instead is effectively a code of conduct, which is 'the school way,' so children are expected to live up to that' (HT, I1L214-220).

'When I challenge someone's behaviour, one of the things I say to them is that I love you too much to allow you to behave like this, and it contextualises what we do (...) I say stuff in worship. I'm talking to the children and adults and say, 'this is why we do what we do (...). We care about this child, so we want them to do well'' (HT, I1233-239).

Restorative justice underpinned the headteacher's approach to behaviour management and enabled pupils to practise the values. He considered its operational effectiveness needed improvement (HTI2, L15-17). He showed me three questions printed on a card all pupils carried in their blazer pockets to guide them through the process of dispute resolution. The deputy headteacher explained its significance in building relationships:

'We model relationships, so we do restorative justice here, and all the kids had a couple of days on it from world-leading experts (...). Everything is very much focused on relationships and repairing relationships and making restitution for what you have done' (DHT, L103-108).

The deputy considered leaders sought to enable pupils' awareness of their responsibilities towards their community, fostering an ethos focused on nurture and self-discipline:

'The Christian ethos and all the things that we have reiterated during the year in relation to the 'school way' is quite distinctive. We have tried to create an atmosphere in school which is both nurturing and disciplined, so children are very much aware of what their responsibilities are in terms of other people in the school community and we constantly reiterate this through the worship that we do and through the form materials that we use and how the headteacher and I hopefully model relationships with children and parents' (DHT, L62-67).

The deputy headteacher considered the school was benefitting the pupils. Pupils self-regulated their behaviour and demonstrated loyalty to the ethos (DHT, L149-152). They were eager to please and *'expected to succeed'* (DHT, L522). His analysis of pupil progress in Year 7 to date placed pupils in the top 15% of the country:

'It is great that children are making that progress. I think that one of the key things is that children expect to succeed, and we do not have zero tolerance of much, but we do have zero tolerance of people thinking they can't make something of themselves (...). If we've done anything for the children and the families this year, it is that we've repaid the trust they put in us' (DHT, L522-525).

The DT/art leader also viewed the school's education ethos as supportive, with pupils aiming *'to please'* and try their best (DTL, 161-165). He described the values as *'good moral grounders,'* which enabled pupils to become respectful human beings (DTL, L178-199). They were *'not especially Christian,'* as his experience as a Christian led him to believe that being Christian was utterly different.

'It's not especially Christian because being Christian is completely different, but it gives a grounding about being a good human being (...) because I don't think the school is about forcing kids to become Christian people. That's not what I am about because that's

ridiculous, but I do believe that the school should show you how to be a respectful human being' (DTL, L183-188).

The DT/art leader considered staff acted as role models for pupils as everyone strived to get the school up and running and were eager to do things:

'There isn't anybody saying no to anything, it's always, 'Yes, I'll try my best to do it.' That's in staff and pupils as well' (DTL, L171-172).

The chair of governors, deputy headteacher and RE leader valued community service essential to realising the school's Christian vision for education ethos (REL, L214-220; DHT, L97-102; CGB, L41-43; L98). The chair was completing a governor monitoring visit focused on the impact of community service on pupils the day I interviewed him.

'Our children are having an average of just over an hour of community service every week which is less than we originally hoped/planned, and we know that we are using public money to provide that community service (...) We're spending time on that when children could be learning. (...) We are considering at least what an outside agency may make of that, and would they say we're wasting public money?' (CGB, L246-255).

The deputy headteacher reported 6,000 hours of community service from pupils in the first year, which contributed to the school's Christian distinctiveness. Community service included pupils supporting pupils in primary schools (DHT, L93-95).

Importance of worship

All leaders placed a high value on worship as a community practice (DTL, L175-179; DHT, L132-135). The RE leader reported form worship lasting 40 minutes, double that typically provided in schools, and made the justification of the content important (REL, L156-160). Pupils were encouraged to reflect on school values, poetry, music, inspirational people's behaviours, and the significance of historical and current events (REL, L116-118, L122-125, L132-141). As a newcomer to the school, the RE leader expressed a lack of clarity about the aims of worship but understood it was her role to support colleagues in conducting form worship. She believed colleagues found this problematic.

'Every day, the idea is obviously to have worship in form time. It's very much called worship, (...), so that's quite interesting, quite distinctive. The materials (...) that I'm providing are very interactive. We would have a person of the week. We have skills that we want to develop and an objective and then putting in some seasonal things as well, so

we have talked about the Tower of London Poppies (...) responses to the 100th anniversary of the First World War. (...), Winston Churchill as the person and we were thinking about compassion and empathy' (REL, L93-99; 117-118).

The RE leader exemplified how teachers invited pupils to reflect on issues, such as whether there was peace in the world or why a poppy was the symbol of remembrance and what symbol they might choose (REL, L136-141). She observed that pupils understood what they should be doing in worship, treated it *'seriously'* and engaged well. She had not encountered this in other schools. It resulted in a *'Christian atmosphere in form time.'* She valued the contribution the school's supporting churches made to whole-school worship.

This DT/art leader found leading form worship challenging. It required interpreting Biblical texts based on a theme for the week:

'I actually find them quite difficult to do because obviously, I'm not a preacher. I haven't gone to Bible College or anything like that, so we'd have a verse or a couple of verses (...), so what I would typically do is break that down and find out what the Bible says about it. Sometimes I found it very hard to figure it out' (DTL, L203-210).

The chair of governors considered worship enabled pupils to hear the Gospel. He aspired to make worship meaningful and was eager to find out about pupils' experiences (CGB, L325-327; L345-347). He found that leading worship in schools was complicated. He expected pupils to sing joyfully, like a Christian congregation in a church (CGB, L331-334). He was unsure how pupil engagement in worship should be tackled and sought the advice of external consultants. He learned that the approach of inviting pupils to pray was different from that used in his school days when the assumption was that all pupils were Christians and would pray.

'It's a big challenge to make worship meaningful (...) X (Name of the consultant to the school) said you should not assume everyone is a Christian, you should differentiate, and I felt awkward about that (...). Who knows what goes on in their heads, and that's what I want to know' (CGB, L348-358).

The deputy headteacher perceived the structure of whole school worship provided pupils with *'a sense of safety if they are not religious.'* They knew what to expect and had the opportunity to sit quietly and *'reflect'* for 15-20 minutes twice per week (DHT, L408-413).

In the second interview, the headteacher reviewed the anonymised pupil data. He was pleased with the value the pupils placed on worship. He explained how he designed the school's physical

space to create a 'heart space' for the school, where pupils could worship, eat lunch, and socialise. He appeared touched by the value pupils placed on this space:

'Getting that space and worship and God overlapping is a good start in making those things positive because in my school, where I was a kid there was a chapel that we went in once a year, and it was a totally separate place from the reality of the school' (HT, I2L627-634).

6.1.3 Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership

The third superordinate theme represents tensions and value conflicts school leaders experienced when implementing the school's vision for education ethos. The chair of governors identified the challenge of balancing the sacred with the secular. The headteacher identified issues in managing differences in leaders' perspectives concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. The disparity between the headteacher's views and those of his governing body caused the headteacher frustration.

Limits to leadership autonomy

The headteacher and deputy headteacher took the freedoms available to Free School leaders in designing the school's curriculum seriously. The headteacher delegated these freedoms to teachers to provide an excellent education in their subjects. However, he expected them when promoting pupil achievement to incorporate *What If Learning* into their teaching. When he evaluated the school's education quality, he checked it was fit for the children in his family and pupils achieved academically (HT, I1L319-20).

'We've taken those freedoms quite seriously, and I've given them to the teachers, so I've said (...) 'I want what we do to be excellent, here it is.' So, the RE teacher has the full freedom to plan and teach what she wishes and the push from me is the 'What If' side of it and that the children are making great progress and we've also done things like teaching philosophy (...) which you wouldn't do if you were following the National Curriculum fully' (HT, I1L257-262).

From a social justice perspective, the headteacher justified spending more time on the National Curriculum core subjects (English, mathematics, and science) than that provided in most secondary schools to improve pupils' basic skills (HTI1L265-272). However, he recognised the challenge of getting the balance 'right' between caring for pupils' academic needs and emotional

needs as some might feel *'a bit over-pressured'* (HT, I1L310-315, L274-275). He judged the school as a *'high performing school,'* a perception shared by the deputy headteacher (DHT, L329).

The deputy headteacher considered pupil achievement mattered. The community demonstrated their *'love for children by helping them to have a successful life'* (DHT, L198-203). Pupils needed to gain the right kinds of qualifications that matched their aspirations and have opportunities to undertake high-quality apprenticeships (DHT, L458-473). The high-achieving pupils studied two languages and studied philosophy instead of one English lesson each week to develop their research skills. He envisaged this as the beginnings of a model for educating students for Oxbridge. He perceived the need to use their freedoms to carefully plan pupils' education and be attentive to concerns about Free Schools nationally.

'We do the National Curriculum plus other things as we find time to do that. We do not believe in just using freedom because you've got it. The way that we use freedom is how the ethos and culture are developed really' (DHT, L448-450).

'In terms of the Free School and faith school agenda, we have had to be very careful. Well, we haven't had to be very careful actually because it is what we believe. We do not want the school to become a Trojan horse or anything like that' (DHT, L432-434).

The headteacher and his deputy considered the most significant barrier to developing the school's vision for Christian education ethos stemmed from challenges to their leadership by the school's governing body. Their view was that the governing body wanted them to conform to the founders' vision for the school. They found dissonance between their perspectives on Christian education and those of the governing body. The headteacher used the phrase *'walking the line'* to describe the governing body's controlling influence over his attempts to transform the founders' vision into a *'workable'* vision. He appeared determined the school and his leadership as headteacher would be successful. He spoke of *'my vision'* and *'their vision'*, implying a growing misalignment once the school had opened:

'They do a lot of monitoring. They've allowed me freedom to interpret their vision, and I would use that language, interpret their vision and make that into a practical reality, but without allowing me so much freedom that I go off and it becomes my vision, and I think they've been very good at walking the line' (HT, I1L146-150).

The deputy headteacher commented on the need for loyalty to the founders' vision while seeking to develop the education within the school:

'The only point of tension really, was to get from the founding vision and still having that there in spirit and (name of headteacher) and I having control over how things looked and what the curriculum is and how it's delivered' (DHT, L265-270).

The chair of governors indicated the governing body regarded the school vision as non-negotiable as specified in the headteacher's selection process: *'They laid it on thick.'* Applicants should *'not come with a blank sheet of paper and not work it out for themselves,'* but demonstrate loyalty to the founders' vision (CGB, L375-380). In practice, he expected some slippage with the new headteacher contributing his ideas.

Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher sensed a growing power struggle between themselves and governors to control the development of the school's education ethos. The headteacher became increasingly frustrated over the governors' comprehension of, and expectations for the Christian education ethos. He considered they lacked clarity about his strategy, including using *What if Learning* to reflect the Christian ideals in teaching and school practices (HTI2, L115-128). He strived to address this by engaging the governors in dialogue and working with them to bring them closer to his way of thinking about Christian education ethos (HT, I2L120-128).

'What I understood as being a Christian ethos has been blown away by our governors' vision of it. I think I knew when they were talking about a Christian ethos and what a Christian school should look like, they meant we had a chaplain, we did nice worship a couple of times a week, and we did community service, and that is how they saw the Christian ethos of the school. Although they forget that now, I came and said, 'it's much more fundamental than that,' and I've worked with the Governors to try and expand how they saw it' (HT, I2L115-122).

The headteacher experienced criticism from the governors about the time pupils spent on community service, which led to the *'strongest'* disagreement with the chair of governors. He argued that measuring time spent on service, although comprehensible to governors, was inadequate in illustrating the effectiveness of the school's education ethos. The headteacher also expressed concern over the value of some service-related activities, such as bag-packing in supermarkets (HT, I2L142-152).

The deputy headteacher considered he and the headteacher had not strayed from the founding vision. They had worked hard to create a *'tangible and workable'* education ethos. Developing *'the school way,'* helped people to understand what the school stood for:

'We had to ease them away from the essay-like view of what the school would be like to something that the parents and other people would understand: five things effectively' (DHT, L276-278).

'The School way stuff is the way into what the ethos means' (DHT, L317-318).

The deputy headteacher perceived the *'biggest challenge'* faced in leading the school was enabling some of the founding churches, particularly the free churches, to comprehend the nature of Christian education. He spoke of the need to work through this issue.

'We have had a lot of difficult conversations with them about what the ethos would be about. Their perception of it was the school was going to be different and would be that haven for staff and students from what the real education system is like' (DHT, L192-194).

The deputy headteacher considered that some teachers held inappropriate assumptions about the nature of education in the school, which made teacher recruitment a challenge:

'One of the main challenges was recruiting staff that understood that this was going to be a high-pressure place to work and would be like any other school, so we lost a few staff quite early on that basis because it wasn't the nice safe backwater, they thought it was going to be' (DHT, L362-366).

Tensions between excellence and Christian distinctiveness

The headteacher and deputy sought to reconcile tensions between achieving academic excellence and Christian *'nurture.'* The headteacher saw excellence as one of his *'core drivers'* and *'a Christian ideal.'* Ofsted's expectations for a Christian school matched his own in terms of measurable performance (HTI2, L88-89). The headteacher and his deputy considered Christian nurture enabled academic advancement. They reported that some governors and Christian staff members challenged this perspective, believing pursuing academic excellence as incompatible with focusing on Christian nurture. The headteacher expressed his unwillingness to compromise on the pursuit of academic excellence. He considered the first chaplain left the school because he was unwilling to accept this stance (HT, I2L342-346).

'One of the things the governors challenge me on regularly is how you do high-performing and Christian caring and nurturing of children, it's a tension. I don't think it's contradictory. I think the opposite (...), but it's certainly a tension' (HTI1, L280-283).'

'There is a Christian duty on us to be more than nice.... I don't think being a caring pastoral school isn't important (...). If children aren't being cared for pastorally etc., then they won't perform well (HT11, L291-294).'

The deputy headteacher considered Christian members of staff required opportunities to reflect on what making demands on pupils meant in a Christian context:

'We constantly have to work harder with (...) the teaching staff rather than the children as we are making demands on them. It is a secular education system, and we are making secular demands on them about progress and data (...). They have to reflect more (...) on what the link is between the progress and the data and achievements and pushing children and supporting them in a Christian context. There is no tension in my mind because I think that Christian love does not have to be sweet and a non-demanding thing. It's the opposite. We will be failing in our duty if we did not help children to achieve the best' (DHT, L153-160).

Acknowledging the range of potential issues that could divide churches, the chair of governors suggested the founding Churches reached a consensus on the way forward for establishing the school (CGB; L210-215). The more significant challenge was reconciling *'the sacred with the secular'*. He accepted the Government expected the school to be *'incredible,'* as public money funded the pupils' education. However, there was limited autonomy in curriculum design in terms of the time that could be devoted to community service (CGB, L246-255). Also, he considered the *'sacred-secular'* could be a *'live issue'* with parents, with non-Christian parents not liking the worship (CGB, L259-264).

Nature and purpose of religious education

As a religious education teacher, the headteacher felt *'conflicted'* over RE's contribution to the school's Christian education ethos. He regarded RE *'as a subject in its own right'* rather than instructing pupils in Christianity. He recognised his views on the nature and purpose of RE were at odds with some governors, which frustrated him. He also disagreed with their argument that Christian teachers should teach the subject. He viewed RE as *'religious studies'* instead of *'a kind of religious education, or worse still, religious instruction'* (HT12, L306-308). He considered *What If Learning* offered an effective means of enabling pupil learning in RE.

'I'm a RE teacher by background, and I spent a lot of my time standing up for RE as being a proper academic subject and wasn't the vehicle for Christian anything (...). That's

another thing I've had arguments with my governors about. I don't feel it should be a reserved role for a Christian teacher. I'd have no problem with it being a non-Christian teacher in that place (...) They see it as having much more of a role in educating children about Christianity and are keen that it has a more significant proportion of time spent on Christianity, and I disagree. We're see where we get with that one' (HT12, L277-287).

He experienced pride in developing a philosophical ethics approach to RE, which enabled pupils' engagement and taught them how to think, question, and reflect on various issues.

'We have a very philosophical, very comparative religion, deconstructive approach, which I have found to be very, very effective. I was in a school where RE went from being one of the most hated subjects in the school to being one of the most popular' (HT, I2L313-315).

'I am very, very keen that we teach children and equip children with how to think and to me that is one of the fundamentals of education (...). I see RE as having a huge part to play in that, but I see that across all subjects' (HT, I2L323-328).

Whilst the headteacher had taught RE in the school's first year, the RE leader considered she had the authority to develop RE throughout the school. She included a range of faiths and human rights in the syllabus (REL, L328-337). In teaching the pupils philosophy, which she associated with *'answering a lot of big questions,'* she exemplified how pupils had been interested in life after death when studying the resurrection of Christ (REL, L427).

Managing parental perspectives on critical thinking

The headteacher placed value on an education that taught pupils how to think (HT, I2L322-325). He believed pupils should learn *'to investigate'* and *'question everything'* across subjects and sought to appoint like-minded staff. He experienced opposition to developing critical thinking from some Christian parents. He resolved this by reassuring parents of the importance of pupils engaging in critical thinking in a safe context as preparation for university. Pupils would encounter other philosophies and ways of living and need opportunities to reflect on their faith and their lives (HT, I2L336-342).

'The response I've given to parents who have come in and questioned us on this, has been that I've worked with (...) first-year undergraduates, who came to our church (...) When they came to university, they were hit with other philosophies and ways of seeing life and found it spectacularly difficult (...). I want to see children thinking about and evaluating

these bigger questions, and we don't dictate the answers, we get them to think about the questions' (HT, I2L336-343).

6.1.4 Challenges of implementing *What If Learning*

The final superordinate theme represents the challenges leaders experienced in implementing *What If Learning* across the school. It includes the headteacher's strategies to inspire commitment to this pedagogy and build teachers' expertise in its use.

Reflections on What If Learning

The headteacher's core strategy for embedding the school's Christian education ethos entailed teachers using *What If Learning* across the school. Inspired by the approach when he taught RE and mathematics, he sought to lead by example in its use. He aspired that staff and governors share his enthusiasm. When teaching mathematics, he rewrote a module focused on spending lottery winnings to one centred on a global village with pupils making decisions about the use of resources to tackle poverty (HT, I2L42-53). He described the '*statistics*' content remaining the same, but the approach to learning changed to enable pupil exploration of humility. The deputy headteacher considered this approach entailed teachers thinking about what children could '*become because of the lesson, series of lessons.*' He reflected on the potential influence on pupils' character development:

'When staff write schemes of work, one of the things that staff have to do is reference, to think about, 'how is a child going to be transformed through engaging in this lesson?' Part of the focus then comes away from the secular content you have to deliver. It is more about, having been through this lesson, what potential changes would you see in the child's outlook or viewpoint?' (DHT, L109-115).

The headteacher appeared disappointed that teachers' aspirations did not match his own. He became frustrated over the time it took to embed the approach in classroom practices. He sought to utilise a '*grassroots*' approach to leadership. Teachers sharing their experiences would have a greater influence on the embedding of the approach than senior leaders officially directing its use. He sensed the freedom he granted teachers in its use was not as productive as he had hoped. He invested in an external consultant to '*try and get people excited about it*' on the first day of the school's opening.

'I very much wanted that to be a grass-roots thing, so staff would be excited by it and therefore implementing it, and it would come much more from staff rather than me saying

you have to do a what if bit of the lesson. The frustrating thing on that, and I have spoken to X (the consultant) about it, is that the freedom has not been as productive as I hoped it would be' (HT, I1L110-117).

The headteacher viewed teachers as wanting a ready-made curriculum, a *'What if pack,'* to implement activities rather than developing the values within their teaching and modifying their lessons to accommodate them (HT, I1L123-128). He and the deputy headteacher recognised the need for the further professional development of staff. The monitoring exercises indicated that the approach was not embedded entirely across the curriculum:

'We had a guy coming in last week, who did some research on the effectiveness of What if and wrote a report (...). A lot of that was about how do we get to the next level of What if Learning? Staff are doing 'what if' moments in the lesson, which is a kind of starting point, but it is meant to envelop everything, so it kind of goes against the spirit of it' (DHT, L121-125).

The DT/art and RE leader reflections on *What If Learning* were that senior leadership did not enforce its use, but teachers had used it. The DT/art leader perceived it worked well in the creative arts but was more challenging to implement when teaching information technology (DTL, L227-234).

'To be honest, I tried using it in all my lessons right from the beginning when you have to use it, but it sort of fizzled out for me. My argument is that especially in the arts you're pretty much doing What if Learning quite a lot (...). In my creative subjects, it's kind of like second nature with it' (DTL, L222-229).

The RE leader considered *What If Learning* was significant to the school as it was part of the teacher appraisal process. However, everyone needed reminding about its continued importance:

'We have things like, 'What if,' which we know of, which is very much part of all the lessons (...). It makes you think from a religious perspective (...). It is not being pushed, but certainly last year it was mentioned, and it's in our blueprints of what should be in every lesson, so it's part of our appraisal. Everyone expects it to be there. I think it's something like the prayer corners. It's there, and everyone just needs to be constantly reminded of it (...). I try and make it part of what we do in philosophy' (REL, L239-256).

While the chair of governors recognised *What If Learning* helped develop Christian distinctiveness, he confessed he had '*no evidence*' of it working. If there were better ways of embedding Christian distinctiveness in lessons, then he believed the school should work on those (CGB, L160-167).

The headteacher identified embedding *What If Learning* as less successful than other aspects of his vision for education ethos. However, he was motivated to persevere and relaunch it after the school completed its first Ofsted inspection. He perceived the lack in staffing capacity as a barrier to prioritising its use, particularly as senior non-Christian leaders expressed reluctance to lead on *What If Learning*. He acknowledged that professional development had to focus on logistical issues, such as determining how support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) worked. The deputy headteacher also believed in the need to focus on systems management:

'In setting up a big school, we had to get things right from the beginning, so all the systems we have are not too cosy (DHT, L19-20).'

The headteacher empathised with teachers needing to focus on what they considered the core purpose of teaching and learning with a pending Ofsted inspection but remained determined to embed the approach after the inspection:

'Teachers, I think, particularly with the whole Ofsted thing that has been going on, have wanted to focus on what they see as their core business, which I don't fully agree with, but I do understand' (HT, I2L66-67).

'Once Ofsted has gone, I would say then our key priority would be about the curriculum and trying to get staff to take ownership of the What If Learning (...). We will be spending a lot of time relaunching that to get people to think quite deeply about what learning is and what they are doing because of the way they set up the lesson (...). I think that is the bit we haven't got across the way we had hoped' (HT, I2L32-38).

Building staff knowledge and expertise

The headteacher reported the school allied with a primary school in its second year to '*share the learning journey*' for the use of *What if Learning*. He identified two teachers to lead *What if Learning* in the future. He found learning walks and '*positive nudging*' helpful in developing the use of the approach instead of providing teachers with directives in its use (HTI2, L368-384).

'We do formal lesson observations, all schools do, with good feedback and so forth, and we do learning walks all the time, so every lesson you could be dropped in on a learning walk. What we do off the back of that is various things but one of things that has been quite effective we call positive nudging (....) I wouldn't want to get into battle with people about it. I think that is one of the difficulties of What If. I've felt it wouldn't work to go down a very hard line of must (....), but it does make it slow' (HT, I2L366-382).

'We have briefings most mornings where we feedback what we've seen in learning walks, always the positive side' (HT12, L387-388).

6.1.5 Summary

I interpreted the leaders' experiences of developing and implementing a school vision for Christian education ethos. The account highlighted the challenges and tensions the headteacher and his deputy faced in implementing a workable vision. The headteacher's central strategy for developing Christian education ethos entailed embedding *What If Learning* across the curriculum. School leaders appeared united in aspiring to create a Free School with Christianity at its heart. However, the headteacher and deputy headteacher encountered tensions between themselves and the governing body and, in some instances, members of staff concerning interpretations of the nature and purposes of Christian education. These interpretations included:

1. The relative significance of Christian nurture and academic excellence in Christian education
2. The nature and importance of community service in the curriculum
3. The content and teaching of religious education and its contribution to the school's Christian education ethos.

6.2 Discussion of school leaders' experiences

In Section 6.2, I move to a higher interpretive level. I discuss the findings using my personal and professional experience and the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 on leadership, education ethos, and the nature of Christian education. I also use the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 4: Bronfenbrenner's Person-Process-Context-Time model of development, Wenger's communities of practice and Lukes' dimensions of power. I structure the discussion under three headings based on three aspects of Bronfenbrenner's model. Person characteristics,

proximal processes, and context. I include Wenger's communities of practice under the section on proximal processes.

6.2.1 The influence of leaders' characteristics on education ethos development

I used Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development to interpret how leaders' characteristics and biographies interacted with a range of social systems to influence their unique experiences of education ethos development. I considered the influence of leaders' force and demand characteristics on ethos development. Force characteristics are concerned with leaders' motivations and persistence. In contrast, resource characteristics refer to emotional states influencing aspirations for ethos development (Section 4.1.2).

In terms of the force characters, it was evident the headteacher purposively set out to influence the school's vision for education ethos. In this process, the evidence suggested his values, Christian beliefs and conception of a distinctively Christian school were determining influences in his approach to education ethos development and its constituent value system (HT, I1L12-20). It was clear he expected members of the school community to scrutinise his leadership. They looked to him to take charge and provide clear direction as a new headteacher of a new school (HT, I1L93-99).

My interpretation was the headteacher experienced tension between his motivation to shape the school's vision while leading collegially by including other stakeholders' perspectives. His account suggested he desired to be charismatic, representing a resource characteristic. As a charismatic leader, he looked to build an image of the school in his followers' hearts and minds' (Hughes, 2006, p.12.). The tension became evident as he showed anxiety to avoid potential criticisms of this charismatic leadership. He could have been concerned about the abuse of authority by exerting too vigorously ambitions over his followers (Western, 2013). As such, these practices could discourage school members from exercising a critical reflection on its educational purpose. It could create a position contrary to what the headteacher intended.

The headteacher clearly understood that establishing values and vision was essential in becoming a successful school leader (Day et al., 2010) (HT, I2L88-90). The headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors understood vision was crucial for giving direction to the school's future development (Leithwood et al., 2006; McKinsey and Co., 2010; Nanus, 1992). The headteacher's revelations established that vision and the school's value system represented an essential means for him to communicate the school's uniqueness or branding in a competitive education marketplace (see Chapter 2). From a recruitment perspective, he exemplified a

resource characteristic to enable prospective parents, pupils, and staff to visualise what the school would be like when it opened. By discussing the vision with other leaders, staff, parents, and pupils, the headteacher saw he could inspire commitment and loyalty to the school's educational purposes. He achieved this despite experiencing differences in value positions concerning the purposes of Christian education between himself, the school's governing body, and to some extent, members of staff and parents (Section 6.2.3).

My interpretation was the school leaders' characteristics interacted with the unique context of the school's formation in ethos development. It was evident the headteacher remained responsive to the school's changing internal and external contexts, indicative of adaptive leadership (Hickman, 2012). He sought to develop his proficiency as a leader and the leadership capacity of his team. As an exemplification of a force characteristic, the headteacher's purpose was to promote the staff's capacity to meet unknown conditions or threats, solve problems, and pursue new opportunities as the school developed. Changes in the internal context, such as the school's size and the relationships between the leaders, other staff and pupils influenced the leaders' understanding of the school's purposes. It led to tensions that needed resolution, such as the chaplain's decision to leave the school. In the external context, he sought to manage parental expectations. It was necessary to do so as there could be differences between those seeking a Christian education and those emphasising academic achievement. Adaptive leadership entailed him resolving conflicts in value positions (Hickman, 2012).

My analysis was that the headteacher sought an innovative approach to developing a Christian education ethos where Christianity would become embedded in, rather than peripheral to, classroom practices. He experienced Christianity as a 'bolt-on' to classroom practices in the previous Church schools where he worked (HT, I1L38-42). In this endeavour, even if unconsciously, the headteacher addressed the Church of England policy on Christian distinctiveness. Potential resource characteristics need not always be articulated but could be implicit. The Chadwick (2012, p.3) approach saw distinctiveness as 'a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum'. The headteacher's goal matched that of Chadwick. He saw the Christian education ethos as permeating the whole educational experience of all pupils. The headteacher's vision for education ethos matched Church policy on Christian distinctiveness, evidenced in three strands:

1. Christianity, becoming 'the DNA of the school' (HT, I1L38)
2. The 'transformation of lives' (social justice) (HT, I1L295-298)

3. 'Excellence in everything' (HT, I2L88-90; L295-298).

The headteacher's use of the structural metaphor 'DNA' to describe his vision for Christian education ethos provided a powerful means of making explicit to followers something potentially implicit. He conveyed an image of Christianity as the faith foundation of the school that provided the essence of the language and life of the school (HT, I1L38). The chair of governors distributed sticks of rocks with 'Christianity' embedded at their centre to prospective parents and pupils. His purpose was to enable their visualisation of Christianity's central importance to the school's ethos. Such metaphors illustrate Elbourne's (2012, p.246) argument that Church schools had to be more than 'ordinary schools with a few add-ons like fridge magnets' when reflecting on their identity.

My interpretation was the headteacher's strategy for implementing his vision had three main components:

1. Use of *What If Learning*, a Christian approach to teaching and learning, to underpin classroom pedagogical practices
2. Use of restorative justice to promote high-quality relationships and a sense of community
3. Developing an education ethos based on inclusion, high achievement, and Christian values

What became evident in the discussions between the headteacher and the school's community was that the headteacher sought to establish a school education ethos rooted in the Gospel. The intention was to inspire the confidence of community members in the school's Christian identity. School values would become ingrained in school practices such as collective worship and the restorative justice system used for conflict resolution. Providing collective worship during the school day contributed to the headteacher building a sense of community.

The headteacher clearly articulated his vision for the school's education ethos in the interviews. He considered he had the Christian faith, Christian literacy, and leadership competence to develop Christian distinctiveness within classroom practices. As part of his professional development, the headteacher became well-informed on Christian education literature through undertaking postgraduate study. He read Green's (2009c) research into ethos development in a City Technology College. However, he could not be sure of the impact of his vision on the pupils. He became encouraged when he viewed the pupils' data and satisfied himself that there was no

gap between his espoused ethos and the pupils' experience of that ethos. Indeed, the pupil data confirmed he was further forward in implementing his vision than he anticipated.

It was clear the headteacher's professional development and leadership experience in a Church of England school, enhanced his capacity to lead in developing the Christian ethos. From a transformative leadership perspective (Shields, 2010), he critiqued the purposes of schooling. He aimed to create an environment and practices to foster pupil achievement to allow the pupils to live a better life in common with others. My findings represented a departure from earlier research studies that found headteachers were unable to articulate how Christian distinctiveness linked to classroom practices (Green and Cooling, 2009; Jelfs, 2008; 2010; Colson, 2004; Street, 2007a).

As with recent research (Lumb, 2014 and Green, 2015), my study confirmed how the headteacher's values and discourse were influential in embedding Christian ethos in school and classroom practices. Green (2015) concluded that community members perceived the headteacher's values and work habits as significant in developing a Church school education ethos. Similarly, Lumb (2014) found the discourse and underlying value system informing the headteachers 'take care' philosophy influenced the formation of the school's ethos and the strategies underpinning pupils' exploration of spirituality within the curriculum (Section 3.2).

I likened the headteacher to a 'principled principal.' Principled principals were capable headteachers driven by their personal, moral, and educational values, who convincingly articulated these to provide a clear sense of institutional purpose and direction (Gold et al., 2003). Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher presented themselves as reflective and ambitious professionals. They had clarity concerning their values and beliefs and how these informed their vision for education ethos and leadership strategies. As the Christian community leader, the headteacher cited strong influences on his vision pursuit of two corresponding values: '*social justice*' and '*excellence*' (HT, 11L32; L88-90; 12-20). He considered he had a '*Christian duty*' to ensure children achieved as a '*matter of social justice*' (HT, 11L358; 12L88-90). His values constituted trans-rational values; principles based on commitment or faith (Hodgkinson, 1991). His use of the term 'duty' demonstrated that his values were also rational: he needed to justify his approach through logical reasoning.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) did not specifically identify faith as a personal characteristic influencing development. I identified faith as an influence on leaders' value positions, supporting the conclusion reached by Begley (2012). As committed Christians, the headteacher, chair of the

governing body and deputy headteacher cited personal Christian faith as significant to their respective visions for education ethos development. My research supported the findings of studies that identified the importance of faith in ethos development (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016; Green, E. 2009c; Green, S., 2015; Lumb, 2014; Pike, 2010). All three leaders viewed social justice as an essential purpose in the school's education. Their interpretation was that social justice would improve the life chances of pupils. Rather than ensuring equity in provision for all pupils, they saw pupils as unique individuals made in the image of God, requiring an education to meet their individual needs. The headteacher and deputy headteacher considered education as essential preparation for employment and pupils gaining the right qualifications. The headteacher saw differences in the interpretations of excellence by some staff and governors (Section 6.2.3). The headteacher's view was that Christian education should be based on the pursuit of social justice and excellence. Teachers could transform pupils' lives using a Christian approach to teaching and learning (HT, L295-298). The headteacher and deputy headteacher's view for achieving excellence extended beyond the achievement of narrow indicators for pupils' academic success as defined by Ofsted (2012). They included the demonstration of school values: truth, excellence, love, leadership, and service.

Servant leadership entailed understanding the followers' abilities, needs and personal goals and encouraging them to reach their potential (see Section 3.1). Servant leadership required persuasion rather than coercion (Greenleaf, 2002). It implied leaders should promote an open, transparent dialogue on the school's vision and values amongst community members. The deputy headteacher's experience as a chorister and leadership in a Church of England school influenced his aspiration for pupils to experience an inclusive ethos based on a Christian way of life (DHT, L103-108, L353-4). Pupils engagement in service within the school and local community was essential to him achieving this goal. My interpretation was that he saw leaders, staff, and pupils acting as servants in a Biblical sense. Staff and pupils could choose to become servants of God by serving others. This conception of service resembled servant leadership as conceptualised by Greenleaf (2002). Indeed, Greenleaf (2002) likened Jesus' to a servant leader. Christ taught and modelled service and sacrificed and portrayed Himself as the Servant of his Father (Prior, 2018).

As a founder of the school, the chair of governors displayed servant leadership traits and hoped pupils would develop such qualities. He exerted a strong influence in the initial stages in developing the school's vision for education ethos. He conceived the plan for the school's place in the community. He saw community service as an essential strategy in making his dream come

true. In this, he envisaged the school becoming a *'force for good'* in the community (CGB, L52-58).

While the governing body sought to develop an education that served socially disadvantaged pupils, the chair acknowledged the challenges in providing Christian education in a secular context. He recognised the challenge of delivering an education that served equally the families expecting high academic achievement and those seeking a school that nurtured children in the Christian faith. In this, he saw the governing body's central challenge as providing an education that combined 'the sacred with the secular' (CGB, L246-255). My interpretation was that he was familiar with the historical debates in the Church of England concerning the tension between an education that fulfilled Christian education's domestic and service functions (Dearing, 2001). Secularisation is a complex concept. In this context, he appeared to refer to 'secular' as the disappearance of Christian doctrinal features in religious education, declining Church attendance, and other religions' predominance in Western countries (Stolk, Gasenbeek and Veugelers; 2016). These aspects created leadership challenges in providing Christian education in schools regarding making RE and collective worship inclusive for all pupils.

The commitment of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors to their core values helped manage the enormity of their tasks. These included establishing a successful school from scratch and navigating their way through the proliferation of expectations placed on them by the governing body, Central Government, parents, and pupils. Nevertheless, the differences in value positions the headteacher and deputy headteacher encountered in working with the governing body caused frustration and ultimately limited their leadership autonomy in developing the Christian education ethos (Section 6.2.3).

6.2.2 Proximal processes: Interactions between leaders

Proximal processes constituted enduring forms of interaction between leaders and their environment (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). They influenced the leaders' experiences of education ethos development. Within the microsystem, the headteacher and deputy formed a trusting relationship, which helped the headteacher implement his vision for the school's education ethos. The headteacher and deputy headteacher's value positions on the purpose of Christian education were aligned. It strengthened their collaborative approach to ethos development. However, their relationships with other staff and governors were problematic.

At the early stage of the school's development, all the leaders showed unity in their excitement about creating a new Christian Free School. Their shared Christian faith underpinned their

motivation in making Christianity central to school life. All the school leaders demonstrated unity in their aspirations to embed a Christian school value system in school practices. This approach was in line with the Church of England expectation of Church school leadership (Chadwick, 2012; National Society, 2013b).

The headteacher was attracted to working at the school as he shared the governors' passion for putting Christianity at the heart of the school (HT, I1L58-62). This initial consensus did not last. The headteacher and deputy's views demonstrated that distinct differences emerged about Christian education's meaning and purpose. These differences led to tensions between the headteacher and governing body and the headteacher and school chaplain (superordinate theme 3). They increased the headteacher's frustration, which was evident in my second interview with him. These tensions strained the trust between the headteacher and governors. In the longer term, it had the potential to cause considerable discomfort to a headteacher. If not resolved, such differences could potentially erode the headteacher's enthusiasm. Distrust was likely to occur when individuals did not share the same values and could lead to a breakdown in relationships (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.56). It was clear the headteacher recognised the potential danger and consequently sought to resolve the value conflicts.

The Academies Act 2010 enabled leaders to find innovative means of promoting pupil achievement (Woods, 2007). In practice, the headteacher's accountability to the School Trust limited his autonomy in developing the school's education ethos. The evolving relationships between leaders and sponsors provided insight into how leaders adapted to their roles under sponsorship arrangements (Gibson, 2014).

Within Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of development, the School Trust constituted the exosystem surrounding the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The School's Trust determined, in their absence, the school's vision. Subsequently, it influenced their leadership of the school's education ethos development and their identity formation. In the initial stages of establishing the Free School, the School Trust, as sponsor and representative of the founding churches, was highly influential in forming the vision for the education ethos. The chair of governors saw their vision as setting the agenda for ethos development. The governors placed importance on appointing the right senior staff to implement their vision. The governors were adamant the new headteacher should comply with this vision, as made explicit to candidates at interview and expected the headteacher's loyalty to that vision (CGB, L1375-380). They considered the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and school chaplain must possess knowledge of, and believe in, the Christian faith as essential attributes for their positions. The governors

emphasised the importance of collective worship, religious education, and instruction in Christianity in developing education ethos.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher understood their remit was to build on the Trust's vision. Nonetheless, they strived to be creative and control ethos development. When appointed, they might have considered they would have the autonomy to develop the school's education ethos. In this, they may have underestimated the determination of the governing body to exert control.

Nonetheless, the headteacher and deputy remained determined to create a school reflective of their faith positions and professional expertise. They were highly motivated in this endeavour. They considered they had earned the positional authority on appointment to the school and expected the governors would trust them to do their jobs. Their selection suggested they demonstrated the professional expertise and leadership qualities desired by the School Trust. Furthermore, in England, educational policy expected headteachers to lead, develop and implement a shared vision as an aspect of effective leadership (DfES, 2004; NCSL, 2009; NCSL, 2012). Strict conformity to the Trust's vision could have reduced the headteacher to a manager: managers 'do things right' whilst leaders 'do the right thing' (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p.21).

The governors' and headteacher's interpretations differed concerning the nature and purposes of Christian education. Each engaged in a power struggle to do what they believed was the right thing. The headteacher was unwilling to sacrifice his value position and professional standards to implement practices that made him feel uncomfortable, or he considered unethical. He would not accept using religious education to instruct pupils in Christianity, the position the headteacher saw certain governors as favouring. My interpretation was that compliance solely with the founders' vision would suppress the headteacher's passion and enthusiasm for his role.

Based on Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power, the sponsors exerted power over the headteacher's leadership through agenda setting, indicative of the second dimension. They established a vision for education ethos development, made before the headteacher was appointed and insisted that he should implement this. Once the school opened, the position shifted. The headteacher engaged in a power struggle with the governing body to control the development and implementation of the school's vision for Christian education ethos. This observable conflict was indicative of the first dimension of power. The headteacher intended his values should underpin the vision and school value system. For this reason, he sought to control

the agenda and lead in implementing the school value system and establish the standards expected of staff and pupils.

The findings supported other research that identified the strength of school sponsors' influence over pupils' education in schools. Both Pike (2010), who researched the Trinity Academy, and Green (2009c), who undertook ethnographic research of a Bible-based CTC, identified the sponsor's strong influence over the espoused value system. Gibson (2014) identified sponsors' vision and values as highly influential in the initial stages of establishing sponsored academies. As with the Free School in this study, Gibson (2014, p.7) demonstrated that sponsors saw the headteacher as 'the conduit' for their vision and provided induction programmes for principals to comprehend their vision.

Although Green, E. (2009c) found the espoused school value system at odds with pupils' experienced ethos, my research did not lead to a similar conclusion. I interpreted that the pupils understood the headteacher's vision and experienced his values (see Chapter 7). My findings indicated the headteacher successfully influenced a positive, inclusive education ethos as experienced by pupils. The headteacher deployed this vision to inspire prospective teachers to join him in his venture (HT, I1L76-80).

Following the taking up of his post, the headteacher shaped his commitment to external policy directives. Hoyle and Wallace (2007) found that leaders responded to external policy directives in three ways: implementing external policy direction; manifesting minimal compliance; or shaping their commitment to policy (Hoyle and Wallace, 2007). The Free School headteacher's response to policy was more complicated than Hoyle and Wallace proposed because he was subject to the Ofsted inspection cycle's impact on the school. Leaders placed a greater priority on compliance with Ofsted accountability criteria as the first Ofsted inspection approached. However, at the same time, the headteacher promoted what he believed to be an innovative vision by placing a high value on pupils' Christian character development. In furthering this vision, he fashioned the curriculum, school practices and pedagogy to develop pupils' characters alongside their academic achievement.

Influencing commitment to the school's vision for education ethos

In exercising leadership, the headteacher used various strategies to influence and inspire commitment to his vision for education ethos. The headteacher established a linguistic discourse on values, which he called 'the school way' of doing things. He intended the values would act as standards for the community. As a community of practice, the values would enable the

community to talk about their school life experiences as meaningful (Wenger, 1998). As an agenda, 'the school way', provided scope for the headteacher to exert influence over the types of interactions and relationships within the community. In this respect, his use of power was illustrative of Lukes' (1974, 2005) third dimension of power, power by domination. He sought to persuade others using his dominant position as headteacher that the values were in their best interests. Furthermore, it offered leaders the means of articulating what was of most value to the community and providing them with the foundations to build trusting relationships amongst community members. In this way, he intended to use power as a form of emancipation.

Ethical school leaders need to do what they say they will do (Begley, 2012). Through modelling the values, the school leaders acted with integrity, which was essential to cultivating an ethos of trust amongst pupils, parents, and staff (Simons, 1999 in Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.26). Their perspectives suggested that their promotion of the values was in the community's interests (DTL, L178-199). The headteacher and deputy promoted the embedding of the values in the ethos. Its success would represent the successful implementation of the headteacher's vision. In this regard, the deputy considered pupils demonstrated loyalty to the values, using them to self-regulate their behaviours and those of their peers. In terms of leaders managing the school's future uncertainties, as the school expanded with a new annual intake of pupils, establishing values as cultural norms were essential in providing stability.

Use of What If Learning

The use of *What If Learning* across the school constituted the headteacher's central strategy for embedding school values in school and classroom practices and enabling pupils' Christian formation. At the time of the data-collection, *What If Learning* was a relatively new pedagogical approach available to Christian educators (see Section 3.2). Limited exemplary materials were available to support teachers in their use. The headteacher aspired for teachers to frame lessons in a Christian context using *What if Learning*. It entailed inviting pupils to reflect on the meaning, significance, and purposes of their activities (Cooling and Green, 2015). For the headteacher, the advantage was encouraging teachers to make appropriate connections between teaching and learning practices, the school's Christian ethos and the Christian worldview, if appropriate. By adopting the approach, the headteacher emphasised pupils' Christian formation over transmitting Christian knowledge and beliefs. The headteacher, however, experienced challenges in embedding *What If Learning* across the school.

The challenges of implementing What If Learning

One of the most significant challenges the headteacher faced in leading the development of education ethos concerned implementing *What if Learning* across the school (superordinate themes 4). He found that teachers and governors were cautious about embracing the approach and did not share his enthusiasm for its use. He became frustrated over how long it took to embed *What if Learning* in classroom practices and the teachers' demands for 'What if' packs to guide teaching and learning. While remaining uncertain about how to resolve this issue, the headteacher articulated a belief in a collegial approach towards its implementation (HT, I1L110-117). He believed *What if Learning* should be under teachers' control, representing a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach to pedagogical leadership. His approach was for teachers to share responsibility for strategy. He emphasised an approach whereby teachers could share in making decisions concerning implementing *What If Learning* rather than imposing it on them (Davies and Davies, 2012).

The headteacher intended to balance his control of the agenda with teacher autonomy. He wanted to retain a clear overview of teachers' progress in using *What If Learning*, even when providing them with the freedom to trial the new way of working. In this, he was tolerant of a risk-taking ethos. Teachers could experiment without reprimand for making mistakes. Instead, they would engage in reflective dialogue with colleagues on their experiences to enhance their pedagogical practices. Middle leaders, such as the DT/art leader and RE leader, interpreted that they used such an approach in improving their teaching.

The headteacher's experience in deploying *What If Learning* as a whole-school approach to education ethos development raised questions about the extent to which he could enforce its use. The issue of enforcement was crucial concerning teachers of other faiths or no faith, who might perceive the approach as an explicitly Christian form of education. The headteacher's perspectives suggested he approached the use of *What If Learning* as a whole-school strategy with caution and patience. He expressed his reluctance when monitoring teaching and learning to discuss teachers' compliance with the approach because it might lead to potential confrontations. As the headteacher did not enforce its use, teachers did not see it as a school priority (DTL, L222-229).

In the school leadership literature, the headteacher's instructional or learning-centred leadership was considered necessary in influencing classroom practices and pupil achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Murphy et al., 2007; Day and Sammons, 2013). Southworth (2009) proposed

that leaders used modelling, monitoring, and dialogue to influence pupil learning. The headteacher modelled the *What If Learning* approach in his class teaching to persuade other teachers in its use. The monitoring of the effectiveness of using *What if Learning* was problematic. Quality indicators concerning its use were unavailable. The school leaders tended to employ the Ofsted (2012) criteria in judging the quality of teaching and learning, which were not appropriate for this teaching approach. The headteacher tended towards the view that more appropriate systems were mentoring and coaching. The headteacher identified the importance of positive feedback from lesson observations and learning walks in staff briefing sessions as his starting point for motivating teachers to use the approach. He used the term 'gentle nudging' as opposed to enforced compliance.

Research into *What if Learning* centred on teachers use of the approach in the classroom rather than the perspectives of headteachers on its use as a school-wide initiative (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016; Church of England Education Office, 2016a). The DT/art leader and RE leader experienced uncertainty about the priority they should place on its use. The chair of governors expressed interest in a 'what works' approach to education ethos development. He questioned whether the embedding of *What If Learning* would effectively promote the school's Christian education ethos. The governing body's interest in measuring Christian education ethos effectiveness raised questions about quantifying developments in Christian education ethos, pupils' spirituality, and development of individual character traits. Measuring such outcomes could be problematic. Likewise, discussions focused on the correct means of reframing pupils' imaginations about what they were ultimately learning might also be challenging.

Teachers' desire for a 'What If' pack challenged the headteacher in implementing his approach to *What If Learning*. The headteacher was aware that teachers experienced challenges in the mindset change required to reconfigure their teaching from a Christian perspective. Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell (2016) reached similar conclusions, establishing secondary school teachers unfamiliar with its use found the approach 'weird'. Consequently, they experienced challenges in its implementation (Section 3.2). While some found the approach too Christian, others found it insufficiently Christian (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). Teachers finding it too Christian saw themselves as artificially inserting God or Christianity into their subjects, which compromised their subject discipline. Research studies into the use of *What if Learning* recommended collective leadership, time for reflection on the use of the approach and professional development of teachers as significant in enabling teachers to comprehend the approach (Church of England Education Office, 2016a; Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016).

What If Learning focused on the 'formational impact of Christian practices in and out of the classroom and not just on developing pupils' cognitive ability' (Cooling 2016, p.31). My interpretation was the teachers could move beyond reductionist approaches to education. In a high-stakes, high accountability education system (Greany, 2017), the use of safe pedagogy, with sound and secure evidence bases, might seem preferable. These could provide teachers with greater certainty in achieving performance outcomes measured by Ofsted's (2012) accountability framework. The headteacher advocated using *What If Learning* across all subjects. It was despite the lack of published research on its use or its impact on pupils' learning. Green and Cooling (2015) considered *What If Learning* was not a method or instrument that teachers could use to ensure their practice was 'Christian' and yield measurable outcomes. However, since completing the data collection, the Church of England Education Office (2016a) found *What If Learning* could positively develop the Christian virtue of hospitality in Church schools. The headteacher's vision could be considered well-placed but visionary.

It was questionable whether all the Free School leaders fully understood *What If Learning's* potential in enabling the Christian formation of pupils and how it needed prioritising. The DT/art leader, although familiar with its use, appeared not to fully comprehend its importance as a strategy for embedding the Christian ethos. As a Christian, he may not have viewed the strategy as sufficiently Christian. He associated the school's Christian distinctiveness with the collective worship practices and the analysis of Biblical passages during worship. He did not wish to influence pupils to be Christians and sought a neutral position in their education.

The headteacher recognised the importance of teachers' professional development in using *What if Learning*. Talented staff adopting imaginative Christian approaches to learning could help the school educate its pupils in the long-term. Evans (2008) in Sachs (2016, p. 420) identified two approaches to professional development: functional and attitudinal. Functional approaches focused on instruction to achieve short-term instrumentalist outcomes. Teachers typically used recipes or tried and tested practices legitimised by experience or acceptance, or research findings (Sachs and Logan, 1990, p.474). The headteacher adopted an attitudinal approach in developing teachers' confidence and expertise. He recognised the teachers' preference was to implement pre-planned recipe-type lessons in a '*What if pack*' (HT, I1L123-128). His focus was on teachers appreciating the complexities of Christian education and encouraged forming collaborative partnerships to develop expertise and experience. The headteacher envisaged teachers working as reflective learners engaged in 'professional knowledge building,' where

they would 'challenge, defend, explicate and question' the information they received (Sachs and Logan, 1990, p.479).

Analysis using dimensions of power

Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power provided a means of analysing the headteacher's influence over teachers. The headteacher initially sought to inspire teachers in the use of *What If Learning*. He wished the teachers to see its use as being in their best interests and those of the pupils as a means of embedding the school's Christian ethos. It reflected what Lukes (2005) termed the third dimension, power by domination. He sought to shape the teachers' desires and value positions to embed Christian education ethos. The headteacher invested in staff development to induct and inspire teachers into using the approach when the school opened. However, this approach did not prove sufficient to embed *What If Learning* in the way he desired.

Instead, the headteacher tried to covertly shape teachers' value positions to persuade them to comply with his *What If Learning* agenda. In furthering this agenda, he implemented a lesson-planning strategy as a blueprint. The purpose was to establish the *What If Learning* approach as a pattern of teacher behaviour. The headteacher's ultimate goal was for teachers to use the blueprint to promote pupils' character development in every lesson. As a control mechanism, he included *What If Learning* as a factor in staff appraisals. The purpose was to formally signal its importance and act to hold staff accountable for its use in their lessons. What was unclear was what sanctions he might use for teachers' non-compliance, as appraisal was developmental rather than disciplinary. Nonetheless, it was of symbolic importance in signifying its importance as part of the headteacher's agenda.

These processes represented examples of Lukes' (2005) third dimension in the way the headteacher sought to influence teachers' approaches to *What If Learning*. The headteacher's decision to use this pedagogy kept other education ethos development approaches off the agenda. Mobilisation of bias favouring some set of preferences against others was indicative of Lukes' second-dimension of power (Edwards, 2006, p.572).

As the school's first Ofsted inspection drew nearer, the teachers expressed unease about prioritising *What If Learning*. They exerted power over the headteacher through exercising voice (Hirschman, 1970). The headteacher could have observed conflict through teachers' expressed grievances. Consequently, he changed subtly the agenda, altering the priority placed on Christian education ethos development to the focus on aspects measured. These included pupil progress, behaviour, and attendance to comply with regulatory educational requirements. The

headteacher's decision suggested the successful exercise of staff voice. At a higher level, the Ofsted agenda exerted power over the leaders, which was indicative of Lukes' second dimension, power by agenda-setting.

The impending Ofsted inspection did not change his commitment to *What if Learning*. It remained part of his agenda, even though he temporarily re-orientated his priorities. The headteacher understood other school leaders wanted to focus on what they considered the 'core purpose' of teaching and learning (HT, I2L66-67). The headteacher was sensitive to this situation and saw a need for pragmatism in the short term. He remained persistent and unwavering in believing that staff should continue to work towards this vision after Ofsted. He recognised the limitations in his influence when prioritising the complex demands in leading the Ofsted preparations. It illustrated the conflicts arising in an education system where there was distrust of teacher decision-making and judgement. It weakened leaders' capacity to encourage teachers to act creatively (Sachs, 2016, p.422). The headteacher adapted his leadership in response to these contextual demands. However, the headteacher did not give up on his strategy. By the second interview, when the school was in its second year, he had two potential teachers to lead on *What if Learning*. It was indicative of a realisation that there was a need to work on championing the approach.

The Free School had a Section 48 inspection three years after the school opened. It focused on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Free School with a Christian foundation. The school's grading as outstanding overall endorsed the use of *What If Learning* to provide opportunities for students to discuss issues of religious, spiritual, or moral concern. As such, it provided the basis for the headteacher to pursue his strategy.

The headteacher faced challenges in convincing members of the governing body and staff members of the approach's value. There was a direct clash between the headteacher and the governors. His work in convincing the governors was indicative of Lukes' first dimension of power. There were observable conflicts and concrete decision-making, with each expressing their views to influence the other. There were indications that teachers used the approach, but not consistently. The chair of governors considered that while *What If Learning* provided a potential means of embedding Christianity in classroom practices, he expressed scepticism about its effectiveness. He wanted leaders to identify and utilise approaches to embedding Christian education ethos that worked, rather than them fixating on a single strategy (CGB, L159-167). It would be interesting to return to the school to investigate whether the Section 48

inspection outcome potentially changed the headteacher's relationship with the governing body.

6.2.3 The importance of context

Managing tensions and value conflicts when leading education ethos development

Different value positions appeared to originate within the five ecological systems defined by Bronfenbrenner (2005). These interacted with the personal values and characteristics of the leaders to influence their experiences of ethos development. They included the headteacher's microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. I explained the nature of these systems in Section 4.1.3.

The headteacher's account provided insights into the tensions and value conflicts experienced when developing the school's Christian education ethos and the challenges faced in resolving them. The headteacher faced pressures between his value-position and those of others concerning the nature and purposes of Christian education and the school's curriculum design. In these circumstances, he needed personal qualities and leadership expertise to manage the school's micro-politics, mediate and resolve value conflicts, and inspire others to achieve the school's objectives.

Initially, there was consensus amongst leaders about the type of education ethos they aspired to develop. However, differences in value-positions arose amongst leaders. The first issue entailed establishing the relative importance of attaining academic standards (performativity) versus Christian nurture. The second concerned the significance of *What If Learning* in embedding Christian education ethos. The third was related to using the autonomy granted to Free Schools to design the curriculum, particularly concerning the nature and purpose of RE and service.

Differences in value positions concerning nurture and performativity

At the macrosystem level, the outermost system of the leaders' environments (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), societal and Church values influenced leaders' perspectives. The headteacher's and deputy's aspirations were that Christian education should focus on 'nurture' and 'excellence'. Any tensions between the two aspects were reconcilable. Their ambition to reconcile care with the achievement of excellence was indicative of the Church of England's aspirations concerning the provision of education in Church schools (Chadwick, 2012; Archbishops' Council, 2013).

The headteacher made excellence explicit as one of the school's five espoused institutional values. As a new headteacher, he looked to establish an educational ethos focused on high expectations and achievement. While acknowledging the importance of excellence in a market-driven education system, he linked his belief in excellence to his quest for social justice. He was also accountable for the school's success and leadership effectiveness through meeting Ofsted (2012) criteria. I interpreted that he aimed to secure the Ofsted grading of good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. This judgement would confirm his success within the school and the local community.

The chair of governors aimed for the school to provide an education that nurtured Christian and non-Christian pupils. His view was that there was a tension between these two aims. The headteacher experienced challenges from the governors to justify his reconciliation of nurture with excellence. The school leaders interpreted nurture differently in the context of Christian education. The leaders collectively sought to care for pupils' wellbeing by providing acts of Christian love and service. Furthermore, the headteacher sought to develop pupils' character virtues, foster pupils' spirituality, and even develop pupils' understandings of their rights, responsibilities, and civic duties towards others. The headteacher saw nurture as the Christian formation of pupils. He promoted developing virtues using *What If Learning*. The deputy headteacher spoke of pupils learning to take responsibility for their actions and acquire values-related behaviours (DHT, L63-67).

In contrast, the chair explained how the governors associated Christian nurture with pupils' faith formation and transmitting knowledge about Christianity. The governors wanted to put more Christianity into the curriculum and ensure the pupils received instruction in Christianity. The headteacher was aware of the tensions between himself and the governors about pupils learning about Christianity relative to other religions in religious education. The headteacher's approach was for pupils to question and explore aspects of faith in a safe space rather than religious education to provide pupil instruction in Christianity. In contrast to the governors' view, the headteacher considered that ethical approaches should allow pupils to interpret and question Biblical texts and Christian values (Cooling, 2010). The RE leader explained that her plans for form times illustrated how pupils could reflect on famous people as cultural heroes, school values and Biblical passages in an interpretive manner.

Astley (1994), when considering the nature and purposes of Christian education distinguished between education into Christianity, education about Christianity and education in a Christian manner (Section 3.1.2). The headteacher and deputy rejected the approaches to Christian

education that entailed adding Bible verses to lessons. Their educational perspective was that pupils should learn in a Christian manner. The purpose of Christian education was to focus on transforming pupils' imaginations rather than absorbing knowledge (Smith, 2009). Using *What if Learning* could signpost pupils to a distinctively Christian way of being in the world, shaped by God's intentions for humanity (Cooling and Cooling 2013). Pupils could learn what it meant to be human and consider using their knowledge and skills to experience 'life in all its fullness' (Cooling and Cooling, 2013, p24). Governors, on the other hand, valued promoting knowledge about Christianity as a factual exercise. The governors placed importance on religious instruction to embed Christian ethos. Instruction into Christianity, concerned with pupils' faith formation, was a controversial aspect of Christian education in a religiously diverse modern society. Leaders faced the challenge of being inclusive to pupils of all faiths, indicated by the chair of the governing body's view about leading collective worship to enable ethos development.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher indicated the governors and some teachers did not fully understand the use of *What If Learning* as the means of pupils learning in a Christian manner. The deputy headteacher appreciated its value. His view was that its use would enable pupils' Christian formation through the school's experiences without incorporating the Bible in every lesson.

The headteacher and deputy encountered teachers and governors, who perceived that pupils' nurturing was compromised in striving for high academic achievement. The headteacher cited how the school's chaplain could not accept the school's focus on high achievement and left the school. Hirschman (1970) argued that individuals could use the options of exit, voice, and loyalty to address any dissatisfaction. The chaplain voiced his views, but he could not resolve the conflict despite meeting the headteacher to discuss these concerns. The consequence was the chaplain exited the school. From the headteacher's perspective, the chaplain was uncomfortable with the focus on academic standards. This critical incident illustrated how the headteacher's values guided his decision-making. Furthermore, not all values conflicts were resolvable without the need for a participant to exit the organisation. It was because the headteacher was unwilling to compromise his value position. His power position within the school was such that he was able to prevail in this instance.

The headteacher encountered contention between himself and the governing body about the nature and purpose of service within the school curriculum. The headteacher regarded engagement as invaluable in encouraging pupils to reflect on how service related to the community, society, and personal growth and provide feedback to help them solve problems.

While including service might appear an innovative aspect of the curriculum, the headteacher did not consider all service educationally worthwhile elements. He cited pupils packing bags in supermarkets as an example. He objected to the governing body's measuring the hours pupils engaged in community service as too simplistic in evaluating the quality of the school's ethos. Meinhard and Brown's (2010) also found that community service programmes were beneficial in pupils' citizenship development. However, it was essential that such programmes were well-structured and provided pupils with opportunities to exercise leadership, problem-solving and responsibility. It was this aspect the headteacher saw as lacking.

Differences in value positions concerning the development of pupils' critical thinking

At the Bronfenbrenner (2005) macrosystem level, the market education system emphasised the importance of parental choice in schooling, albeit within restrictions imposed by the admissions policies. At Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem level, an interaction between the headteacher's and parents' values systems influenced the headteacher's perspectives. The headteacher experienced differences between his value system and those of some Christian parents. The headteacher valued the development of open-mindedness, personal autonomy, and critical reasoning skills in pupils. However, he encountered some parents who wanted their children nurturing in the Christian faith, which reflected how members of the governing body thought. The headteacher found that parents challenged the purpose of developing pupils' criticality. The headteacher promoted pupil reflection on aspects of faith, school values and the big questions about life. He envisaged religious education and philosophy as making significant contributions to this goal. The headteacher managed to resolve differences in perspectives through open dialogue with parents. He justified his position in terms of what was in the children's best interests in preparing them for university education. Although an instrumental approach, it was intelligible to the parents. He used his power to persuade to encourage the parents to keep their children at the school.

From a power perspective, the headteacher employed Lukes' (2005) third dimension of power by getting parents to value what he wanted them to. In terms of Hirschman's concepts of exit voice and loyalty, he provided parents with options. His strategy enabled parents to exercise their voice to gain their trust within the school through dialogue. Such dialogue led to exploring the values so parents could build their trust in the school's education and its leaders' credibility. Differences in value systems could lead to a loss of trust. In a new school, the headteacher and deputy sought to build positive relations with parents and engage them in their children's education.

6.3 Summary and reflection on the issues raised

In this Chapter, I interpreted leaders' experiences of developing education ethos in a newly opened Christian Free School. To discuss leaders' interpretations, I used the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. The discussion was informed by the theoretical framework constituting Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of human development, Wenger's communities of practice and Lukes' dimensions of power.

Leaders perspectives provided valuable insights into the challenges they faced in developing Christian education ethos. Using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of development, my analysis suggested that leaders' visions for education ethos stemmed from a culmination of their personal qualities, experiences, and values. Initially, the school's vision was devised by and controlled by the sponsoring Trust/founders. In the absence of a headteacher, the founders made decisions about the vision and the school's mission statement. The headteacher viewed himself as the Christian community leader and strived to make the school vision his own. Once the school was open, the headteacher and governors engaged in a power struggle to gain control over further developing and implementing the vision for education ethos.

The headteacher promoted an innovative approach to Christian education ethos development rather than replicating previous models he had encountered. Government expectations were headteachers should have the autonomy to develop innovative strategies for education in Free Schools (DfE, 2010). He sought to inspire teachers into developing a Christian approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum to embed the Christian values framework within the school's ethos. He was responsive to opportunities and threats arising within the school's contexts. He could adapt his leadership accordingly whilst remaining true to his values. With the school's internal context changing as the school expanded and matured, leaders indicated the need to address the potential threat to the stability of the education ethos established. There was also the challenge of preparing staff to experience success in the school's approaching Ofsted. It required compliance with Ofsted's external accountability criteria for excellence.

The headteacher was accountable to Ofsted, the School Trust, and the parents for the school's success. In a high-stakes accountability system, he could have experienced anxiety about failure. The Free School study illustrated how leaders' perspectives, vision, and strategy were high on their agendas. However, they faced ongoing tensions between balancing autonomy and control. Higham and Earley (2013, p.704) suggested that school leaders could meet competing external demands. The headteacher and deputy recognised the tensions but were proactive in handling

the competing demands. Instead of reducing their decision-making capacity to 'tactical interpretation,' they were engaged in 'strategizing' to develop the Christian education vision.

A range of studies found that headteachers could not clearly articulate the distinctiveness of Christian education in the first part of the millennium (Elbourne, 2012; Colson, 2004, Street, 2007a; Jelfs, 2008). By way of contrast, the headteacher and deputy in the Free School showed the capacity to identify a distinctively Christian education ethos. The headteacher's commitment to implementing his vision and values arose because he had certain personal qualities. They included perseverance; the mind-set to succeed, a willingness to take risks in a high-stakes, high accountability context, and a desire to work through conflicts in value positions concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. While the chair of governors sought an approach to Christian education that worked, the headteacher wanted excellence in all aspects of the school's work. He favoured learning in a Christian manner. While the governors preferred education into and about Christianity (Astley 1994), the headteacher experienced high success levels in implementing aspects of his vision. He embedded the school's values within the school's ethos. His success was partly attributable to the personal competence, ambition, entrepreneurial spirit, and reflective professionalism he brought to his role.

My findings illustrate how Central Government and school governor accountability frameworks exerted power over the headteacher's leadership when analysing the power dimensions in education ethos development. In this, they created tensions for leaders concerning competing priorities. Based on the headteacher's account, I interpreted that teachers prioritised pedagogical practices which provided greater certainty in enabling their pupils to perform academically. In this, they favoured the learning outcomes required by Ofsted over the use of *What If Learning*. Although there was an aspiration to develop pupils beyond meeting narrowly defined and measurable performance criteria, the headteacher faced challenges in convincing staff and governors of the value of *What if Learning*.

It is necessary to view leaders' development and implementation of the vision for a Christian education ethos in the Free School within the broader school context and power relationships between parties. Questions arose about the degree of trust governors placed in the headteacher, who held the professional credibility to enable pupils' life chances, from both social justice and performance perspectives. The headteacher sought to resolve value conflicts concerning the nature and purposes of Christian education and negotiate a shared ambition for Christian education between the foundation Churches, the School Trust, governors, staff, and parents. It required using the right mechanisms, time, and space for dialogue to develop shared

ways forward across the community. The findings indicated the importance of the headteacher's continued monitoring of the trust-power relationships within the community and enabling members to share expertise within and across schools to build relational trust.

Chapter 7

Presentation of Study One

Part 2: Interpretative account for the Christian Free School pupils and discussion of the findings

7.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present the second part of Study One: my interpretation of four Year 7 pupils' experiences of their education in the Christian Free School education ethos. I structure the interpretative account around four superordinate themes. These are grounded in the pupils' accounts of their educational experiences. In Section 7.2, I discuss my interpretation of the meaning of pupils' experiences. In this, I use the literature I reviewed on education ethos and Christian education in Chapters 2 and 3 and the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 4.

Within the following table I provide some information about the pupils:

Figure 7.0 Table providing information about the pupil participants (Free School)

Name	Gender	Declared religiosity	Interests
Simon	Male	Christian	DT/art
Jade	Female	Christian	Sport
Andrew	Male	Non-Christian but acknowledged the existence of God	Sport, DT/art
Joshua	Male	Christian	Music

In presenting the account in Section 7.1, I adopted the following conventions:

1. Written or verbal quotations, including photographic captions, are in italics to distinguish the participants' voices from my interpretation of their lived experiences.
2. Brackets (...) Indicate the removal of part of the utterance.
3. PRC followed by a number designates the photo-ranking number in the diamond-nine exercise (what pupils valued most about their school).
4. DWT followed by a number indicates the number of the draw-and-write task. DWT1 represents what it was like to be a pupil at the school. DWT2 represents what made

the school special. DWT3 represents what the pupil wished to achieve that would have made the school proud of him/her (See Appendix I for a complete set of each child's DWTs).

7.1 The pupils' experiences of their education

The four superordinate themes are:

1. Sense of belonging.
2. Valuing Christian symbols, artefacts and practices.
3. Excellence in everything.
4. Making dreams come true.

Collectively, these themes provide insights into pupils' perceptions of the school's ethos in terms of its atmosphere and underlying values and practices. They also represent pupils' interpretations of the purposes of the school's education, the expectations placed on them and the types of relationships they encountered within the school community. Furthermore, the themes indicate what pupils viewed as important to the school community and valued most about their education. Using an IPA methodology, I based my analysis on interpretivism as the social view of reality. The claims I make are tentative.

7.1.1 Theme 1: Sense of belonging

The first superordinate theme represents the connections pupils made with their school community and their special spaces within the school. It reflects their concern to gain acceptance by the community and their pride from being attached to their school. The tasks suggested they experienced a supportive, inclusive ethos, which enabled them to explore their changing personal identities.

Belonging

A pattern appeared in the types of language pupils used to describe their school, indicative of them experiencing a '*united,*' caring, and inclusive ethos. Andrew's six pairs of smiling faces conveyed his peers experiencing a friendly, joyful, and happy atmosphere. They stemmed from him, forming firm friendships and his enjoyment of lessons (Andrew, DWT1):

'I've put some people, and everyone has a friend, and there's some people in a lesson, and they're enjoying themselves, and I've put words like 'joy, fun, hope, leadership, happy' as I think they all represent the school' (Andrew, I1, L566-568).

Jade's thoughts about being a pupil included being in an *'understanding environment'* and *'caring community'* where *'everyone looks out for everyone else'* and helps each other (Jade, DWT1). This ethos influenced her sense of wellbeing positively. Joshua referenced the school values as reflective of his life as a pupil. He indicated that values-related behaviours influenced the mood of the school and the behaviours of pupils. He circled the words representing the school's values: *'hope'*, *'love'*, *'leadership'*, *'service'*, *'truth'* and *'excellence'* in DWT1 (Joshua, DWT1). Use of the language of values reoccurred across pupils' DWTs. I outline their perspectives on the school values in greater depth under the theme *'excellence in everything'*. Pupils communicated that the school values, expressed in the school's code of conduct, helped establish clear expectations for behaviour.

In DWT2, all pupils depicted the small size of the school building and its community as a distinctive feature that facilitated close, caring relationships among community members. Jade described the school as *'a very Christian, very small school'* where *'everyone knows everyone'* (Jade, DWT2). She drew six *'kind'* and *'friendly'* stick people, with smiling faces under the left-hand arm of an enlarged cross. Simon drew several circles, tightly clustered together and made a sizeable, inverted triangle, representing heads of pupils *'united together'*. Two smaller clusters, on either side of the pupils, represented the teachers together. Andrew mirrored Simon's inverted triangular representation of the community, recording *'happy friends'* next to this drawing. However, Andrew could not explain why he chose the triangular mode of representation, commenting he just chose *'to do it like that'* (Andrew, DWT2). With pupils completing the task in the same room, they might have shared their ideas for representing the community. Andrew depicted what was unique about his school in three other drawings (Andrew, DWT2). One was of the school logo. Another represented a side-profile of two heads of pupils sharing laughter. Indicative of them enjoying their learning. The third drawing, the four grasped hands of friendship, suggested a sophisticated, symbolic representation of him and his friends belonging to a caring Christian community. It expressed the importance he placed on friendship (Andrew, DWT2). His friends' arms formed the arms in a symbol of a cross:

'I've done a cross out of hands, people shaking hands, because everyone is friends. They're like friends, and they're laughing together. This shows that everyone is happy and they're all friendly, and that's the X (Name of School) badge, and I think some words that sum up the school are friendly, happy and fun' (Andrew, I1, L344-347).

Collectively, pupils' responses to DWT2 indicated their willingness to identify with their school and friendship group. The school name appeared in large lettering on Andrew's and Joshua's

pictures, indicating its importance. Pupil responses to all the DWTs suggested they felt well cared for and valued. The presence of enlarged drawings of Christian crosses in their pictures denoted the importance of the school's Christian identity to them. I discuss their valuing of, and connection with the Christian cross under superordinate theme 3. Pupils' responses to the photo-elicitation tasks and group interviews provided further evidence of them feeling valued, accepted by their community, and them valuing a sense of community.

Pupils welcomed engagement in collegial tasks and practices involving the whole school. For example, Jade photographed a tree of decorated hands displayed in the collective worship hall, which the community created on her school induction day. This picture exemplified her connectedness to her community and the value she placed on feeling a sense of community (Jade, PRC2):

'I chose the hands because we made it, the whole school made it. The whole school has got their hands there, and that is where we eat lunch, and it is where we worship' (Jade, I2, L375-378).

Discussion with the group indicated the whole school had collectively created a cloth featuring every child's hand-sewn initials, which hung in the worship hall behind the worship table. Andrew featured this cloth in his photo of the worship table (Andrew, PRC8). When we went around the school, the pupils proudly pointed out the worship area to me. The strategic positioning of this cloth signalled its potential worth to the community. Andrew liked how each piece exemplified the community's 'creativity' (Andrew, PRC8). Pupils photographed art displays as aspects of value (Andrew, PRC3). They served to mark their presence within the community, including the work of all the pupils. The art display acted as a source of inspiration for their learning. Comments by Simon and Andrew indicated an eagerness to share their skills and talents, recognising the worth of the work of others and understanding the importance of enabling the success of their peers at school:

'I chose this picture (...) It is my artwork. It has been put up, so the teacher has put everyone's up so everyone can see everyone else's, and you can go, 'Wow!' and I think I will use that in my artwork too' (Simon, I2L394-397).

'Everybody's artwork: I chose Everybody's art because it helps me to go and look at the art. I really like and use parts that make it good, e.g., tone, and will use it in my piece, and it will help me to improve' (Andrew, PRC3).

Friendship and love

All pupils identified friendship and love as essential components of the school's ethos as they enhanced their welfare and enjoyment of school. Andrew exemplified his experiences of friendship in his two drawings. One was of smiling faces, and the other was the cross of friendship (Andrew, DWT1; I1L456; DWT2). Pupils' photographed places around the school where they valued their time with friends (theme: special places). The meaning they attributed to friendship appeared to go beyond merely socialising but embraced a deep mutual concern for others' welfare. *'Looking out'* for each other mattered as much as friends supporting and inspiring each other to achieve their learning aspirations. Simon described people as *'kind-hearted'* and *'happy'* (DWT2), indicative of him experiencing high levels of care. In her detailed yet complex mind-map of herself at school, Jade described a *'friendly community'* with four aspects: *'understanding environment; caring community; helping each other'* and one in which *'everyone looks out for everyone else'*. The pupils understood the significance of helping others, which they appeared to associate with acts of service (Jade, DWT3; Andrew, DWT3).

'Well, sometimes when we finish our work early, we help each other, or if someone's not getting anywhere, then you can help them' (Jade, I2, L447-448.).

Jade photographed a large smiley face displayed in the school corridor to symbolise her conception of friendship as the most important school characteristic. Friendship was *'a massive part'* of her life and one of her *'favourite things'* about the school (Jade, PRC1). Simon also photographed the smiley face to indicate the importance of friendship:

'Friendship: This is important to everybody in the school because everyone has friends and they support and comfort each other in all things' (Simon, PRC7).

'My friends are very supportive, and one good thing about our school is that no one is really horrible to anyone and if someone is feeling lonely, we go over and talk to them' (Simon, I2, Andrew, DWT1; I1L456), L270-272).

The word *'love'* appeared in Simon and Joshua's first DWTs when describing what it was like to be a pupil at the school. Joshua considered that God had a love for everyone. I considered his perspective further in the next Section *'being myself'*. He wrote, *'God loves you, and he cares for you'* (Joshua, DWT1). Jade connected love with acts of worship and form time, indicating her perceptions of the atmosphere during this time.

Pupils valued highly positive, loving relationships and freedom from strife. They found the use of *'restorative justice'* helpful in resolving conflict and friendship issues. Jade identified three aspects of restorative justice: the pupils used to talk through issues (Jade DWT2). She linked restorative justice to the 'TELLS', the school's five values (Jade, I1, L212-215). She appreciated that the process had strict protocols. It was necessary to ask someone what they were thinking when resolving incidents but not why they acted as they did. All pupils kept a card in their uniform pocket with three questions to guide them through a restorative justice session. They received training in the system during a restorative justice day. She looked forward to sharing a presentation she had prepared with the new Year 7 to initiate them into the process.

Being Myself

In DWT1, two pupils expressed that they could be themselves at school. Joshua wrote, *'You can be yourself'* and acclaimed that *'God loves you and cares for you'* (Joshua, DWT1). Simon wrote *'Being myself, being me'* within a circle with light beams representing his school (Simon, DWT1). He reinforced this view in DWT2 and selected a photo of his favourite room, the art and DT room, where he engaged in his favourite subject and could be himself (Simon, PRC1). In DWT1, DWT2 and DWT3, Simon projected himself achieving and enjoying school. He considered the school met his learning and social needs. His current emotional disposition contrasted with the anxiety experienced in his primary school education. He indicated the focus was on him performing well in tests and him possessing an image of himself as a failure. He perceived *'peace'* as central to his welfare, and he was free from worries in a *'kind-hearted'* and *'blessed community'* (Simon, DWT2). He drew a descending dove, which typically symbolised the Holy Spirit in Christianity, over an enlarged cross to represent peace (Simon, I1L282). He referenced *'kind-hearted'* people behaving in a Christianly manner. He explained his response to DWT1 and DWT2:

'I did the cross to show we're a Christian school, and then I did the dove because we have peace at school, and I did the circle to show that we're united and that we are a small school, and I did like light beams to represent our school to show that we're very kind-hearted and have no worries and happy' (Simon, I1L282-286).

'At my primary school, the teachers used to pressure us to do well in all our work and do well in our tests and everything, but they didn't give us the help that we needed to do well in our tests (...) at this school they want kids to do the best that they can do (...). They just try and show you how to improve, so you get better. You don't get shouted at and get

disheartened about it thinking that you're rubbish, but if you don't do good, they'll say to you, 'try harder,' but they don't get all angry, so they help you to get better' (Simon, I1L303-309).

Being proud

Pupils used the word '*proud*' to express feelings of pride in their school and achievements. Simon photographed his school uniform with the logo on the pocket as symbolic of the pride he perceived pupils felt in being members of the school (Simon, PRC5). He signified that pupils were willing to wear the uniform to indicate their association with their school. Joshua also drew the uniform as an aspect that made his school special (Joshua, DWT2). He perceived it was comfortable and attractive and kept him warm and dry, which was not the case with other local school uniforms.

'School uniform: This is really important as it is a nice school uniform and people are proud to wear it, and it is comfortable' (Simon, PRC5).

The pupils photographed pieces of work of which they were proud. Andrew photographed a wooden pencil tidier he made in a design technology display and a detailed pencil drawing of his bearded pet dragon in an art display (Andrew, PRC1; PRC5). He considered he had worked hard to improve his drawing in response to his teacher's feedback. Similarly, Simon was proud of a '*pop-art*' drawing he completed during art club (Simon, PRC4). The pupils aspired to do well in school to satisfy both themselves and their teachers.

Special places

The pupils photographed special places where they experienced comfort, enjoyment in learning or opportunities to socialise with friends. They selected areas where the whole community met, providing a sense of community. They valued spaces where their learning was displayed, which gave them inspiration, confidence, and achievement. They also photographed classrooms in which they learned their favourite subjects.

Jade and Andrew valued the worship hall. This hall served as a canteen, worship hall and social centre for meeting friends at break times. Jade saw it as '*the centre of the school*', where many activities happened, such as talks and a restorative justice day (Jade, I2, L257-259). Jade and Andrew perceived worship as prominent in the school timetable.

'In the worship hall, we always meet every Monday and Thursday, so it's a massive part of our school timetable. We always meet as a community, so we all have a little job to do every so often' (Jade, PRC4).

'I have chosen the worship hall because I think it is a really important part of the school because everyone uses it whenever we want at lunch and break and sometimes at the beginning of the day, we go there to worship' (Andrew, PRC8).

My observations of the pupils at break and lunchtimes indicated they photographed spaces they preferred to use. They enjoyed pleasurable experiences with friends. Simon's basketball ring photo represented the place he liked to play *'good games'* with his friends at break (Simon, PRC9). Andrew and Joshua's photos of the ping-pong tables symbolised enjoyment of sport and friendship (Andrew, PRC4; Joshua, PRC6).

The pupils valued unique places and artefacts related to favourite subjects and personal interests. Jade's photographed the netball post to symbolise her love of sport, teamwork, and pride when representing her school in matches (Jade, PRC6). Andrew and Simon photographed the music room. Simon focused on his favourite instrument, the drums (Simon, PRC3). Andrew liked music as a subject, took piano lessons, played the guitar, and found music therapeutic (Andrew, PRC2). He recounted occasions enthusiastically when he contributed to classes by playing his guitar. Learning about shanties inspired him to write accompanying sketches and his musical compositions.

'I chose the pianos because I really enjoy learning how to play new things on instruments, and it makes me forget about my worries that I have on my mind. Also, I enjoy music, especially the bass guitar' (Andrew, PRC2).

Three pupils photographed the DT/art room because they enjoyed the subject and placed importance on learning in art and design in preparation for their future careers (Joshua, PRC3; Andrew, PRC6; Simon, PRC1).

'I chose the DT/art room because I really enjoy both lessons, and I really enjoy being creative with what I make and draw' (Andrew, PRC6).

Three pupils valued their form room (Simon, PRC6; Andrew, PRC7; Joshua, PRC8). They began their day in their form rooms to engage in reflection, catch up on work and discuss any concerns privately with their form tutors (Simon, I2, L228-229).

'I have chosen my form room because it is central to starting the day. Also, if anyone has any problems, they can go to their form room and talk to their form tutor about what's wrong' (Andrew, PRC7).

'My form room is important because we use it every day, and it's a place to reflect when we aren't in worship. Also, we can catch up on some work' (Joshua, PRC8).

The pupils were excited about the school moving to new premises. They photographed the architects' plans for the new school, which they anticipated would have improved facilities for learning, sport, and socialising (Jade, PRC9).

7.1.2 Theme 2: Valuing of Christian practices, symbols, and artefacts

Importance of the cross

All pupils drew enlarged crosses relative to other aspects on the page to depict what made their school special (Andrew, DWT2; Simon, DWT2; Joshua, DWT2, Jade, DWT2). Two pupils also photographed at least one cross in the school's environment as aspects they valued (Simon PRC2, Jade, PRC3). Simon photographed the cross on the school blazer and the large cross on the front of the school building (PRC5, PRC2). Andrew photographed a cross he had designed and made in his wooden pencil tidier (PRC4). Jade photographed the cross in the prayer area and on the front of the school (Jade, PRC3, PRC7).

Pupils appeared to use the symbol to identify the school's Christian character (Simon, I1L295). They signified the cross's importance in worship or to depict a Christian ethos focused on the Trinity. They reflected on its meaning in their personal lives, education, and faith. Andrew's drawing of the cross of the grasped hands resembled a Christian cross. He associated the cross with friendship and his sense of belonging to a caring Christian community (Andrew, DWT2; I1L365-369). When pupils saw a cross, they expressed reflection on the resurrection of Jesus, who died on the cross for them. Simon and Joshua made explicit the cross was essential to their Christian identity and belief system.

'The Cross: This expresses our own school and shows we are a Christian school. This symbol is important to me as well' (Simon, PRC2).

Across a large cross, Jade made the statement *'excellence in everything'*, when contemplating what made her school special (DWT2). She conceptualised a deep relationship between Christianity, her school and excellence.

'All the words represent (school name) like hope, trust, excellence, love and service (...) The teachers encourage us to do 100% in our work, so there's a quote on our little card saying excellence, excellence in everything, so we try to get 100%' (Jade, i1L554-557).

Her photograph of a large cross at the school's entrance reinforced its importance in her life.

'The cross: I chose this image of the cross because it's on our logo, and we see it every day when we come to school. We also hear passages from the Bible, and sometimes it's about Jesus dying on the cross' (Jade, PRC3).

She perceived the cross was in use in church and school worship. She said, *'in school, we refer to Jesus dying on the cross for us'* (Jade, I2, L170-172).

Worship and reflection

The pupils perceived that prayer, reflection and Christian worship formed an essential part of their school lives and school timetable. They indicated that they valued these practices, the associated artefacts, and the spaces in which they took place: the prayer areas, form room and worship hall (Andrew, PRC8; Jade, PRC4). They described the whole school community meeting twice per week for worship in the worship hall. They contributed by lighting a candle, undertaking a reading, or leading a *'candle prayer'*. Andrew photographed the worship table, complete with three candles lit during worship, a lectern and two Bibles as aspects he valued. Similarly, Jade indicated she valued the worship hall, the form-room prayer area and the display of hands in the worship hall (Jade, PRC2, PRC4, PRC7):

'Worship hall: In the worship hall, we always meet every Monday and Thursday, so it's a massive part of our school timetable. We always meet as a community, so we all have a little job to do every so often' (Jade, PRC4).

'Prayer area: In most form groups, we have a prayer space where we can reflect and learn about other famous people' (Jade, PRC7).

Jade associated prayer areas as places for reflection and use as part of form time (Jade, I2, L276-279). Each prayer area had a small board that displayed prayers, questions, pictures, and famous people's quotations. She explained that pupils could contribute to the contents. Teachers also gave the pupils in form times quotations to help them through the day. In DWT2, Jade connected worship with the words: *'love'*, *'wisdom'*, *'truth'* and *'person of the week'* and *'the School way'* (Jade, I1L338-339).

In the group discussion, the pupils indicated that celebration formed an essential part of worship. They used the word *'assembly'* and *'worship'* to describe worships focused on celebration. I observed a celebratory element of worship when the headteacher awarded pupils with stars for achievement and a class attendance award.

'What I quite like is that at the end of each term we do a celebration assembly where you get a truth award, reflection awards and the person who really shone in a subject. It doesn't have to be the person who was best at the subject, but it could be a person who tried really hard or something like that' (Jade, I1, L659-662).

The pupils spoke of *'reflection'* on the content of worship and what they learned in form time as significant of the community's expectations of pupils. Andrew described the worship hall as a *'really good place to reflect and think about things'* (Andrew, I2L84-85). During form-time, the pupils recalled reflecting on the meaning of passages of the Bible, the importance of charities, such as Christian Aid, and famous people's lives. When reflecting, they tried to think about how their learning could make a difference in their lives (Simon, I1L101-102). The pupils described learning in form time about *'famous people'*, who had achieved *'something good'*, such as Sir Edgar Allan Poe and Nelson Mandela. I observed worship in form time when the pupils selected quotations perceived as having a tremendous significance to the lives of others. They discussed the importance of one quote and its application to their lives in small groups and then shared their views with their class. The pupils also described experiencing the occasional *'form assemblies'* when they performed to the rest of the school.

'You usually read your books and talk about the person of the week..... It's a famous person who has done something good, like a few weeks ago we did like these experts and stuff like that, and this week, the person of the week is Edgar Allan Poe' (Simon, I1L97-99).

Use of the Bible

Two pupils, Andrew and Joshua, took close-up shots of the Bible in the collective worship hall as a valued artefact. Each pupil received a present of a Bible when starting at the school. To Joshua, the Bible was representative of his Christian faith. Andrew described himself as not being Christian but declared he believed in God and found he could use specific passages he had learnt at school in his life (Andrew, I2L266-268). He, however, questioned whether all aspects of the Bible were believable. The use of the Bible helped him resolve troubled periods in his life. The pupils indicated they were encouraged to reflect on Biblical passages' relevance to their life-

needs and situations in worship. They tended to read the Bible during form-time rather than at home. During form time, teachers spoke about a passage and person of the week.

'I have chosen the Bible because, even though I am not a Christian, I still believe in some of the Bible messages, so if I was in trouble, I could look through the Bible, and it would help me to work out what to do' (Andrew, PRC9).

'The Bible is an important thing to me as I am a Christian and some things in the Bible help me in my life. Every week in worship, we read a verse from the Bible, and a student reads it out. Also, in collective worship, we have a candle prayer, which is read whilst someone lights a candle' (Joshua, PRC5).

7.1.3 Theme 3: Excellence in everything

As a superordinate theme, excellence in everything encapsulates the pupils' experiences of a school ethos focused on high achievement, self-discipline, sense of community and care. Pupils viewed *'Excellence in everything'* as the community's umbrella term to embrace the school's shared values, code of conduct, and aspirations for individual and community achievement.

Two pupils used the phrase *'excellence in everything'* to convey the importance the community placed on high standards. Jade wrote the phrase across the arms of a drawn symbol of the cross (Jade, DWT2). Joshua used bold capitals to emphasise the significance of excellence in his life:

'EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING' (Joshua, DWT2).

The pupils' viewed *'excellence'* as meaning engagement, effort, and demonstration of the school values. Jade perceived that the pupils should exhibit the school's four *'learning habits'*: resilience, teamwork, love, and perseverance, reflective of a disciplined work ethic (Jade, DWT2, I1L335-336). On a tour of the school, she proudly pointed out poster-sized photos of pupils demonstrating such behaviours on the corridor walls.

Giving and achieving 100 per cent

The phrase 100% appeared boldly in large lettering in Simon's DWT3, indicating that effort and academic performance mattered. He drew himself, achieving 100% in a written composition, which would make his school proud of him. Reaching 100% of his performance targets was a short-term target he set; becoming an art teacher was his long-term goal. Art was one of his favourite subjects. He saw himself making progress by acting on the feedback his teacher

provided. He described himself moving from one National Curriculum sub-level of attainment to the next:

'I have put in the short-term target to achieve all my targets (...). In the next piece of work, I got a higher grade because I did the description, which got me a higher grade. Then in the long term, I want to be an art teacher, so I did a paintbrush and things and got 100% in everything' (Simon, DWT3).

The pupils perceived that peers and teachers were encouraging. They described their teachers as being *'really good'* at teaching and providing helpful feedback on learning (Jade, I3L648-653). They also viewed teachers as good role models of school values.

'The teachers encourage us to do 100% in our work, so there is a quote on our little card saying 'excellence, excellence, excellence in everything, so we try our best to get 100%' (Joshua, I1, L556-557).

'Some teachers are always saying to you, 'even if you don't do well, as long as you're trying your best', and I put creativity, peace, service, love, and dreams, fulfilling your dreams (...) The teachers and Everybody on the staff and friends say to you *'achieve your dreams'* (Simon, I1L586-589).

'They're all really good, and we really learn a lot about everything that we do, and all the lessons are really good, and all the teachers are really, really kind in work (...) We did our end of year tests for everything. So, looking back on it when I was doing the test, I just thought to myself, *'Wow, I've learnt lots of stuff I never knew'* (Jade, I3L648-653).

They saw the school marking system as based on *'What Went Well'* and *'Even Better If'*, abbreviated to *'WWW'* and *'EBI'* (Joshua, DWT3; Jade, DWT2).

'We have this thing called, or we use 'what went well', so teachers mark our work by saying 'what went well', and then we do 'even better if' and then we do 'my response is'. So, you say, 'I'm going to include this', or things like that (...) It's helpful to know what I did well, and then you know what you need to improve on (Joshua, I1L435-437, 441-442).

Andrew envisaged achieving 100% in seven subjects and meeting his performance targets. He also perceived that actions, which entailed helping people and the community, mattered. In a cartoon-like image, he drew himself in aiding a distressed and injured person lying on the ground (Andrew, DWT3). His picture indicated that excellence also focused on fulfilling expectations to care for others and achieving academically.

The pupils valued rewards. They drew stars, which teachers awarded at three excellence levels: bronze, silver, and gold (Andrew, DWT3; Simon, DWT1). They valued access to electronic programmes for accelerated maths and reading. They could complete these and receive stars as rewards for engagement.

'When we get 100% on a piece of work, in the lunch hall, there's a star wall, and when you do well on AR Reading or AR Maths, you get to put a star with your name on it on the wall'
(Simon, IL471-475).

The School Way

The pupils linked the term *'excellence in everything'* to *'the school (name of school) way'*, which was the term used to describe how to do things around the school. Joshua recorded all five school values when explaining what it was like to be a pupil at the school: truth, excellence, love, leadership, and service (Joshua, DWT1). The pupils abbreviated these values, referring to them collectively as the *'TELLS'*. Jade referred to all five values when explaining what made her school special (Jade, DWT2), indicative that she valued the values.

The pupils appeared familiar with the meaning of the values and their application within their school lives. Jade associated *'love'* and *'truth'* with worship (Jade, DWT2). Pupils associated the importance of leadership with their role as class ambassadors. Teachers randomly selected these pupils to meet, greet, and explain the lesson to classroom visitors. While Jade said she found telling people what she was learning *'nerve-racking'*, Joshua perceived it was *'good for confidence'* (Jade, I1, L527; Joshua, I1, L522).

Creativity and enjoyment

The pupils viewed their learning experiences positively. There were several photos of favourite rooms and lessons amongst the group. Art, design and technology and music were popular subjects amongst the group. Pupils welcomed having the opportunity to express themselves creatively and construct things in lessons. They often linked the enjoyment of learning experiences to opportunities they experienced to express their creativity. Andrew and Jade appeared proud to be part of a creative community. Andrew spoke of the school, making two blankets from each child's embroidered initials (Andrew, I1, L567-578).

'I chose the DT/art room because I really enjoy being creative and what I make and draw'
(Andrew, PRC6).

7.1.4 Theme 4: Making dreams come true

This superordinate theme encapsulates the pupils' hopes and aspirations for the future. It conveys what the pupils imagined was the ultimate purpose of their education, which centred on them achieving academic excellence and making a difference to the lives of others. The focus on achievement links with the superordinate theme 'excellence in everything'.

Jade aspired to 'make someone's dream come true' as something that would make her school proud of her (Jade, DWT3). In DWT3, she wrote about her experiences of service. Service was an essential part of the school curriculum. Jade linked engagement in service to fulfilling dreams and undertaking worthwhile activities for the good of others (Jade, I1L607-611). Her service experiences inspired her to build the foundations of charities' and participate in fund-raising events to make a difference in others' lives.

The other pupils also identified service as a distinctive feature of the school (Andrew, DWT2 and 3; Joshua, DWT2). Their experience of service appeared novel and exciting. It was an unexpected part of the taught curriculum. Jade believed the school would be proud of her if she put others before herself and understood others (Jade, DWT3; I1, L391-393). She recognised the kind of person the school wanted her to be or become.

Concerning the pupils' sense of belonging (superordinate theme 1), pupils considered engaging in service helped people 'fit into the community' (Jade, I1L393). The pupils described service as going into the community and packing bags, 'without payment', at Tesco and raising money for charities such as Christian Aid through planning and organising events. They also visited elderly people's homes to help-out, play bingo and talk with people (Joshua, I1, L365-369). Andrew alone engaged in various tasks: packing bags at supermarkets, picking up litter, playing bingo with people at an old peoples' home and fund-raising for Christian Aid (Andrew, I1, L413-420). Joshua explained his picture represented an old lady who dropped her bag in a supermarket and a compassionate pupil saying, 'I'll help you' (Joshua, DWT 2, I1, L365-369).

When asked how the pupils felt the school made a difference to them, their responses included gaining confidence, doing better things, thinking more about others and helping others:

'It's probably made me more confident in myself because I used to get really bad like I find it really easy to talk to people, but when I'm up on the stage and doing a production and talking in front of people, I used to get really bad stage-fright, and so it's kind of made me more confident because on the induction day I read a poem out in front of all the people

because we were given poems to read that we'd written, so I read mine out, and I wasn't that scared' (Simon, 11L620-624).

'I think it's made me think about people more' (Andrew, 11L603).

'The idea that you can help people in every aspect. Like you wouldn't think like when I went to a primary school or when I went over to Tesco to pack bags and things, I didn't think this school would be doing that and like helping the community and things like that and raising money for somebody else and not for yourself, like putting others before you, basically' (Jade, 11L607-611).

'It's probably made me think better about others, and to help others, to do better things really' (Joshua, 11L635).

The pupils were hopeful of a bright future. They portrayed themselves as either achieving their learning targets, achieving their dreams, or following their chosen careers (Simon, DWT3; Andrew, DWT3). Simon and Joshua wanted to use their developing expertise in art and DT within their professional careers (Simon, DWT3; Joshua, DWT3). Simon aspired to become an art teacher and Joshua, an architect or builder. Joshua sought to design houses and have a profitable and successful business. He sought to earn *'quite a bit of money'* (Joshua, 11, L713-714).

7.1.5 Summary

The elicitation tasks enabled the collection of rich data and my development of a positive rapport with pupils. Pupils found the tasks accessible, which encouraged creative responses. They could articulate the nature of the school's education ethos and how it influenced their learning. While mindful of the dangers of reading too much into my interpretation of the pupils' tasks, I derived four superordinate themes within the data set. These formed the basis of my interpretative account for the group.

Pupils used diverse modes of communication to express their experiences. They drew on a range of socially recognised conventions and styles in the DWTs, including words, phrases, stylised lettering, mind-maps, sketches, symbols, and cartoons. They often used realism in drawings and conveyed their emotional states and the school's atmosphere using cartoon-like images. Such forms of representation indicated learned forms of visual representation used in society.

The pupils experienced the school ethos as the feel or mood of the place, as interactions between community members, school routines, practices, and school values. They used aspects

of the community's discourse familiar to them to describe the school's education ethos. Their experiences of this ethos appeared to be overall positive. The tasks provided insights into their emotional states, perceived achievements, responses to the expectations leaders placed on them, their future aspirations, and their connectedness to their school community.

7.2 Discussion of the pupils' experiences

In part 2 of this Chapter, I discuss the pupils' experiences of their education within the school's education ethos. I use relevant literature on state-funded Christian schools in England (Chapter 3) and the theoretical framework constituting Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model for human development, Wenger's (1998) communities of practice and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power outlined in Chapter 4.

7.2.1 Analysis using Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model of human development

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model helped identify the complex range of influences on pupils' educational experiences. In terms of contextual effects, some occurred within the school community, and others went beyond this. Bronfenbrenner (1979) originally envisaged these contextual influences as a series of layers around the child, like a Russian doll.

I present the contextual influences on the Christian Free School pupils' development diagrammatically in Figure 7.2.1. In the research, the pupils' provided rich insights into the unique ways they experienced regular interactions with several people in their lives who influenced their development. These included their immediate families, peers, friends, teachers, school staff and school leaders. Some people, such as their families, were outside of the school microsystem. They constituted separate microsystems with their unique forms of interactions, values, standards, and practices, which could collectively interact to influence individual development. The pupils saw their parents as instrumental in their choice of secondary school, and their parents' confidence in the school mattered. Adam's DWT3 provided an example of the family influence on pupil experience. He outlined his aspiration to become an architect or builder, his grandfather's profession (Adam, DWT3).

Of particular interest in my analysis was the interaction between each pupil's microsystem and exosystem. I focused my discussion on these two systems for the pupil group. When I compared the data sets for leaders and pupils, a critical finding was the headteacher's vision for the school's education ethos and value system influenced pupils' experienced ethos. In Section 2.5, I distinguished between the nature of espoused and experienced education ethos. In

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model, this relationship illustrated the interaction between the pupils' exosystem and microsystem.

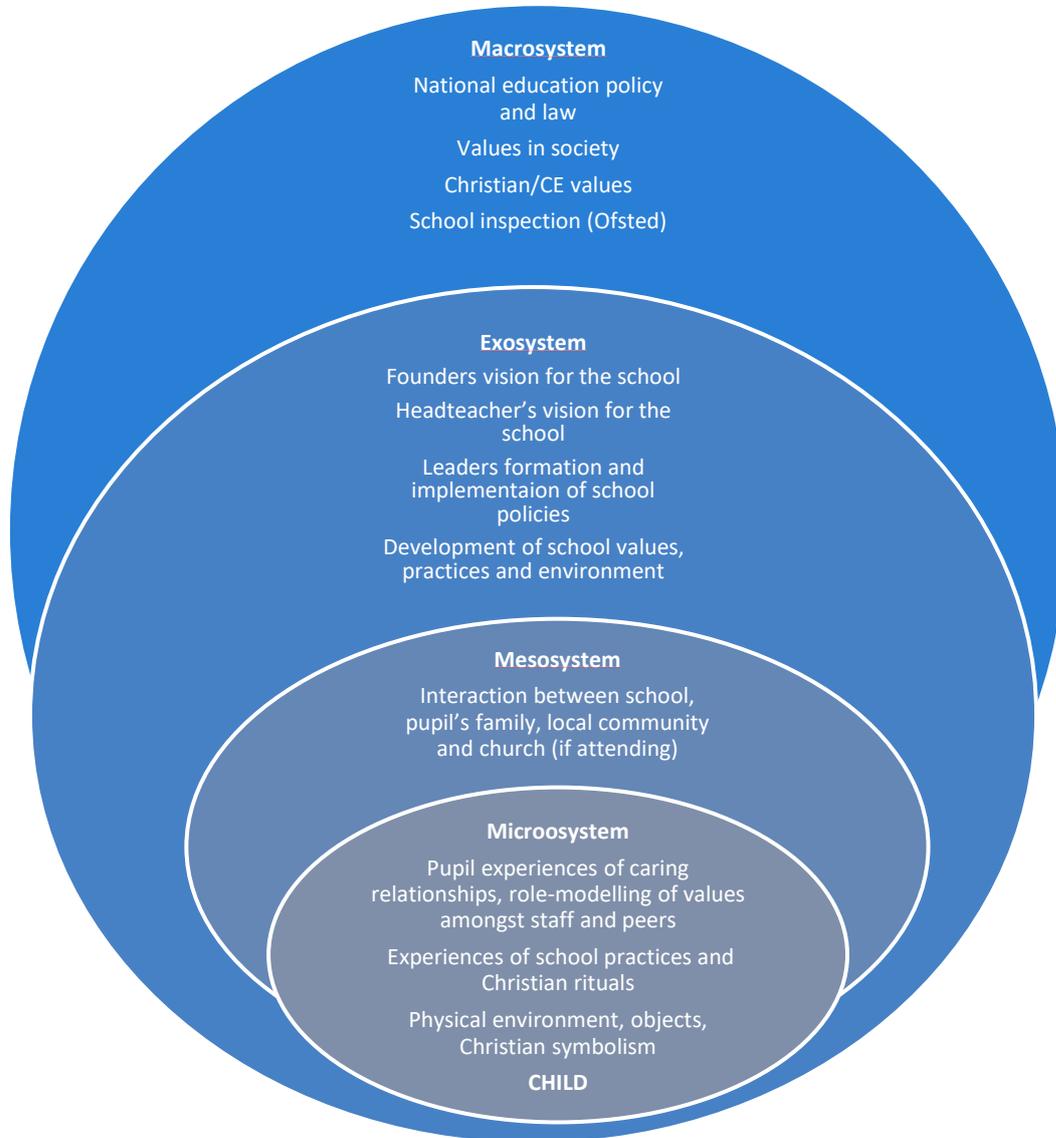


Figure 7.2.1 Contextual influences on pupils' experiences of their education in the Christian Free School based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model of human development

Proximal processes: Interactions between people

The persistent forms of interaction between pupils and the people, objects and symbols in their environment influenced pupils' educational experiences. Bronfenbrenner (2005) referred to these interactions as proximal processes. Through such interactions, pupils in the research learned to understand what their school stood for at the microsystem level. In turn, pupils could

reciprocally influence the development of the school's education ethos. All leaders, including the headteacher, could influence the pupils' learning when teaching lessons, managing school practices, and leading worship. Additionally, they could indirectly influence the pupils' learning through their decisions about the school's education ethos and underpinning value system.

Leaders within the Free School faced tensions in creating an education ethos distinctively Christian and inclusive of pupils of all faiths (Section 6.2.3). Within the pupils' tasks, their choice of words, phrases, and drawings conveyed them experiencing high-quality relationships between the school community members suggestive of a caring and inclusive education ethos. Both Christian and non-Christian pupils felt valued, accepted, respected, and loved within the community. They considered the education ethos as contributing positively to their happiness and enjoyment of school (Andrew, DWT1; Jade, DWT1). For example, Jade described the community as '*understanding*' and '*caring*' with members looking out for others' welfare (Jade, DWT1). Pupils included '*kind*' and '*friendly*' people in their DWTs (Simon, DWT2) and photographs. It was evident that pupils at the school could experience upset or injury. For instance, in his drawing, Andrew indicated that staff or peers would offer well-meaning assistance to pupils when they hurt themselves (Andrew, DWT3).

Pupils perspectives on high-quality relationships being a distinctive aspect of Christian ethos were consistent with other research studies exploring the nature of ethos undertaken by Jelfs (2010) and Hemming (2017) (Section 3.2). Furthermore, the findings supported Dearing's (2001) argument that inclusiveness contributes to a distinctively Christian ethos. Leaders met the perceived needs of these pupils with Christian faith or no faith. Pupils indicated that in a small community, the staff treated them as individuals, knew their names and cared about them (Jade DWT2). Leaders put systems in place that enabled them to seek pastoral and learning support and gain feedback (Simon DWT3). They reviewed their learning, progress with form tutors. The feedback system appeared to provide them with clear learning targets. It also focused on communicating the pride and appreciation of staff experienced in pupils' efforts to contribute to the community's growth. From the pupils' perspectives, the staff believed that they would succeed in their lives. Consequently, pupils sought to live up to the expectations placed on them. They came to believe in themselves and their capacities to fulfil their hopes and dreams (Simon, I1L586-589; Jade, I3L648-653).

Proximal processes: The significance of the school values

To build a sense of community and encourage pupils to act in a Christian manner, leaders in the Free School embedded a set of school values as the community's code of conduct (Section 6.1.2). The decisions taken about the values to represent the community occurred at Bronfenbrenner's (2005) exosystem level. It meant the leaders took these decisions in these pupils' absence. However, the values subsequently influenced both their conduct and identity formation. Even though the pupils did not participate in conversations about selecting the school values, they indicated reflecting on them in whole-school worship and form worship. The pupils understood the school's value system and its significance as a set of community standards they were willing to embrace. In their DWTs, they all used the headteacher's linguistic discourse on the 'TELLS' (truth, excellent leadership, love, and service) and 'the school way' to describe the school's education ethos, their learning aspirations, and behaviour expectations of others (Joshua DWT1; Andrew DWT1, Jade DWT2; Simon DWT1). The pupils' familiarity with the discourse on values provided evidence of its regular and explicit usage amongst community members and its embedding within the school's ethos. The findings confirmed those of Lumb (2014) and Green (2015) that the discourse and values of the headteacher were highly influential in developing the pupils' experienced ethos in the Church of England schools (Section 3.2).

The headteacher wanted pupils to experience an ethos based on the Trinity and learn to act in a Christian manner (Section 6.2.3). Although leaders did not explicitly use the terms 'spirituality' or 'spiritual development' in their interviews, they conveyed the importance of children exploring and developing spirituality. The chair of the governing body stated the school's mission statement centred on children reaching their potential and living life to all its fullness, quoting John 10:10 (CGB, L194). The pupils' tasks were evidence of them experiencing and potentially seeking to articulate the spiritual dimension of education ethos. Pupils represented three of the four categories of spirituality identified by Hay and Nye (2006): the experience of the inter-relationships between child-people, child-self, and child-God. Pupils spirituality concerned their 'relational consciousness' (Hay and Nye, 2006). The discourse on the values helped pupils explore their spirituality: their connectedness to their school, others, and God.

The pupils felt they experienced love, one of the school values, from others in the community, as God's love or through a love of self. For example, Joshua experienced God's love. He expressed he could be himself in writing '*You can be yourself*' (Joshua, DWT1). He spoke about how he was learning to love himself and feel comfortable with his school identity. Wright (2012, p.202) argued for the Christian worldview's predication based on an ontology of love grounded

in the reciprocal loving relationships between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Trinity's unity. Simon's drawing in his DWT2 illustrated him seeking to articulate his relationship with God. He conveyed his sense of God's presence in the community, which provided him with a sense of peace. His recognition that he could be himself illustrated him feeling a strong sense of belonging to his school. I discuss pupils' sense of belonging to their school further in Section 7.2.2.

The findings support Casson's (2018) study of how a Church of England school developed pupils' spirituality. Casson found that staff modelling virtues of hospitality, nurture, and inclusivity when interacting with pupils was influential in developing pupils' spirituality. Also, their creation of safe spaces for faith-based conversations and meaningful worship mattered. In the Free School, leaders placed a high value on sustaining an inclusive education ethos, modelling school values, and prioritising worship in the school day. Pupils recognised leaders as good role models for school values. The Free School pupils reported acting as classroom ambassadors, welcoming school visitors into lessons. Whilst they could feel anxious about this, the process was indicative of leaders, encouraging them to demonstrate hospitality.

Achievement matters

The headteacher and deputy headteacher's attentiveness to pupil progress and performance targets reflected the Government's focus on performativity. They indirectly conveyed the importance of pupil achievement to the pupils. The headteacher concluded that the leaders' focus on pupil achievement did not dominate pupils' tasks when viewing the pupil data. He expressed anxiety that this might have been the case. He acknowledged that the high expectations the school placed on pupils needed monitoring. Pupils nonetheless indicated familiarity with how teachers had to measure their achievement and performance. An example was Simon's DWT3, where he explicitly portrayed himself making progress in his learning using the discourse established on the National Curriculum levels of achievement.

Proximal processes: Interaction with artefacts

As well as the school values holding symbolic significance to their community, the pupils appreciated the importance of Christian artefacts, symbols, and practices (superordinate theme 3). These aspects provided them with the means to make sense of the school's Christian ethos (Hofstede, 1997).

The pupils were highly attentive to Christian symbolism within the school's physical environment and logo on their blazer pockets. They explained the significance of Christian artefacts in

collective worship and prayer and showed awareness of the spaces devoted to worship (Jade, PRC7; Joshua, PRC5). They understood the school hall functioned as a place for whole-school worship and a place to eat and socialise as the headteacher intended (Andrew, PRC8). When starting at the school, the pupils' receipt of the gift of a Bible could reinforce the value the community placed on this Christian artefact and the school's Christian faith designation.

In identifying what made their school special, all the pupils drew enlarged crosses (Jade, DWT2; Simon, DWT2, Andrew DWT2, Joshua DWT2). The large size of the crosses on their pages, and the number of crosses appearing in their tasks, signified the symbol's value in their lives and worship. In some instances, the cross had significance in the pupils' belief systems. (Section 7.1.2). Simon and Joshua valued the cross as it symbolised their Christian identity and belief system and the Christian identity of their schools. Pupils also photographed crosses in the school environment as aspects they valued. My findings supported those of Hemming (2017). In his ethnographic study of Christian ethos, Hemming found primary-aged pupils included crosses in the collages to represent their Church school's Christian character.

The pupils respected and enjoyed worship as a ritual. It provided them with the time to reflect on life and matters of faith. They spoke with enthusiasm about engagement in worship. The gathering helped them feel part of a worshipping community, whether they were designated Christians or not. Andrew, as a non-Christian, welcomed the guidance offered by the Bible (Andrew, PRC9). The pupils suggest that they were encouraged but not forced to contribute to worship by leading candle prayers or undertaking Biblical readings. They valued their peers' contributions to developing the prayer spaces and prayer boards in their form rooms. Their views illustrate how pupils shared ownership of these spaces with their form tutors (Jade, I2, L276-278). The findings differed from those of Hemming (2017), who concluded that some pupils experienced boredom when participating in school worship. It was not the case with the pupils in the sample in this school.

Wenger (1998) saw tacit knowledge development as a unique feature of a community of practice. Community members could learn to comprehend the relationship between the cross and what constituted excellence in everything, whilst outsiders might find this hard to interpret (Wenger, 1998). In some instances, the pupils' tasks conveyed such tacit knowledge; they appeared to know more than they could tell (Polyani, 1967). I found the pupils either lacked the verbal skills to express explicitly the complexity of their views or wished to keep aspects of their thoughts private.

For this reason, I found the interpretation of aspects of pupils' experiences challenging. An example was the bold statement Jade made, '*excellence in everything*', across the arm of a cross when contemplating what made her school special (Jade, DWT2). This image indicated the tacit knowledge Jade held about the connection she sought to make between the cross, the school value of excellence, and its Christian identity. One interpretation was Jade theorised that Christianity was representative of a set of beliefs that signified excellence in everything. Alternatively, she envisaged the school's enterprise as a Christian institution, which represented excellence in everything. Another explanation was that she strove to emulate the standards and values expected by the school and/or her religion. I considered that pupils frequent use of this term '*excellence in everything*' was indicative that leaders had successfully established amongst pupils a unique branding for the school. In the school's context, the pupils associated the Christian symbol of the cross with excellence.

7.2.2 Analysis using Wenger's (1998) communities of practice

Wenger's communities of practice enabled me to interpret how pupils' made sense of their school's education ethos, establish their place within the school and negotiate their identity. Wenger (1998), like Bronfenbrenner (2005), acknowledged the importance of time and life-changing events in human development. Time represented the fourth component in the PCCT model.

When they started at the Free School, they ventured into an unfamiliar context. Their school community did not exist before their arrival. Their transition from primary to a new secondary school represented a life-changing experience. Mellor and Delamont (2011) found that pupils could experience anxieties and challenges from this transfer if they left behind friends and a place where they felt secure. Alternatively, they could view the transfer as offering an adventure or a fresh start. The Free School pupils saw their transfer as successful. When I collected their data, towards the end of the pupils' first year at school, they talked about how they had fitted into their school. They reported experiencing happiness at the school and felt well-supported with their learning (Jade, i3L648-653). They enjoyed close relationships with staff and peers. They were conversant with the school's value system, routines, practices, and expected standards (Joshua, DWT2). They could predict and explain their typical school day or week and describe the nature of school practices. They knew whom to go for pastoral support. These factors collectively contributed to them feeling safe and secure at school.

Wenger (1998) identified three dimensions that would form a source of coherence for the new community. First, members would interact and establish norms and relationships through mutual engagement in shared practices. Secondly, members would come together by understanding the school's joint enterprise: establishing the school in the local community and its educational provision. Thirdly, members would produce a shared repertoire of language, routines, artefacts, and narratives to define the community over time. The pupils contributed to developing the language, practices and artefacts and made sense of its evolution using the collaborative processes of participation and reification (Wenger 1998, p.58). In Figure 7.2.2, I exemplify three interacting dimensions of practice pupils experienced in the Free School.

Participation levels in a community of practice could range from full engagement to non-participation (Wenger (1998, p.165). The pupils presented themselves as willing and active participants in school life. They had become full participants in their community (Wenger, 1998). Being a full participant required knowledge and competence on their part. They had developed a sense of community. They cared about what the school stood for and were proud to be pupils. They appeared to share the leaders' aspirations to make their new school a success. They chose to engage with their education and to be committed to the community's development. They wanted to give 100% and do their best (Simon DWT3; Jade DWT2; I1L335-336; Andrew DWT3; Joshua DWT1). As a group, they showed unity in their goal of 'excellence in everything'. At the interview, the headteacher used the phrases '100%' and 'excellence' as part of his core values, which indicated his influence on the pupils' discourse.

In this school, the leaders sought to maximise pupils' participation levels to build a cohesive, inclusive, high performing community. The deputy headteacher indicated that leaders took pupils' induction arrangements into the school seriously to develop their knowledge of community practices and standards (Section 6.1). Jade's valuing of community-building practices, such as her participation in constructing the community's tree of hands, indicated the importance of such exercises in developing her sense of place or belonging to her school. Pupils indicated that their participation in whole school worship also enabled them to feel connected to their community.

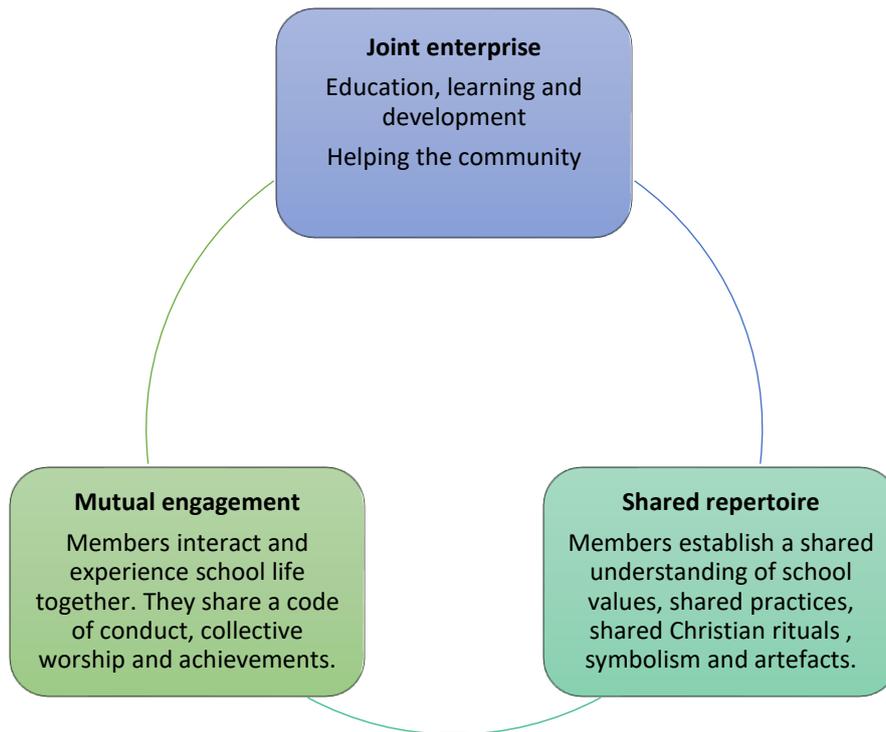


Figure 7.2.2 Diagram showing three dimensions of practice for pupils in the Christian Free School, based on Wenger's (1998) dimensions of practice

Pupils' identity development stemmed from their continued engagement in and learning from school practices (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger, 1998). The pupils were aware of their developing identities and how they could learn productively with others. They understood what they needed to do to achieve, become successful and gain recognition within the community. They suggested that success meant embracing the school's code of conduct, 'the school way' and contributing responsibly to the community's growth. My interpretation was the pupils were gaining competence in meeting the expectations the community placed on them. For example, they found value in using the restorative justice system, which permitted them to exercise independence in managing their relationship disputes with peers. As a strategy, implemented by the headteacher, the restorative justice system successfully prepared them to resolve conflicts and rebuild relationships in their lives (Jade, I1212-215). Through community service engagement, they learned they could utilise their skills and knowledge to positively impact others' lives (Jade DWT3, Andrew DWT3). They saw themselves as being generous-hearted and making positive contributions to their community (Joshua, I1L635). I interpreted that they strove to avoid becoming self-centred on their welfare and advancement at the cost of them becoming blind to others' needs. They expressed possessing autonomy over their engagement with the

recommended online learning support programmes in reading and mathematics. However, the expectations of rewards for engagement and effort appeared to strengthen their engagement (Simon DWT1; Andrew DWT3).

The pupils' primary education experiences were relevant and influential in understanding how they conceptualised their identities. Their primary school represented the experience of a historical microsystem, or community of practice, with a different shared repertoire. For example, Simon compared conceptions of his identity at primary school with that at the Free School. He found the Free School's educational provision enabled his transformation from an anxious pupil, fearful of tests in Year 6, to a confident, aspirational pupil in Year 7 (Simon, DWT1, DWT2). Simon had not attended a primary school with a faith foundation. Through experiencing supportive learning practices, he appreciated his increased capacity to achieve academically. He aspired to meet his learning targets, progress, and utilise his art expertise to become an art teacher (Simon, DWT1; DWT3).

Sense of belonging

Korpershoek, Canrinus, Fokkens-Bruinsma and de Boer (2020, p.641) saw school belonging as enabling pupils to feel accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school's social environment. My interpretation was the pupils developed a strong sense of belonging to their community (superordinate theme 1; Section 7.1.1). They worked hard to sustain their sense of belonging. The pupils' sense of belonging mattered as their feeling isolated might negatively influence their motivation, levels of well-being, engagement in school and ultimately their achievement. This interpretation is in line with other literature, focused on exploring pupils' experiences of belonging, such as Riley (2017) and Korpershoek et al. (2020). The pupils' strong sense of belonging to their school contributed to the very positive perspectives concerning their education.

Riley (2017, p.4) considered 'belonging as the sense of being somewhere where you could feel confident that you will fit in and feel safe in your identity.' She viewed leaders were place makers, actively investigating pupils' experiences of belonging. She worked with leaders and teachers as school-based researchers to explore how pupils experienced place and belonging. Riley (2017) found school leaders saw pupils being valued and welcomed into a climate of mutual respect, which could help pupils inquire, explore, be themselves, and participate. In my research, I identified factors in the pupils' tasks indicative of their strong sense of belonging. The pupils felt that they were receiving a good education and made to feel special (Riley, 2017). They

valued having their form room as their territory, having their work displayed, and sharing their learning with others (Riley, 2017). They respected and were receptive to support and encouragement from their teachers and peers. They demonstrated attachment to the school by being proud to wear the uniform. School leaders enabled the pupils' sense of belonging. Emotionally, they appeared happy at school, were enthusiastic about their education and indicated they were willing to put effort into their learning. Leaders enabled them to explore their relationships with others and be themselves so that they could be open and receptive to the learning experiences.

I connected the pupils' learning and identity formation with three distinct modes of belonging to a community: alignment, engagement, and imagination (Wenger, 1998). Concerning engagement, pupils experienced belonging through the relationships they formed and mutual engagement in shared school practices leaders designed. Examples of these practices included whole-school worship, learning with others in lessons and socialising with friends. The many references the pupils made to friendships in their tasks indicated that this was one of their most cherished virtues and appeared central to experiencing a sense of belonging to the community (Andrew DWT2, Jade DWT2, PRC1; Simon, PRC7).

Pupils could experience belonging through alignment. Alignment entailed them following 'the school way' and aligning themselves with the expectations leaders placed on them. Alignment implied pupils' response to the leaders uses of power. I discuss the use of power further in Section 7.2.3. Each pupil showed a willingness to embrace the values, which would earn them respect and recognition among staff and peers. For example, Jade ranked excellence as one of the most significant school values, as an aspiration for herself and the community. Another was friendship (Jade PRC1). Leaders and pupils valued 'service' (Jade, DWT2, DWT3; Andrew, DWT2). They considered undertaking community service enabled them to fit into the local community, gain recognition for their efforts, and undertake responsible or compassionate acts to improve others' lives.

Concerning imagination, leaders provided opportunities for pupils to reflect on the meaning of the values in their lives, visualise themselves as community members, and reflect on the ultimate purposes of their becoming. The headteacher's central strategy for embedding school values in school and classroom practices included using *What if Learning*, although he experienced challenges embedding this approach (Chapter 6). The teachers used this approach to enable pupils to reflect on the meaning and purpose of their learning and the types of people they wished to become. I observed teachers encouraging the pupils in my research to engage in

reflection in a design technology lesson and form worship. In the lesson, the teacher had reframed the design task from a Christian worldview. The pupils had designed a fabric creature to meet a baby's needs or a visually impaired child. They self-assessed their design's accuracy and detail using the National Curriculum level descriptors. Additionally, the teacher invited them to empathise and reflect on how they met another person's needs. In this task, pupils became aware of their talents and how they could use them to aid others.

Pupils saw reflection as an essential means of engagement in the community. It illustrated the importance of belonging within Wenger's communities of practice. The pupils welcomed opportunities to reflect on the content of collective worship, passages of the Bible and the famous people they studied. They reported being encouraged to reflect on the relevance of what they were learning to their lives. The headteacher intended the school to provide a secure base of support, or safe space, for pupils to explore the big questions in life, values, and personal faith. The pupils felt supported by their teachers, both pastorally and academically. The pupils regarded their form teacher as an essential person they should turn to for advice about relationships and ways of making progress in their learning. They saw their peers as critical sources of support and encouragement. The finding was supportive of Elbourne (2012), who discussed the importance of promoting a sense of belonging in schools. Elbourne saw this as essential to conceptualising and realising a distinctively Christian education ethos. There was nothing new in appreciating the importance of belonging. Maslow (1943) and Bowlby (1969) identified belonging as a universal human need. Maslow (1943), associated with humanist theories of development, placed belonging in the middle of a motivational hierarchy. Belonging in terms of acceptance was a prerequisite for pupils' self-esteem, confidence, and fulfilment of their learning potential. Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory focused on the need for people to form emotional attachments with others to feel safe and secure.

7.2.3 Analysis using dimensions of power

A power differential existed between the leaders and pupils. Leaders, by the nature of their positional authority, exercised power over the pupils. Using Lukes (2005) dimensions of power, I analysed how the leaders exercised power over the pupils.

Concerning Lukes first dimension, power by decision-making, leaders decided to include community service in the curriculum and use restorative justice as part of the behaviour management system. Community service was visible to pupils as a resource on their weekly timetable. Leaders trained pupils in using restorative justice as a resource to enable them to

resolve conflict. These two structural mechanisms furthered leaders' interests in embedding the Christian ethos. Although the use of power appeared emancipatory, the intention was to promote the leaders' interests. Pupils engagement in community service and restorative justice provided the pupils with the capacity to shape the school's ethos. Potentially they could promote the school's relations with the local community. It empowered the pupils within the school. The pupils reported they welcomed restorative justice in resolving conflicts in their relationships and building trust. Whilst Lukes was mainly concerned with power by domination, he acknowledged the emancipatory aspects of power, the power to make a difference (Lukes, 2005, p.109). There were limits to the emancipatory aspects, as pupils were not involved in deciding the structural mechanisms put in place to enable their comprehension of Christian education ethos. These included how leaders would realise Christian distinctiveness and their intended purposes of Christian education, regulating their behaviour.

The headteacher established the agenda for education ethos development, representing the second dimension, power by agenda-setting. His vision was invisible to pupils as he formed it in their absence. The pupils appeared unaware of the conflict between the headteacher and governing body concerning the agenda for Christian education's nature and purposes. The pupils comprehended the headteacher's agenda for education ethos, illustrative of his influence over their experiences. The pupils came to understand the need to embrace the school values, behave in a Christian manner, contribute to their community, and achieve academically. I interpreted that leaders did not seek to dominate and oppress pupils as they believed pupils' experiences of the school values would enable them to flourish. The headteacher and senior leaders sought to allow them to experience a Christian way of life and explore faith matters to make their own choices about faith. As such, it would promote the emancipatory aspects of power.

While the pupils did not participate in selecting the school values, they were subject to their influence. Using Lukes' third dimension of power, I interpreted leaders as persuasive in promoting the values. Leaders acted ethically to implement values believed to be in the pupils' interests. The headteacher established an institutional discourse on the school values, 'the TELLS', or 'the school way'. As this discourse underpinned the school's behavioural code, he could control the community's standards and behaviours. All the pupils included the values underpinning the behaviour code in their DWTS. They understood that embracing the values provided recognition of excellence (Joshua, DWT2, Jade DWT2). They implied that accepting the values did not have negative consequences and appeared eager to embrace the values. Their

alignment with the school's values could help them fit into their community and gain recognition for doing the right thing.

Pupils' experiences of learning about famous people in worship indicated how leaders selected and used cultural heroes, illustrating Lukes' third dimension of power. The teachers, not the pupils, appeared to choose the famous people exemplifying the school values and enabled pupils' analysis of famous people exhibiting the school's values. The importance attached to these value positions reflected those intended by the school leaders. Pupils could see the embracing of these values as reasonable. It was illustrative of the leaders' purpose in celebrating the behaviours and values prized by the school as a strategy for inspiring the pupils (Hofstede, 1997). In a form-time worship, I observed the teacher facilitating pupils' discussion about the meaning of Gandhi's quotations. The teacher invited the pupils to consider the potential impact of what Gandhi said as a leader on people's lives at the time and how they might apply these to their own lives. However, the teacher selected Gandhi and framed the task, which illustrated the third dimension of power. Pupils valued inclusion of the values in whole school worship as they acted as reminders about their conduct.

Leaders sought to make the values transparent to pupils by displaying them on the school walls and enabling pupils' reflection on the values in their lives. The pupils reported how the community valued reflection, and they could receive rewards for such thinking. Pupils' incentives to adopt the values might have reflected their desire to belong and connect with their community. Leaders role-modelling the values were influential. Pupils viewed their teachers as role-models for the school values, who treated them respectfully, supported them academically and cared for their wellbeing (Jade, 13L648-653). Pupils could view leaders as acting with integrity or behaving in a trustworthy manner (Southworth, 2004; Cefel, 2017). I interpreted their embracing of the values as giving them recognition by peers. They provided favourable conditions for their learning. They could care and show respect for others or depend on teachers or peers demonstrating the values for support. The relational trust came through the use of consistent and predictable behaviour. Not following the code would betray the trust staff and peers placed in them. The cost of not complying with the school way could be high. Pupils could risk being alienated or segregated from the community. The deputy headteacher remarked on how well the pupils' self-regulated their behaviour.

7.3 Summary and significant insights

In this Chapter, I presented my interpretation of the pupils' experiences of their education within the Christian Free School education ethos. I discussed the interpretative account under four superordinate themes. At a higher level of interpretation, I discussed the findings using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of human development, Wenger's communities of practice and Lukes' dimensions of power.

The pupils provided rich insights into aspects of the school's educational ethos. These insights included their perspectives on the expectations leaders placed on them and the meaning of the school's values, practices, and religious symbolism of significance to the community. Furthermore, they provided insights into their emotional responses to their education, learning aspirations and developing beliefs and values.

I reflected on leaders' influence over pupils' educational experiences. Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of human development enabled me to explore the relationship between the pupils' microsystem and exosystem. The leaders established the discourse on school values, which pupils were familiar with and appeared eager to embrace within the microsystem. Pupils suggested that leaders sought to inspire rather than enforce their commitment to these values. Pupils indicated leaders provided time and safe spaces for their reflection. They could reflect on the meaning, significance and purpose of school practices, relationships with others and God, religious beliefs, and importance of school values in their lives and broader society. Pupils placed a high value on the demonstration of school values, engagement in religious practices, sustaining friendships, and experiencing a sense of belonging to their community. The fostering of trust amongst community members appeared essential to the pupils and enabled this sense of belonging.

Wenger's community of practice enabled interpretation of how the pupils' repertoire of interactions in their daily school lives influenced their perspectives and identity formation. The headteacher's implementation of *What If Learning* allowed pupils to imagine the types of people they wished to become. The importance leaders placed on school values, symbolism within the physical environment, and engagement in Christian practices appeared significant in shaping pupils' experiences, sense of belonging, and responsibility for their community.

Given the existence of a power differential between leaders and pupils, Lukes' dimensions of power enabled analysis of how leaders exerted power over pupils. Leaders achieved success in persuading pupils that the school values were in their best interests. Rather than using power

against pupils' interests, I interpreted that the use of power appeared to be in the pupils' interests.

In viewing the pupils' data, the headteacher saw the influences of his leadership on pupils' attitudes to learning and their formation. He commented on the emphasis pupils placed on worship, the school values, and providing a well-rounded education as aspects they valued. Despite facing challenges in implementing his vision (Chapter 6), pupils' responses to the tasks caused the headteacher to realise that his vision's actuality was more advanced than he thought. The findings emphasised the value of the school leaders listening to the pupils' voices about education ethos.

Chapter 8

Presentation of Study 2

Part 1: Interpretative account for the Church Academy leaders and discussion of the findings

8.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I present an interpretative³ account of leaders' experiences of developing a Christian education ethos in the Church Academy. I ground this account in the leaders' perspectives, including extracts from leaders' transcripts to emphasise their voices. In Section 8.2, I interpret and discuss their experiences using the literature on school leadership and Christian education discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. I present the interpretative account following the format used for the leaders in Study 1 (Section 6.0). I use Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development, Wenger's (1998, 2002) framework for communities of practice (CoP) and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power (Chapter 4) to make sense of leaders' experiences.

Information about the school and participants

The school achieved Academy status in 2011. It retained its Church of England designation and followed the local authority's admissions policy. The school specified Church affiliation as the second criteria for school admission (HT, 11L585-586). The school, situated on the edge of a city, was a larger than average primary school. Pupil ethnicity was predominantly White British. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and receiving Free School meals was below the national average. In 2014, pupil achievement at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in all areas.

Just before I commenced data-collection, the school received a Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The school was graded 'satisfactory' in all areas. As the inspection report was unavailable, I relied on leaders' interpretations of the process. Previously, SIAMS graded the school as 'good' overall. Soon after I completed the data collection, the school was subject to an Ofsted inspection. The school received 'outstanding' as the overall effectiveness grade and in each sub-category for the inspection. These included leadership and management, pupils' behaviour and safety, quality of teaching, pupils' achievement, and early years' provision.

I interviewed six leaders. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were long-serving leaders. The deputy did not hold a class teaching role. The collective worship leader, an experienced early

years' teacher, was another long-serving senior leadership team member. The RE leader was new to teaching in a Church school, acting as a RE leader and the SIAMS process. She started at the school at the beginning of the academic year. The mathematics leader was a senior leadership team member and was the Year 6 teacher for the pupil participants. The chair of governors was a foundation governor new to the position of chair of governors. I summarise information about the leaders in the table below:

Figure 8.0 Table providing information about the leaders (Church Academy)

Position	Gender	Religiosity as described by the leader	Time in post
Headteacher	Male	Catholic	17 years
Deputy Headteacher/ member of the senior leadership team	Male	Atheist	9 years
Chair of Governors	Female	Church of England	Less than one year
RE Leader/Reception teacher	Female	In sympathy with the Church of England	Less than 1 year
Collective worship leader/ Reception teacher/ member of the senior leadership team	Female	Christian	7 years
Mathematics leader/ Year 6 teacher/ member of the senior leadership team	Female	Atheist	6 years

8.1 Leaders' experiences of developing the school's education ethos

In presenting the leaders' account, I emphasised the headteacher's perspectives as the ultimate leader for Christian education ethos development. I focused on making sense of leaders' experiences of the SIAMS as a critical incident because it influenced the strategies for developing

Christian education ethos. In using an IPA methodology, I recognised the tentativeness of my claims. I drew on the three superordinate themes:

1. High standards with a caring Christian ethos
2. Embedding a Christian way of living
3. Critical incident: Managing and responding to SIAMS.

In presenting the participants' voices, I included transcript extracts in italics. I made some minor changes to direct quotations to improve readability, such as removing hesitation utterances or repetition. I denote missing material using dotted lines in brackets (...). To preserve the school and participants' anonymity, I removed material referring to the participants' names and the school's name.

I also used the headteacher's photo-elicitation data as a resource for discussion in addition to the headteacher's interview transcripts. He photographed aspects of the school he valued. The purpose was to find out more about the nature of his leadership and what mattered to him.

8.1.1 Theme 1: High standards with a caring Christian ethos

This superordinate theme encapsulates leaders' core values and shared vision for the school's Christian education ethos.

Being an outstanding school

On appointment, the headteacher considered he inherited an ethos of underachievement. The end of Key Stage 2 standards were below national benchmarks. His vision was to build '*a sense of community*', raise educational standards and inspire parental confidence in the school (HT, I1L5-27; 34-40). His vision entailed developing a caring Christian ethos focused on high achievement. Other leaders suggested that their visions for pupils' education aligned with the headteacher's (ML, L133-138; CWL, L396-403; DHT, L228-231).

'I wanted to improve standards, but I wanted it with a caring atmosphere (...) That had to be built up by appointing the right staff and establishing the right culture where it matters that you value children and that is not exclusively Christian (...) So we have teased out values that the Church of England would be proud of, very proud of, by which we can live our lives' (HT, I1L41-50).

The headteacher perceived the governing body and leadership team shared his vision for the school's education.

'The governors are at one with me. They very much want high standards with a caring ethos, and when we chose our four values, they led it' (HT, I1L271-273).

'I've got a good deputy, and we're of a like mind (...). The SLT are the best SLT I've ever had (...). They've been on 'good to outstanding' courses; they know what the strategies are about being an outstanding teacher; they want to do this' (HT, I1L533-534, 546-548).

The deputy headteacher acknowledged the leaders' ambitions to improve performance against the SIAMS criteria for Christian distinctiveness:

'Our challenge is to improve every year (...) there are always elements that you can improve (...) there is an expectation to continually improve' (DHT, L324-327).

Doing our best for others

The headteacher considered that Christian education ethos was established by everyone *'doing the best for people'* (HT, I1L291). It entailed embedding Christian values in school practices and appointing the right staff. He sought to look after staff, as he *'could only make a difference'* through them (HT, I2L270-277).

While the headteacher understood Ofsted expected him to raise educational standards, he valued effort more than attainment (HTI1L173-184). He expected staff and pupils to give their best. He wanted pupils to develop an *'awareness of the duty to work hard'* (HT, I1L179). Pupils' grades for effort recorded in their annual progress reports *'mattered more'* to him than knowing *'who's top of the class'* (HT, I1L181-184).

'I used to have a motto 'only your best is good enough', and I'd say to children, 'it doesn't matter what you attain, what really matters is the effort you put in', and I give them stickers and things and headteacher's awards because I think it's important to recognise that we're all here to do our best' (HT, I1L176-179).

The deputy headteacher, chair of governors and collective worship leader emphasised *'helping pupils to meet their potential'* (DHT, L226; CGB, L176-178). The collective worship leader perceived children as made in the image of God. She considered the fulfilment of a child's potential essential to staff with the Christian faith.

'Those members of staff who have got that Christian faith, they would probably feel that every child was made in the image of God, every child has the right to fulfil their potential' (CWL, L297-299).

Putting children first

The collective worship leader described the headteacher as being *'passionate that the children are always put first'* (CWL, L384). However, she identified a tension between meeting Ofsted requirements for achievement and the holistic development of pupils. She appreciated that staff were judged on pupil performance outcomes. Consequently, they would be doing pupils a *'disservice'* if they did not ensure their academic achievement (CWL, L396-403). She considered the staff as *'genuinely concerned'* about the pupils' *as people'* (CW, L371). Pupils possessed awareness that staff valued *'their happiness and their families'* (CWL, L374-375). The mathematics leader emphasised the importance teachers placed on meeting pupils' individual needs through their teaching: *'they are all individual and unique'* (ML, L86-89).

Promoting happiness

Collectively, leaders felt passionate about pupils' experiencing happiness at school (CWL, L375; CGB, L70-81; ML, L482). The headteacher related pupils' happiness to their achievements. Well-cared-for children would be happy. Caring entailed teachers challenging pupils academically to achieve. The chair linked pupils' happiness to their self-confidence and independence.

'I'd like to think they link because happy schoolchildren achieve more and if children are happy, they want to come to school, and they know there's love for them (...) they would want to achieve more' (HT, L1L285-287).

'For me, it's that everyone is happy, that's the staff, support staff and the children (...) That's fundamental to me, if there is a child unhappy, I want to know why (...). The children are very happy here; they're very secure (...). Because the children are happy, they have confidence, and they have independence (...). They're not afraid to go and ask anything or do anything' (CGB, L70-93).

Educating the whole child

There was a consensus amongst leaders' views about a holistic education enabling pupils to develop the skills and attributes needed for responsible citizenship and the next stage of their education. The deputy headteacher expressed commitment to pupils' holistic education despite external policy directives emphasising the teaching of nationally tested subjects'. He aimed for pupils to become *'confident and well-rounded individuals'* and develop *'resilience'* and *'stamina'* (DHT, L45, 49). In describing his vision for the school and aspirations for pupils, he commented:

'As much as possible, to try to educate the whole child. Although we seem to focus very much and are not forced, but heavily encouraged to focus on maths and reading and writing, it's about making sure we celebrate and develop all facets and skills that a child has, not just those three (...) that everybody likes to report on' (DHT, L26-30).

As a Year 6 teacher, the mathematics leader considered the Key Stage 2 SATs conflicted with her approach to teaching and learning. She aspired to get good results, but sought to develop pupils' holistically to enable them to become comfortable with their identities:

'You've got the added pressure of the SATs exams, particularly Key Stage 2 because the school league table position is based on the results. We've done well over the past few years, so obviously, I'm keen to keep that up, but I don't want you to think that I am all about numbers and figures because I am not (...). I also want well-rounded children when they leave me' (ML, L133-138).

'I'd like happy, confident, sociable children who (...) feel comfortable to be emotional (...) to talk to all the adults there' (ML, L482-484).

The RE leader aimed for pupils to become compassionate and tolerant members of society with life-long learning aspirations:

'I'd like them to be just really well-rounded individuals that are compassionate and who understand that people do have different views but felt they would want to be friends with anybody. They will give people a chance. I think I want them to learn more. I'd like them to be respectful and go into the world with an enthusiasm to want to know about people more and to not have any barriers up' (REL, L446-451).

Both the chair of governors and headteacher sought to prepare pupils for the challenges of secondary school education. As a former secondary teacher, the chair wanted pupils to *'fit into a global world'*, *'have confidence'* and *'a sense of independence'* (CGB, L70; 176-179; 198). She considered she brought to the role of her secondary school expertise (CGB, L59-60).

'A lot of them probably aren't going to a Christian school and are going to have to cope with things that they've not had to cope with before, and I'm hoping that they'll be able to do that, to be able to cope with bullying and be able to stand up and say.' Okay, well, you know you're the person who's got the problem, I haven't. Why are you bullying me?' and to be able to tackle that head-on' (CGB, L190-196).

The headteacher regarded developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as essential for access to the secondary school curriculum (HT, I1L338-341). A school priority was establishing reading as an enjoyable activity (HT, I2L252-267). All pupils experienced literacy and numeracy lessons each morning. As an activity he valued in school, he photographed pupils and a teaching assistant engaged in 'reciprocal reading'. He also appreciated breadth in education, delivered through a topic-based cross-curricular learning approach (HT, I1L371-380). He identified music as important and valued singing in collective worship. Early in his headship, he introduced a school choir. His view was that music aided pupils' literacy skills, enabled perseverance when learning an instrument, and was '*vibrant*' and '*fun*' (HT12, L218-224).

Serving parents and the community

The headteacher considered his vision included serving the needs of the community. As not all pupils were '*church-goers*', he made explicit to prospective parents the nature of the Christian ethos.

'Prospective parents, part of the talk is that they're coming to a Church of England school. Yes, it serves the community, but it may be different from the school down the road (...). I might say to them we have collective worship every day, and that is one of the values of the Church of England, so we make sure they know that' (HT, I1L93-97).

The chair of governors perceived '*a lot of parents*' valued children's academic achievement more than the school's Christian ethos (CGB, L478-471), but all '*clients*' needed to be satisfied with the school's education (CGB, L72-75). Parents wanted their children to attend '*good*' secondary schools (HT, I1L399-403). As the local Church was a coach ride away, the headteacher invited the local Church members to contribute to the school's collective worship (HT, I1L55-56). It was to meet Christian parents' aspirations that their children experience Christian worship.

By becoming an Academy, the deputy headteacher viewed the school as gaining the power to negotiate new accommodation for pupils without altering the education offered:

'We want to meet the needs of the community, but we want to do it in the right way' (DHT, 201-211).

8.1.2 Theme 2: Embedding a Christian way of living

Superordinate theme two captures leaders' perspectives on the strategies employed to embed the school's Christian education ethos and their effectiveness.

Living our lives through values

All leaders considered that embedding the school's value system within the school's education ethos aided pupils' formation. The headteacher sought to make the values 'overt' through inclusion in school policies and collective worship. The value 'forgiveness' underpinned the school's behaviour policy (HTI1, L80-91). He emphasised community members should 'live their lives' by the values (HT, I1L49-50, 80-81). When interviewing applicants, he made the values explicit as he expected staff to sign up to them:

'I don't say that they have to be Church of England (...), but I do insist that they hold the ethos of the Church of England dear and sign up to these values' (HT, I1L81-86).

The headteacher's view was that former SIAMS outcomes stimulated the development of school values (HTI1, L74-76). The collective worship leader and deputy headteacher considered the values had Christian origins and noted the National Society recommended their use. However, they also thought them good human values for people from all faiths and cultures (DHT, L635-637). The collective worship leader's perspective was that as staff had 'personal faith or were sympathetic to values of the faith', and the pastoral care system was excellent (CWL, L35-39).

'The reason why we care about them so much is because it is based on the Christian faith where Jesus says we should all love one another and care for one another, and that comes above everything else' (CWL, L40-42).

The school limited to four the number of articulated school values as leaders *wanted to try and have four that the children could easily get a handle on'* (DHT, L78-79). The deputy headteacher justified these values as representing 'the golden rule'. The behaviours pupils were encouraged to follow related to the class rules (DHT, L381-384).

'As a Church of England school (...), what we try to do is promote the ideals of Christianity that we believe, whether you are Christian or of a different faith, or if you have no faith at all, you can still take a message and gain an understanding from the teachings of Jesus (...) to try and help you be a better person, try and help you understand why you should be forgiving' (DHT, L112-117).

Selecting school values was a 'long' process, engaging various stakeholders (ML, L180-188; CGB, L266-271). The collective worship leader described working with pupils, the school council, staff, a group of parents, governors, and the local vicar to select values of relevance to everyone. The school explored all the National Society's recommended values for Church schools over three

years before stakeholder engagement (CWL, L156-165). As part of the consultation process, teachers asked their classes, *'If you had to describe this school, what words would you use? (...) How would you like it to be better?'* (CWL, 185-193).

'We ended up with four, and these were the ones coming through the most. Everybody talked about the friendship, and it feels like a very friendly place (...). The children talked about how they say sorry, and they are given the chance to choose a new slate each day, so that led us to forgiveness (...). There was a lot of thought about how we all have to trust each other and how friendship and forgiveness is based on trust, so that gave us our third one, compassion. We do lots of fundraising and things' (CWL, L199-211).

Leaders views differed over embedding of values in school practices. The headteacher regarded the values as embedded in behaviours of community members:

'You will see compassion with adults, you will see friendship at all levels, governors, children, whatever, and that has taken quite a time' (HT11L50-53).

The collective worship leader, RE leader and deputy headteacher believed the values observable in staff-pupil relationships. There were issues concerning pupils' comprehension of the values and their capabilities to apply them. They had to make explicit to pupils the exemplification of the values in their behaviours and develop their awareness of the values' Biblical origins (REL, L208-217). Their perceptions stemmed from the recent SIAMS feedback (REL, L228-229) (superordinate theme three). The deputy reflected that the staff team *'may not have been overt enough'* in teaching pupils about the values and linking the values to stories in the Bible (DHT, L334-340). The collective worship leader commented:

'The main next step is really to help the children to understand that they come from Biblical Christian teaching' (CWL, L246-250).

Leaders perspectives were that they embedded values in the school's ethos. They facilitated pupil reflection about the values in worship, RE, circle-time, relevant curriculum subjects and dialogue with pupils in their daily school lives (superordinate theme three). The headteacher credited the RE leader and collective worship as driving this process (HT, I1L107-115). Leaders sensed young pupils found it hard to comprehend the values, but their understanding grew as they matured. They found description and comprehension of the school value *'compassion'* the *'most difficult'* (CGB, L105-108; REL, L213-215). *'This was because it's much more than feeling sorry for someone where their level kind of stops'* (CWL, L220-223). The mathematics leader

perceived young pupils comprehended compassion as *'being kind'* and the older ones *'putting yourselves in other peoples' shoes.'* Also, it *'was unfair to expect a five-year-old to explain compassion in quite intricate detail'* (ML, L193-194). The chair of governors expected pupils to develop *'empathy'* as they matured and it would become *'embedded in their being'* (CGB, L110-121).

The chair viewed school values as embedded in school policies and *'in the way we conduct ourselves'* (CGB130-132) but acknowledged governors did not discuss them at meetings. She planned to raise their profile on the governing body's agenda (CGB, L262-264). Governors would also have to get to grips with British values, including how they taught them and related to the school's Christian values (CGBL. 156-162). For her, the priority was enabling children's understanding of school values and their Biblical origins.

The mathematics leader noted using the term 'FFCT' (friendship, forgiveness, compassion, and trust) helped pupils remember the values (ML, L206). She considered that *'children should be able to be inquisitive, to question, to understand that there are certain expectations'* of them. They should also learn to examine their behaviours and those expected for positions of responsibility in school:

'There are ways that we behave and interact with each other, and I'm very much into we treat others how you want to be treated (...) I try to instil these values in children that if you want to be seen in a certain light, you sometimes have to look at yourself and your behaviours (...) I can have a dialogue with children about what they want to be. Because we have a lot of positions of responsibility in Year 6 (...) if they want those, but they have to earn them' (ML, L78-83).

She likened her leadership role to *'plate-spinning'*. She focused on including values in her practices while introducing a new cross-curricular topic-based curriculum and preparing pupils thoroughly for the Year 6 tests.

'I'm teaching the new curriculum, but my children are going to be tested on the old curriculum, so it's making sure that everything is covered. It's plate-spinning again. That's how I feel' (ML, L309-311).

She found integrating values into some subjects, such as history, physical education and personal, social and health education, more straightforward than others, such as mathematics.

'I think the links between the curriculum and values need to be more obvious (...) I would not know how to make the link, particularly in maths. I would say, do you trust my answer? (...) I think our values underpin what we stand for as a school. I think links are being made with subjects where they can be (...), and it's not always feasible' (ML, L259-268).

The staff as role models

There was a consensus amongst leaders that they acted as role models for pupils' interactions:

'I think we are role models for children. I think that's really, really important at all levels' (HT, I1L298-299).

'The interactions between the staff are generally really very good, so I think the children will certainly see friendship, compassion (...) but also in the way the staff deal with the children (...). We always try a model that kind of friendship and basic respect of each other' (CWL, L270-281).

'It's lovely teaching in this school - it's friendly, it's really warm. The children just pick up on it, so they're just lovely, and they care for each other, and they can see that the staff care for each other' (REL, L16-18).

When viewing pupils' elicitation tasks, the headteacher was delighted with pupils' endorsement of staff as role models:

'I think there's the thread of the values coming in (...) they've noticed the teachers' praise and there's a smile on their face and good role models and things. I think that's positive. The welcoming aspect, positivity. It's quite pleasing' (HT, I2L362-364; 367-370).

Building relational trust

Leaders sought to build warm, trusting relationships amongst community members, making their school's education ethos distinctive. When appointing staff, the deputy headteacher recognised he and the headteacher sought to select the 'best teachers' with 'nurturing abilities' (DHT, L94-96):

'I don't want a hard person who is not in touch with their emotions and is just driven by results. The nurture side is very, very important' (DHT, L97-98).

'Everybody cares about Everybody else. Everybody is willing to listen to Everybody else, and no child is told you don't know what you're talking about or brushed aside (...).

Children are happy; they have confidence (...). Teachers have that embedded and underlined in everything they do - give it a go, and if you're wrong, it doesn't matter' (CGB, L85-93).

The headteacher valued the positive relationships formed between younger and older pupils. He encouraged Year 6 to act as mentors for pupils in the first year of their schooling. He discussed a photograph he had taken:

'That is Year 6, and they're Year R and what I think is noteworthy about the school and what parents have noted is that Year 6 look after Year R - cut up their roast potatoes and are buddies and play with them and I think that's the large family feel of the school (...) They look after them at playtime' (HT, I2237-240, 245-246).

Leaders sought to gain parents and pupils' trust by nurturing pupils and listening to parents' views about their children's education. As well as enabling parental participation in the formation of the values, the headteacher monitored parental satisfaction using parental questionnaires. He welcomed parents' endorsement of community members treating others with 'dignity' and 'respect' (HT, I1L299-307). He thought it 'important' to be at the school gate to 'welcome' and speak with parents (HT, I2L174-178). The deputy headteacher placed value on developing these trusting relationships:

'Trust (...) we want the children to trust us and talk to us (...) trust us with their learning (...) to help them do what's best for them (...). Parents have got to trust us (...). There has to be a strong element of trust there, and that comes from the strong nurture, which I believe we are good at' (DHT, L78-92).

The mathematics and collective worship leaders described experiencing 'supportive' relationships with parents. Using an 'open-door policy' enabled parents to call in or telephone with any issues, which gave the school a 'community feel' (ML, L53-59). The collective worship leader invited parents to attend Friday morning worship 'to be part of the worship with the rest of the school' (CWL, L84-85).

The headteacher viewed his senior leadership team as capable and energetic. As they had 'drive and energy' he trusted them, and he could promote 'distributed leadership'.

'They're respected, so they get things done' (HT, I1L550).

The mathematics leader described experiencing the headteacher's and deputy's trust in her teaching:

'I feel supported by the head and deputy; I've got a good relationship with them. I feel that they trust the initiatives I would like to do with my class. I respect them a hundred per cent. I would always do what they've asked me to do. I've questioned them in respectful boundaries because you can't always be a yes person, I feel, you have to be objective as well' (ML, L49-53).

New members of staff had mentors, with all staff operating in supportive units. The RE teacher began working at the school at the beginning of the school year. The *'warm and happy'*, and *'friendly' atmosphere*, attracted her to work at the school (REL, L29-32, 51-53). She was new to the role of a RE co-ordinator. She perceived colleagues as supportive and that they wanted her to do well (REL, L108-111). She described working closely with the *'really supportive'* collective worship leader to develop links between RE and collective worship. She felt she could ask staff for help when needed (REL, 173-175):

'She did the SIAMS monitoring report with me. She talked me through everything I've needed to do, helped me lead (...) meetings, booked me on a RE course' (REL, L138-139).

An eye on everything worth doing

The collective worship and RE leaders saw the headteacher as instrumental in keeping staff focused on aspects that benefitted pupils. In this way, he prevented colleagues from being overwhelmed by too many initiatives and becoming distracted from what mattered. The leader for collective worship observed:

'Whenever any of us (...) go off on these courses and come back with all these wonderful ideas (...) he always says, 'how does that benefit the pupils, and will you have time to do that? (...). He's always got his eye on everything that is worth doing if it's going to improve standards (...). That is good but never at the cost of the children and their esteem' (CWL, L384-391).

The RE leader considered other leaders helped ensure she made her leadership of RE manageable and prioritised appropriate actions to prevent excessive demands on the staff (REL, L325-341).

Creative ways of learning

Teachers appeared to value creative, investigative, and collaborative approaches to learning. The deputy headteacher commented:

'Children are not empty vessels to be filled up (...) learning (...) it should be enjoyable, interesting, collaborative (...) the teacher poses questions and challenges and gets the children to (...) arrive at answers (DHT, L358-365).

He liked using narrative, history, collective worship, and famous people to encourage pupils' reflections on human behaviour and its impact:

'You can take an awful lot from stories that you read about the way characters behave, why they do certain things, why they're driven to behave in a certain way, right through to looking at things like history (...). In Year 5, we looked at the Second World War (...) the Holocaust. How on earth do people behave the way they did? A concept of good and evil that can be looked at' (DHT, L128-138).

The RE leader wanted *'pupils to always have something that would capture their imagination'* and *'inspire them'* (REL, L57-61). The mathematics leader sought to encourage pupils to be *'inquisitive'*. When teaching RE, her aspiration was for them to explore and develop opinions about the big questions in life, like *'who is God'* (ML, L360-368). Besides, she wanted them to reflect on the meaning of the school values in their lives:

'We did a bit of writing about friendship in a bubble. What does that mean to us in Year 6? (..) In the classroom? (...) for us in the school, and what does that mean for us in the wider community? So, they articulated it to that extent' (ML, L207-211).

8.1.3 Theme 3: Critical incident – Managing and responding to SIAMS

This superordinate theme encapsulated the leaders' experiences of, and responses to, a critical incident: the school's SIAMS process. The *'satisfactory'* inspection grade was unexpected. The leaders identified dissonance between their view of distinctively Christian education ethos and that of the SIAMS inspector and quality assurance officer. Leaders indicated that the SIAMS outcomes altered their approach to developing the school's education ethos.

Feeling aggrieved about SIAMS

The headteacher believed the visiting inspector mishandled the SIAMS process (HT, I2L31-32). In his view, the quality assurance officer in attendance for monitoring purposes influenced the outcomes, *'which was not right'* (HT, I2L46-49, L40-44). The headteacher and deputy viewed the SIAMS outcomes as unjust as they did not accurately reflect the school's position (DHT, L295-297; HT, L486-489; 594-496). They reported a mock inspection, or *'MOT'*, five months earlier judged the school *'good'* overall (DHT, L501-502). The mock inspector perceived the school as a

living breathing Church school (...) well on the road to outstanding' (HT, I1L486-489). These comments convey the 'annoyance' and upset the headteacher considered the community experienced:

'I just feel aggrieved really, I don't mind if it reflects where we were, but I think we're further on in the journey than she gave us credit for. We're not perfect, and we are not outstanding, but I think there's loads of elements of good' (HT, I1L495-497).

'The governors are more upset than I am really because they just think our school got so much better. You've done this, you've done that' (HT, I1L463-464).

'A lot of teachers felt they were like two Pharisees walking around saying, 'you don't pray to the Trinity, you only say thank you prayers' and they rubbished that, and they didn't particularly raise the fact that we raise a lot of money for charities, they just walked by, they thought we didn't have enough altars around the school, so it's how we pray and the outward signs, perhaps, weren't there' (HT, I2L57-61).

The headteacher tried to make sense of the feedback. He found that the few parents, governors, and pupils the inspector saw *'could not link the values to the Gospel'* (HT11, L40-424). He thought that the inspector failed to see the reflection in the school when there were *'oodles of reflection in school'*. He admitted, *'it leaves a nasty taste in your mouth, and I don't like that'* (HT, 482-485). He explained the inspector sought evidence of *'prayers that reflected the Trinity and not thank you prayers.'* The inspector considered the school's charity giving was *'only one aspect of Christianity'* (HT, I1L500-502). The headteacher believed the school did its best to incorporate other cultures in a predominantly White British area. However, the inspector considered that the school did not provide evidence of learning about Christianity in other parts of the world. The headteacher argued he had invited a Muslim speaker to talk to pupils about this religion (HT, I1L507-212).

The headteacher found the disparity in outcomes between the mock inspection and the substantive inspection challenging to comprehend. It left him questioning the conduct of the process and consistency in the judgments made (HT, I2L32-37). He reported the school's governing body decided to appeal against the approach to the Diocese because the conduct of the inspection *'was awful'* (HT, I1L12; 416-418). The headteacher reported the appeal was unsuccessful, the outcome would stand, and the training of inspectors would address issues concerning the inspector's conduct.

'I think the school felt a bit sore about it, kind of that's not fair. The sense of fairness wasn't there; the Diocese had closed ranks. They actually said they will inform their trainers of this now, so there's a slight admission of guilt. But it stands (...), but it didn't reflect the school really, it's just the sense of unfairness and justice not being done' (HT, I2L52-57).

As headteacher, he felt responsible for the outcome. He blamed himself for not playing the game. His interpretation of promoting Christian distinctiveness was that young pupils should learn to say *'thank you'* prayers so that they learned to be grateful. He considered physical symbols of Christianity, such as the school's number of altars, should not drive the inspection (HT, I1L435-443).

'Had I played the game, I could have got good, and that's what annoys me (...). I could've primed four children and said, 'make sure when you talk about compassion, you talk about the Good Samaritan, Samuel and John' (...). I could have cherry-picked four parents (...). Why would I want to do that? And why should I? It is easy to do because they're only in for a day and talk to four parents' (HT, I1L467-475).

The deputy headteacher also viewed the SIAMS as game-playing, and the school needed to play the game. Game-playing entailed drilling pupils who attended Church to recite the links between school values and stories or books in the Bible. He, however, viewed pupils' demonstration of the values as more important than their capacity to reference passages from the Bible:

'That's just drilling, isn't it? (...). Okay, if that's what they want. If that's what they're looking for, you play the game. I'm not sure that's the way' (DHT, L287-289).

'I think it's important that they can be forgiving and caring (...) I don't think it's important that they can reference which page from the Bible it comes from personally, it's the person themselves that is the key thing rather than they can quote from where it comes from' (DHT, L277-281).

The collective worship leader's impression of SIAMS, and apparent engagement with the Church policy of education since 2012, was that the Church was becoming *'more evangelistic'* in its approach to Christian education.

'I have a feeling that the Church would like schools to be a lot more evangelistic. I might be wrong, but from what they have put out since 2012 onwards (...). I wonder whether there is a place for that or whether that has to be a bit more carefully looked at' (CWL, L426-430).

She questioned whether the Church wanted pupils to do *'more than just encounter God, Jesus and a living faith'* and considered there was *'almost a clash of outcomes and aspirations'* for schools that needed addressing (CWL, L409-411). *'She was not here to evangelise the children, to lead them to becoming Christians.'* This position contrasted with her role at her local Church, where she taught Christianity (CWL, L411-420).

The new RE leader described the experience of SIAMS as *'odd'*, as the inspector only spent ten minutes with her. She sensed she did not know what was going on until the end of the day (CWL, L305-308). However, she perceived the outcomes provided her with a clear focus for future work and gave her leverage to implement changes:

'I did know my stuff, but it was an odd experience. I can't say it was a good experience, but positives came out of it (...). Everyone has been really supportive, and I don't doubt that they wouldn't have been if SIAMS hadn't happened, but it is nice because it made it clearer, and it's given me a reason to say why I want to do stuff rather than being the new girl who wants to come in and change everything' (REL, L318-321).

The chair focused on the SIAMS report indicating that the pupils *'did not understand the connection between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost'*. She considered it would be hard for five-year-olds to grasp (CGB, L296-297).

Finding out what Christian distinctiveness means

The headteacher, collective worship leader, RE leader and chair of governors welcomed attending external professional development sessions focused on developing insights into the nature of a distinctively Christian education ethos (CGB, L308-322; HT, I2L64-70).

'The first one was looking at Christian distinctiveness, and one of the first things that was said was, 'when you walk into your school, how do you determine that it's a Christian school?' So, we all piped up, 'well there's a cross there', and he said, 'well, what makes it different?' (...). I said, 'we have our values on our policies, and we have this and that', and he said. 'Yes, and what else do you do?' (CGB, L309-315).

'We have moved on since then to make sure children have this understanding of the Trinity and also to know where all the bits of our values come from in the Bible' (CGB, L320-322).

The RE leader perceived as *'helpful'* her participation in a school-based research project exploring the nature of Christian distinctiveness undertaken in conjunction with other schools, a university, and the local Diocese (CWL, L147-151). A model that looked like *'an onion ring'* with

'heroes and values and physical parts to the building' enabled exploring the various aspects of ethos (REL, 153-156). She confided on starting at the school that she was unaware Church schools had values. She welcomed the opportunity to learn about values in different schools:

'It has been really good, actually, to understand the values side of things as I didn't even know that Church schools had values before I came to one' (REL, L160-163).

Leaders perceived discussing values in greater depth, including introducing a values board to celebrate pupils exhibiting school values, helped develop pupils' awareness (HT, I2L69-70; DHT, L392-399; REL, 171-172).

Matters of faith, RE and collective worship

School leaders cited collective worship, RE and PSHE as instrumental in enabling pupils to explore and reflect on school values (DHT, L390; REL, 228-236). The RE leader saw RE as a school priority for development. She objected to the practice of classroom assistants teaching RE because she wanted to improve its status. She persuaded teachers to teach RE the following year rather than use RE as their statutory release time for planning, preparation, and assessment (REL, L394-397):

'The biggest thing we are working on is trying to get all the teachers to teach RE next year... I didn't feel that it had the status it should have' (REL, L292-294).

She described introducing practical and reflective methods for teaching RE in Years 1 and 2. These included role-play and drama to make Biblical events more understandable and memorable for pupils. She explained including the values in pupils' RE books. Pupils noted down passages of the Bible or thoughts linked to the school values. In her reception class, pupils engaged in 'Godly Play' to explore Bible stories (L429-430) (www.godlyplay.uk/).

'I've introduced big books, so they're not doing as much work in books, but they are doing it really more practically (...). They're recording in-depth discussions, and their thoughts are being recorded on post-it's so hopefully, that will get the big questions answered better than if they're just doing worksheets' (REL, L230-234).

In raising RE's status, the headteacher was interested in purchasing 'an *inquiry-based RE scheme*'. He consulted the Diocese, but it did not meet their approval because it was not '*two-thirds Christian*' in every year group (HT, I2L112-119). Staff also received training from the Diocese about quality written work in RE (HT, L86-100). The collective worship leader reported raising RE's status as a subject. Teachers assessed older pupils at the end of each RE unit. They

undertook a piece of writing and marked this using National Curriculum English levels. The expectation was for pupils to perform equally well in RE and English (CWL, L251-259).

School leaders used collective worship to promote pupil reflection on the nature and importance of school values. They appeared willing to lead collective worship, as the school expected (ML, L437-446). The mathematics leader saw collective worship was improving due to using a Diocesan scheme, which aided planning for worship. Improvements entailed increased pupil engagement in leading role play and prayers in worship (ML, L387-390; 432-435). As a non-Christian, she sought to link the content of worship with the school values. The deputy headteacher used the scheme to explore famous people's behaviours, such as Malala, the youngest girl who won the Nobel Peace prize (DHT, L138-142).

The collective worship leader ran a *'lighting a candle group'* to enable pupils to explore links between the school values and the Bible. The group considered how to incorporate the values in worship and display information about the values around the school. She wanted teachers to explore themes in worship in their classroom teaching. She exemplified how considering awe and wonder and reverence concerning caring for God's world led to an entire week's study on the rainforest, with children raising money to buy a piece of rainforest. Another focus was on the Creation narrative, with children exploring God's creativity in different subjects. They had also explored how the world began from the perspectives of other religions.

8.1.4 Summary

In the first part of this Chapter, I presented leaders' experiences of developing the school's Christian education ethos in the Church Academy under three superordinate themes. I included extracts from leaders' transcripts to emphasise their voices. Collectively, leaders aspired to develop a Christian education ethos to prepare pupils to become responsible, caring, well-rounded, high-achieving pupils. They would leave the school ready to face the challenges in the next stage of their education. Leaders sought to embed Christian values in school practices and foster trusting relationships amongst members of the community. The central issues leaders encountered in developing Christian education ethos centred on their interpretations of the school's SIAMS. They articulated disappointment with the outcomes and a sense of injustice. They experienced an inspector who interpreted the nature of Christian distinctiveness differently to themselves. The staff responded robustly to the SIAMS but altered their approach to developing Christian education ethos.

8.2 Discussion of school leaders' experiences

The discussion of the leaders' experiences of developing a Christian education ethos draws on the literature on leadership and education ethos (Chapters 2) and Christian education (Chapter 3). I analyse the leaders' account using the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 4. I structure the discussion using three aspects of Bronfenbrenner's model: the influence of personal characteristics, proximal processes, and context in ethos development. I build in the fourth dimension of time under each of these headings.

8.2.1 Influence of leaders' characteristics on education ethos development

Using Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PCCT model of human development, I interpreted the leaders' competencies, personal qualities, and values were important in developing and implementing the school's vision for Christian education ethos. The changing context in which the leaders worked also influenced their actions and identity formation (Day et al., 2009; Gibton, 2017).

The importance of core values and vision

I interpreted the headteacher's values and competence as central to the school's education ethos development, in line with previous research into education ethos development (Lumb, 2014; Green, 2015). At the interviews, the headteacher presented himself as a calm, approachable, respectful, and confident headteacher. As a long-serving headteacher, he could influence the school's education ethos over several years. Having a vision for ethos development was essential to him and other leaders in promoting the school's success (Davies and Davies, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2006; McKinsey, 2010; Nanus, 1992). From the headteacher's perspective, he sought to '*get the best*' for children when determining the school's educational purposes (HT, I1L333). He summarised his vision for the school's education ethos as having '*high standards*' with '*a Christian caring atmosphere*' (HT, I1L41-50). I identified four aspects, which the other leaders appeared to share:

1. Valuing each child and putting the '*children first*',
2. Providing a holistic education to prepare pupils to flourish while also enabling their core literacy and numeracy skills to prepare them for the next stage in their education.
3. Becoming an outstanding school as judged by Ofsted and SIAMS,
4. Serving parents and the local community.

When appointed to the school, the headteacher prioritised building '*a sense of community*' and inspiring parental confidence in the school, which he appeared to address successfully (HT, I1L5-27; 34-40). The leaders considered that he established the school's high reputation in the local community. He implemented measures to increase staff and pupils' aspirations for achievement in a school that ought to have demonstrated higher pupil achievement based on its neighbourhood characteristics. He reported transforming the school's education ethos from underachievement to high achievement (HT, I1L34-41). In prioritising literacy and numeracy, he ensured that pupils developed the necessary skills required for the next stage of their education (HTI1, L338-341).

The headteacher viewed academic achievement and care as in a symbiotic relationship with each other. Care entailed doing and expecting '*the best for people*' (HT, I1, L174-184). The collective worship leader spoke of his force characteristics, his passion for putting the pupils first (CWL, L383-391). If everyone did their best, pupils would be well-cared for, want to attend school and achieve. Exacting standards were, for him, endorsed by how people treated each other. His aspiration was for pupils to develop personal qualities such as respect, collaboration, and happiness and those associated with the school values of forgiveness, friendship, compassion, and trust (HTI1, L181-182; HTI1, L285-287). My interpretation was that his values underpinned the school's ethos. For example, he valued forming trusting relationships. To the headteacher, trust required members of the community to demonstrate integrity and live honest and good lives within the community. The other leaders suggested they endorsed the fostering of high-quality relationships amongst members of the community.

What underpinned the school's application for Academy status was not the aspiration to develop innovative educational practices. Instead, it was the headteacher's motivation to provide the best for pupils' and leaders' disenchantment with local authority services (HTI1L198-215). The headteacher considered an inequitable distribution of resources existed amongst local schools. There was the prioritisation of those schools situated in areas of social deprivation for local authority support. The school could utilise additional funding from becoming an academy to enhance pupils' learning conditions (HT, I1L207-211). The headteacher strengthened his position to negotiate with the local authority new permanent classrooms to accommodate rising pupil numbers in the locality (HT, I1L217-223). Besides, he could retain beneficial relationships previously established with individuals from the local authority, such as his school improvement adviser, and network with select schools within the community (HT, I1245-246).

My findings concerning the importance of the headteacher's core values in vision formation and leadership supported previous research findings concerning successful school leadership, including Church school leadership (Campbell, Gold and Lunt, 2003; Rayner, 2014) (Sections 2.3 and 3.2). Day et al. (2010) cited values and vision as one of the eight key dimensions of successful leadership, enabling leaders to tackle daunting situations. The headteacher expressed clarity over the school's educational purposes before the SIAMS. Consequently, it helped him provide the other leaders with direction on the nature of education ethos development. My interpretation was that leaders' commitment to a shared set of core values contributed to their robust response to the school's SIAMS. The inspection challenged their shared vision for education ethos, their value positions, and their identities as leaders (Section 8.2.3). Green, S. (2015) and Lumb (2014) found the headteacher's values were influential in developing Church school ethos, including the discourse staff and pupils used to describe education ethos. The Academy leaders used the language of school values to express their aspirations for pupils and to make sense of the daily interactions observed amongst staff and pupils or staff and parents.

Successful leadership

Acting with a moral purpose was essential to successful leadership (Haydon, 2007; Hickman, 2012; Begley, 2012). The Academy leaders sought to take responsibility for doing what they believed to be right when developing the school's education ethos, indicative of ethical leadership approaches (Day and Sammons, 2013, p.5; Bennis and Nanus, 1985). They sought to reconcile tensions between developing a Christian caring ethos and improving academic standards. Church of England policy endorsed leaders attending to academic performance alongside Christian distinctiveness (Chadwick, 2012; Archbishops' Council, 2013, National Society, 2013b; Cefel, 2017). By embedding a Christian-values based ethos focused on care, the leaders considered pupils could live their lives by the school values. They could also learn of the values' importance to the school community (HT, I1L48-50; CWL, L269-271).

All leaders strived to go beyond satisfying the measurable performance criteria required for Ofsted (2012), such as achieving outstanding attendance, behaviour, and pupil attainment. I interpreted that leaders sought to enable pupils' love of learning and character development. They desired that pupils reach their potential. They wanted pupils to experience an education that would prepare them to tackle the challenges they could experience in life and allow them to flourish in their chosen pathways. They looked for pupils' development of behaviours and qualities reflecting the school values and qualities such as resilience, curiosity, creativity, self-confidence, and tolerance (CGB, L147-148, 198, DHT, L45-47). Leaders identified RE, PSHE, circle

time, and collective worship as crucial in enabling pupils to learn about the significance of the school values in their lives (CWL, L314-316). They differed in their beliefs concerning the extent to which the school values became embedded in the school's curriculum. Leaders were unaware of *What If Learning* as a possible means of embedding Christian school values in classroom practices (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). It was not a widely used approach at the time of the fieldwork.

Leaders' motivations for the school to become outstanding reflected their ambitions as leaders, their professional commitment, loyalty to the school and intention to meet parental expectations concerning pupil outcomes. Professional expectations to achieve standards of excellence, including those in the DfES (2004) *Standards for Headteachers*, influenced leaders' practices. Also, leaders suggested they saw the necessity for complying with the criteria of two accountability systems - SIAMS and Ofsted - when providing a Christian education. Recognition of the school's education as an outstanding required judgement by both these inspectors. Ofsted measured school and leadership effectiveness. SIAMS judged the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Church schools (National Society, 2013b).

From an ecological systems perspective, the influence of inspection criteria on leaders' motivations and practices illustrated the complexity of leading education ethos development. Leaders formed part of a complex system of interrelated factors influencing ethos development that determined their leadership practices and influenced their value positions. The leaders suggested that the constraints of the standards agenda restricted their professional autonomy in education ethos development. In Chapter 2, I explored how market and performative reforms could affect leadership autonomy. Leaders could earn professional status by adhering to the standards agenda (Brown and Manktelow; 2016). Parents and broader society could judge the school's success through its inspection outcomes and the public assessment process, with the publication of pupil results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in English, mathematics, and science.

Leaders' saw the achievement of good or better judgements in Ofsted inspections and SIAMS as essential to establishing credibility in their community. These findings supported those of Coldron et al. (2014), who found that the category Ofsted awarded for the school's overall effectiveness influenced leaders' standing. An outstanding grade could consolidate a school's reputation locally. Besides, leaders of schools graded as *good* and *outstanding* by Ofsted could apply to become Local Leaders of Education, provide guidance, or take executive control of schools graded *requires improvement* or *inadequate*. To avoid failure, the headteacher took active measures to monitor parental feedback, meet with parents to resolve issues and prepare

for SIAMS with a mock inspection. From my own experience of mock inspections, the process had the potential for leaders to validate their judgements of the school's position using the externally published SIAMS accountability criteria (National Society, 2016b3). However, a mock inspection was at best an indicator; in this case, the inspection produced a different result which dismayed the school leaders.

The headteacher prioritised providing education in pupils' best interests within the restrictions of the broader accountability frameworks controlled by Ofsted and SIAMS (HT, I1L24-26). It emphasised each child's achievement rather than just focusing on the cohort's collective achievement. The headteacher attended to the views of parents, governors, staff and pupils, and members of the local Church and Diocese in developing the school's Christian education ethos. My impression was that he remained open to changes in the school's context through a willingness to listen to others, exercise empathy, and use of his contextual, analytical skills.

My interpretation was that the school leaders aimed for pupils to experience happiness and enjoy their learning. This finding supported those of Harnett and Vinney (2008) and Brown and Manktelow's (2016). They concluded that primary teachers valued pupils' happiness and enjoyment when researching contextual influences on teachers' professional identities. However, achieving pupil happiness as a goal could be challenging, with demands placed on pupils by the national tests in Year 6. In the UK, the happiness of children remained a national concern. The mathematics leader reported experiencing tensions between her aspirations to care for the Year 6 pupils' welfare needs and covering the necessary curriculum content. There was a perceived need to prepare them to achieve highly in the standard assessment tasks at the end of Key Stage 2. She considered she must secure the school's position in the national league tables by the pupils achieving highly in the tests (ML, L130-138). It resulted in her appearing anxious not to let the leadership team or the school down. PISA (2015) identified pupils in the UK as amongst the least happy in the world and more anxious about testing than any other country. Chamberlain et al. (2011) reported that pupils in years 5 and 6 felt the pressure to achieve at school and unhappiness with the pressure teachers placed on them (Robinson, 2014, p.7). In this school, leaders linked happiness with pupil and staff welfare.

Having been a secondary school teacher, the chair of governors could empathise with the demands on teachers and considered happiness to be an essential feature of staff wellbeing, which she monitored (CGB, L80-82). My own experience of the headship was that happiness was part of a primary school's discourse. It was an expression often used by pupils and parents when describing desirable educational outcomes.

The influence of faith as a personal characteristic on education ethos development

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PCCT model did not specifically focus on aspects of faith as a personal characteristic influencing identity development. Nonetheless, in a Church Academy, leaders' religiosity was of interest in education ethos development and leaders' identity development. Previous research noted how faith perspectives influenced how leaders and teachers approached their leadership and pedagogy (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016; Green, E. 2009c; Green, S., 2015; Lumb, 2014; Pike, 2010). Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell (2016, p.117) pointed to documentation on the relationship between religion and education. However, they concluded it was less clear how educators could include religious voices in education.

In my research, the headteacher observed he was discreet about his Catholic faith. He spoke of it only when asked at school. It was a challenge to suggest the extent to which it drove his leadership. However, as the leader of a Christian community, he aspired to serve parents' diverse needs. These included those parents choosing to have their child educated at the school because of its Christian foundation and those with an expectation that their child would achieve highly (HT, I1L54-55). The nature of his personal faith did not appear to be as strong a factor influencing Christian education ethos development compared to his quest for inclusion and pupils being able to experience human flourishing.

The school leaders expressed caution about promoting instruction in Christianity. The chair of governors seemed puzzled over the SIAMS inspector's expectations concerning pupils' comprehension of aspects of the Christian religion. She provided examples of their expectations that young children understand the Trinity. As a practising Christian, she professed that she found specific Biblical texts hard to comprehend as an adult (CGB, L294-305).

The collective worship leader reflected on the influence of faith in developing Christian education ethos. As a committed Christian, she considered enabling pupils to reach their potential as her '*Christian duty*'. It underpinned the love she demonstrated for pupils from a Christian perspective. However, she experienced confusion following the school's SIAMS over the Church of England's expectations concerning the nature and purpose of pupils' education. It led her to question the school's role in an evangelical sense (CWL, L407-413). She expressed concern about the extent to which the school should proselytise pupils into the Christian faith. She compared her role as a Christian educator in her local Church with her teaching role at school. She implied that converting pupils into the Christian faith was inappropriate in the context of a school. I interpret that she saw herself in school as a teacher and not a preacher of

Christianity. Her position was illustrative of the Clark and Woodhead (2015) argument that instruction in religion in schools was inappropriate. The reason was that pupils might not critically question alternative views. However, it was appropriate outside schools where young people received instruction in a specific religious or non-religious tradition.

The collective worship leader identified a shift from 2012 in the Church of England policy concerning the nature and purpose of education in Church schools. This shift coincided with the Chadwick Report (2012) publication, which emphasised that Christian education ethos should impact the entire curriculum and pedagogical practices, with RE contributing to the school's education ethos. This vision for developing education ethos informed the SIAMS evaluation schedule used to evaluate the school's distinctive Christian character and how its values ensured developing the whole child (National Society, 2013b).

In Chapter 3, I identified the tension that Church school leaders could face in offering an education that was distinctively Christian and inclusive of pupils of all faiths. Dearing (2001) advocated this as a policy for Church schools. The Runnymede Trust also emphasised the significance of leaders of faith-based schools, offering a distinctive response to diversity in the interests of promoting community cohesion (Berkeley, 2008). The Church Academy leaders appeared to lack clarity over the Church of England vision for education. It was indicative of the Church's challenge to present its schools with a clear and accessible theology (Jelfs, 2008). Research into Christian distinctiveness in the first part of the millennium indicated that leaders could not clearly articulate a clear theology and philosophy for Christian education ethos (Colson, 2004; Street, 2007a, Green and Cooling, 2009). I interpreted that Academy leaders became confused by the Church agencies, which exerted power over them, following the shift in Church policy.

My interpretation was that school leaders became uncertain about the place of faith in education. The leaders viewed the school and classrooms as inclusive spaces. Inclusive spaces, where pupils could openly discuss matters of faith, were significant in Christian ethos development. Leaders were anxious to avoid creating a divided community, where individual pupils might perceive they did not belong due to their faith positions. Green (2009c) identified that pupils did not experience the inclusive ethos leaders intended in a City Technology College sponsored by a non-denominational Christian foundation (Section 3.2.5)

While the leaders varied in their religiosities, they all expressed their willingness to lead collective worship, explain Bible stories and related values (ML, L444-446). There were potential

challenges in members of the school interpreting the school's values as Christian values, which was a point made by Elbourne (2013). The headteacher and collective worship leader viewed them as Christian values, based on a Biblical narrative (CWL, L40-42). The deputy headteacher viewed the school values as a 'good' set of values for pupils to possess regardless of faith, selected and endorsed by the whole community (DHT, L58-60). Whilst he did not believe in God, he described himself as a spiritual person. He articulated the school's priority with clarity to strengthen pupils' comprehension of the Christian narrative underpinning the values following the SIAMS inspection. All school leaders expressed commitment to modelling school values in their interactions with the school community members. The purpose was to sustain the high-quality relationships they enjoyed between themselves, pupils, and parents (DHT, L59-60).

My finding was that leaders made little or no reference to the significance of British values in school ethos development in their interviews. However, the chair of governors acknowledged the governing body's need to consider their relationship to the school's Christian values. I observed a Key Stage 2 worship focused on the Rule of Law, one of the fundamental British values, which indicated senior leaders' compliance with their statutory duty to teach them (DfE, 2014)

8.2.2 Proximal processes

Relationships amongst the leaders

Enduring forms of interaction between leaders, which Bronfenbrenner (2005) termed proximal processes, could enable leaders to learn leadership behaviours of importance to the community. Over time, the leaders could observe, reflect on, and become familiar with the headteacher's practices, response to crises, and interactions with parents and pupils. The leaders appeared to admire the headteacher's way of working. They projected themselves as secure and confident in their roles. They possessed clarity about their individual and collective contributions to developing the school's Christian education ethos through their respective roles and responsibilities.

Proximal processes were bi-directional influences (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The headteacher's experiences of the other leaders' approaches to their roles and competence influenced his leadership. He felt able to distribute leadership to a greater extent than earlier in his headship. He believed his leaders were competent, and he could trust them to get things done (HT, I1L526-527). Day et al. (2009) found that leaders delegated more responsibilities to subordinates after becoming established in their posts and following increased confidence and trust in staff

capabilities (Section 2.4). The headteacher appeared to facilitate teamwork, which enabled a consensus-orientated, deliberate process of improving educational provision.

The collective worship leader's comment on the headteacher's attentiveness to aspects '*worth doing*' (CWL, L87-391) indicated that he played a pivotal role in prioritising attention to essential leadership tasks. It included those that influenced pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence, or achievement. The headteacher had oversight of the school's strategic direction and could prioritise the leadership team's work. As a group, the senior leaders acknowledged how the headteacher exerted some manageability over teachers' workloads to prevent their distraction with less critical endeavours. From a strategic leadership, perspective the chair of governors felt comfortable as a critical friend to the headteacher (CGB, L364-366).

Brokering trust and acting with integrity

At the level of the pupil microsystem, leaders considered it essential that staff modelled school values when building high-quality relationships between themselves, the pupils, and the parents (DHT, L59-60). Their aspiration was that pupils and parents would place their trust in leaders (DHT, L78-92). There was no single definition of 'trust' in the literature due to its multi-faceted, situated, and complex nature. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2014) identified that common amongst most definitions was a consideration of the willingness to take risks in the face of vulnerability. Bottery (2004) argued that trust could be generated in three ways: agreeing on value priorities, people doing what they said they would do, and demonstrating competence. My findings concerning leaders' experiences suggested that all these strategies contributed to developing the school's education ethos. My analysis of leaders' perspectives using Wenger's communities of practice indicated that the sharing of tacit knowledge through their engagement in school practices enabled them to become full participants. The leaders all understood what the school stood for.

The leaders sought to build relational trust with pupils and parents by securing their agreement to their values and priorities. It was illustrative of the point made by Roberts (2006, p.628) that within communities of practice, trust was important as it led to openness and the willingness to share tacit knowledge. Leaders engaged stakeholders in selecting values representative of, and comprehensible to, the school's community (CWL, L184-210). Riley (2009) also emphasised the importance of leaders' listening to their communities' views in establishing trust between the school and community. The leaders chose values compatible with the Diocese and National Society, as published on the Christian values for schools' website (DHT, L78-79; CGB, L266-271).

Leaders did not intend to alter the school's existing ethos substantially. Collectively, they were proud of the school's ethos, believing it enhanced the school's reputation in the community. Leaders incorporated the chosen values into the school's mission statement, reflecting the institution's purpose (Coates, 2017, p.92). By engaging parents in communication over school values, leaders could foster collaborative relationships with families and potentially influence pupils' characters. With cooperative parents, both parties could share aims for pupils' moral or Christian education. A range of character education literature supported the family's central role in this regard (Arthur, 2003; Arthur et al., 2015; Layard and Dunn, 2009).

Trust was reciprocal. In developing a Christian values-based ethos focused on high-achievement. Leaders suggested they satisfied parents' diverse needs and generated parental trust and loyalty. The deputy headteacher noted the '*strong nurture*' of pupils helped build parental trust (DHT, L86-92). Role-modelling school values indicated that staff members acted responsibly. Their intentions to model school values supported findings in previous research. It supported Southworth's (2009, p. 95) conclusion that leaders need to 'walk the talk' for others to follow their example. Demonstrating integrity and competence was important in ethical leadership (Begley, 2012; Trevino; 2000, Western, 2013).

Leaders were central in brokering trusting relationships with parents. By welcoming parents into the school, leaders could provide transparency in school practices, enabling parents to find out what the community was about and how staff responded to pupils' needs. Parent-school partnership in education appeared to be an implicit value shared amongst leaders. I interpreted that the school's boundaries were more complex and less rigid than Wenger's community of practice model (1998). In Wenger's model, parents appeared to represent peripheral participants in a school at the boundary of the community of practice. They could observe the actions of active members through brief encounters and visits. School leaders took seriously parental perceptions of their children's education (DHT, 89-91). The headteacher valued parental voice and encouraged their contribution to community building. High-quality discussion over the school values acted as a means of leaders demonstrating their trust in parents as partners in their children's education. The headteacher took pride in securing favourable parent survey results concerning their perceptions of the school's education.

All leaders understood their shared responsibility for engaging parents in their children's education and the life of the school. Leaders described an open-door policy. They welcomed parents into the school as helpers and communicated with them at the start or end of each day (REL, L90-94). The collective worship leader invited parents to attend school worship and

encouraged parents to act as parent-helpers in her classroom. Overall, leaders perceived parents appreciated their work and enjoyed good relationships with parents. I interpreted that such trust improved the morale and job satisfaction of leaders. Their relationship indicated the bio-directional influence on identity development in Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem through the effect of leaders' behaviours on parents' perspectives and parents' behaviours on leaders' perspectives.

Trust and power were interrelated. I analysed the power dynamics in operation at the school as a community of practice in knowledge creation and sharing. The school contained people of different ages, levels of expertise and experience. Inequitable distribution of authority existed between pupils and the leaders. Leaders could exert power in determining the knowledge to be learned and designing practices to make pupils' learning meaningful. Middle leaders, such as the RE and mathematics leaders, represented full participants in the community of practice. As an outsider to the school, I perceived the RE leader moved from being a peripheral to a full participant through a process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991). She saw her induction and professional development as crucial in understanding school practices and developing the capacity to exercise her leadership of RE. Her induction, led by the collective worship leader, was matched to her needs so that she could be SIAMS ready. Being included in what mattered and trusted by colleagues was important in her engagement in the community.

The middle leaders believed the headteacher trusted them to fulfil their responsibilities and utilise the professional competence and the insights they brought to their leadership and teaching roles. It illustrates the Roberts (2006, p.627) argument that members with full participation could wield more power in negotiating meaning within a community of practice. In bestowing his trust, the headteacher trusted them to follow his lead and act in pupils' best interests. Having the right staff was essential. He expected them to do their best for the community (HTI1, L291). His trust appeared beneficial, enhancing their job satisfaction and loyalty to the school.

Leaders demonstrated a strong sense of belonging to their school. Their tenure, experience of working together, and interactions with parents over several years indicated that they understood each other's needs and pupils. They appeared to share a common understanding concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. I interpreted their sense of belonging to their community through three modes of identification with their community: engagement, imagination, and alignment (Wenger, 1998). Concerning engagement, they worked collectively

to promote pupils' experiences of a holistic education and Christian values-based ethos. In terms of imagination, they appeared to possess clarity about their contribution to the community and the headteacher, parents and pupils' expectations of them. In terms of alignment, they seemed to align themselves to the headteacher's expectations and co-ordinate their actions towards shared goals and embedding shared values. Leaders indicated they worked well collaboratively, shared perspectives and supported each other in the school's Christian education ethos development.

8.2.3 The importance of the broader context in education ethos development

In addition to developing a Christian education reflective of their value positions, the leaders also pursued new opportunities, met threats, and solved problems emerging from the dynamic policy context. They achieved this through a process of 'adaptive leadership' (Hickman, 2012, p.68). Leaders aspired to meet the expectations placed on them to achieve excellence in all aspects of their work. The SIAMS inspection appeared significant in shaping their identities regarding their motivations, professional values, and actions. It also shaped the school's identity as a Church of England school. The school was not a closed system but belonged to Church schools' broader family (Elbourne, 2012). Following the SIAMS, leaders sought to align the school's education ethos more fully with National Society (2013b) expectations. Higham (2013, p.31) found schools positioned themselves as either 'confident', 'cautious', 'concerned' or 'constrained' concerning national policy. School leaders suggest that collectively they demonstrated a 'cautious' response to the policy context before SIAMS, but it became more constrained by external policy directives afterwards. I interpret the response to SIAMS criteria became a tick-box activity exercise for leaders to secure the school's performance in the education marketplace.

Church of England policy on what constituted a Church school education influenced leaders at Bronfenbrenner's (2005) macrosystem level. Leaders selected Christian values recommended by the local Diocese and the National Society. In adopting the Church of England values, leaders could promote the community's relationship with the broader Church family of schools and demonstrate loyalty to the Church, which was an essential aspect of trust. Through agreeing with appropriate values, school leaders could build a trusting relationship with the Diocese and National Society. The 2010 SIAMS outcomes provided a catalyst for leaders to make Christian values more explicit.

8.2.4 Analysis using dimensions of power

Lukes (1974, 2005) saw power as the ability or capacity to achieve something using influence, force, or control. Analysing leaders' experiences of education ethos development using Lukes' dimensions of power highlighted the influence of performativity and context in education ethos development. It revealed the scope of the authorities to exercise power over leaders' decision-making and leadership practices.

From my review of the literature on Church of England policy (Section 3.1), I inferred that a series of policy developments cumulatively enhanced the National Society's control over Christian education's nature and purposes in Church schools over time. The new agenda for developing Christian education ethos was established through the National Society's revised criteria for SIAMS, illustrative of Lukes' (1974, 2005) second dimension of power, controlling the agenda. The outcomes of the school's SIAMS challenged the leaders' value positions concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. The criteria and grade descriptors produced to codify the school's inspectors' evaluation (National Society, 2013b) represented a measurable aspect of power. The exertion of this form of power was unidirectional. The Academy leaders had no say in this agenda, as they were limited to interpreting how to respond to it.

Lukes' (2005, p.24) third dimension, power by domination, entailed the National Society ultimately shaping leaders' preferred actions and conceptions of Christian ethos. Successful leadership was critical to leaders seeking to position the school's high reputation in a quasi-market education system. Leaders viewed compliance with this new agenda as serving their interests in being seen as successful and securing the school's reputation as a high-performing school. Consequently, they came to accept their role in fulfilling this new agenda.

Leaders reports on the Diocesan inspector and quality assurance officer's behaviours suggested they viewed the advisor and inspector collaborating to exert power through their decision-making. The inspector judged the overall effectiveness of Christian distinctiveness in the school using the National Society (2013b) criteria. Leaders' experienced discomfort in the inspection's conduct (HT, I1, 429-443; CWL, L426-430; GGB, L3-6). They considered the inspector's interpretation of Christian education ethos and its impact on pupils differed from their interpretation (CGB, L3-6; HT, I1L431-443). The inspector's use of this form of power is related to Lukes' first dimension, overt power through decision-making. The inspector possessed the authority to override the leaders' self-evaluation judgements on the school's position. Two

questions arose: Was the exercising of this power in the best interests of the school community? What purpose did this serve?

Leaders were clear that the overall judgement of 'satisfactory' in SIAMS was unexpected and were disappointed with the outcomes. The process exposed the emotional dimensions of leadership, the vulnerability of the headteacher. It seemed to have longer-term repercussions on the identity formation of leaders. The headteacher felt he should shoulder the blame as he did not play 'the game' (HTI1, L467-471). He implied he had let the community down, which appeared to impact his dignity. It led him to be self-critical of his leadership. He underestimated the significance of game-playing but questioned why he should have to stage-manage the event. He acknowledged the need to prime pupils and parents to state the Biblical origins of the school's values. However, the RE leader reported that a committee (consisting of the collective worship leader, RE leader and governor) regularly reviewed the development of the school's Christian ethos against the SIAMS accountability framework.

My findings support those of James (2018). She found that leaders in the Church of England schools experienced discomfort in the personal and professional compromises required to ensure the school's success in SIAMS. James concluded that leaders appeared to resort to fabrications and cover stories to present a positive image of the school's performance to ensure the schools received successful judgments in SIAMS. The influence of the SIAMS process on the leaders' experiences of SIAMS in the Church Academy indicated that they felt the same way.

In applying the Hirschman (1970) concepts of exit, voice and loyalty in analysing the critical incident, leaders could voice their concerns about the inspector's conduct in an appeal to the Diocese. They suggest they did not receive a satisfactory resolution to the use of voice. The exercise of voice could not, however, influence the outcomes. The headteacher perceived a potential bias by the Diocese towards their inspectorate. There was no option of an exit from the Church of England family. Therefore, the school adopted a position of loyalty.

The loyalty was illustrative of leaders adjusting their teaching of pupils about the Biblical origins of the school values. In consequence, they attended professional development on Christian distinctiveness provided by the Diocese. The power exercised by the Church agencies secured the compliance of the school leaders. However, compliance in the form of loyalty does not necessarily generate trust.

The SIAMS event and outcomes: A betrayal in trust?

Potentially power and trust operate in opposition (Moos (2012, p.29). There was a disparity in outcomes between the mock inspection and the actual event. It led to the headteacher and the other leaders questioning the validity of the inspection process. The headteacher considered the judgements did not accurately reflect the school's position. The staff felt aggrieved about the inspector's conduct and the oral criticisms made of the school's environment and prayer practices. The inspection findings raised questions about the potential value of, or over-reliance on, mock inspections.

As a result of the SIAMS incident, leaders appeared to lose trust in the inspection process regarding its function and outcomes. Leaders indicated they felt let down or betrayed by the process. Trusting relationships, such as those leaders shared between themselves and parents or pupils, could not be assumed and took time to build (Riley, 2009). Betrayal entailed a violation of trust, which could be damaging to relationships (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Repairing trust could be a long, arduous process. Repair begins typically with the violator recognising and acknowledging that a violation took place. Following an inspection process, it was questionable how it was possible to work through the situation as leaders could not question the inspector's judgments.

I interpreted the incident as an example of a situation where achieving consensus in value positions about the nature and purpose of Christian education was difficult, if not impossible. The headteacher and other leaders' value positions concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education conflicted with that of the SIAMS inspector and quality assurance officer. The headteacher suggested he valued an experiential approach to Christian education. Using Astley's (1994; 2018) categorisation of Christian education's nature and purposes, the headteacher saw the purpose of education as education in a Christian manner and education about Christianity. Pupils could experience relationships underpinned by Christian values and learn about Christianity as well as other religions. The headteacher and other leaders' interpreted the inspector's view of the purposes of Christian education as education into Christianity. Leaders, therefore, prioritised pupils' instruction in Christian practices and the Biblical origins of Christian values. For the collective worship leader, the incident created confusion about the Church policy on Christian distinctiveness. She suggested moving to an 'evangelistic' or instructional approach to religion caused the school leaders discomfort, anxiety, insecurity, and uneasiness.

I interpreted that while the inspection could offer school leaders insights into issues influencing Christian distinctiveness, the problems of reliability and validity in a process that lasts one day could offset any potential advantages. There could be a lack of objectivity in terms of an inspector's ability to assess all relevant evidence in one day. The analysis raised questions about the appropriateness of a one-day inspection for evaluating the effectiveness of Christian education ethos, and whether other forms of evaluation might be more effective.

Issues related to accountability, autonomy and control: Leaders' response to SIAMS

Leaders appeared to respond robustly to the SIAMS. However, they suggested experiencing the loss of autonomy in developing a Christian education ethos. Their response required personal qualities, such as empathy, integrity and resilience combined with deploying appropriate leadership practices. The leaders' strength appeared to stem from them not losing sight of their core values and their capacity to build on the trusting relationships formed with parents and the local community.

To do things right, leaders reiterated their active engagement in professional development on Christian distinctiveness. They extrapolated what was of value and applicable to the school's situation. Their participation in an action research project exploring Christian distinctiveness seemed advantageous in promoting their networking across schools and organisations. The outcome suggested that leaders enriched their knowledge of leading Christian distinctiveness. Wenger (2002) emphasised the importance of leaders acting as brokers of knowledge to identify fresh ideas, solutions, perspectives, and tools for developing community practices from a community of practice perspective. The RE leader considered the community benefitted from introducing a new lens for viewing the school's Christian distinctiveness. She described leaders adopting Hofstede's (1997) model of institutional culture. It facilitated their analysis of the school's education ethos based on institutional values, practices, rituals, heroes, and symbols (Section 2.5). Leaders introduced a reward system based on heroes to establish expectations for behaviour (REL, L228-235). They identified heroes as Biblical characters, fictional characters and pupils characterising the school's highly prized values. They made the pupil heroes explicit by using reward display boards. Leaders found they could make quick fixes to the physical environment by increasing Christian symbolism throughout the school, the visible aspects of education ethos. They considered the challenge lay in facilitating the youngest pupils' understanding of the Christian origins and meaning of complex values such as compassion.

Leaders demonstrated compliance with the SIAMS criteria by improving the status given to RE within the curriculum and its contribution to developing a Christian education ethos. Church of England policy consistently placed a high priority on the contribution RE made to Christian ethos development (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012). To ensure the headteacher did the right thing by Church policy, he exercised caution when considering the adoption of a new RE scheme to improve RE teaching. He would not risk purchasing it. It did not meet the Diocese's approval despite leaders liking the focus on philosophy and the big questions. The Diocese rejected the scheme as it did not emphasise teaching about Christianity sufficiently in all year groups.

The RE leader was excited about the pedagogical tools she introduced to strengthen pupils' reflection on school values and to support teachers in their teaching of RE. She displayed pride during her interview when she shared the large class floor books she had introduced. These included numerous examples of pupils' reflections on the school values during RE. She seemed eager to lead by example. As the mathematics curriculum leader in her previous school, she appreciated the expectations placed on her concerning curriculum leadership. I interpreted that she had the necessary leadership expertise and support from the leadership team to persuade colleagues to change the teaching of RE.

The study raised questions about leaders' autonomy in Christian education ethos development at the school. An issue was the levels of trust the National Society and local Diocese would place in the leaders' development of Christian education ethos. Trusting relationships between the Diocese, National Society, and school leaders could encourage reciprocity, openness, and collaboration. It could provide the means sharing of expertise for the common good. If inspectors penalised leaders for non-compliance to the SIAMS criteria, there was a danger this might foster alienation between the school and the Diocese. It could lead to a loss of leadership expertise and creativity at the level of the school. My analysis supports arguments made by Brown, Stoll, and Godfrey (2017, p.134) and Spielman (2018), who expressed concerns about the pressures of accountability systems. Such forces caused headteachers to align school structures and systems to accountability criteria in instrumentalist ways. The result could hinder the achievement of educational goals.

8.3 Summary and significant insights

In this Chapter, I interpreted the Church Academy leaders' experiences of developing a Christian education ethos. In employing the double hermeneutic, I moved from providing an account grounded in the extracts from leaders' transcripts' to a higher level of interpretation. In my interpretation, I used my professional and personal experience, relevant literature from Chapters 2 and 3 and an application of the combined analytical framework provided by Bronfenbrenner (2005), Lukes (2005) and Wenger (1998).

The analysis of the leaders' experiences highlighted the complexity in developing a Christian education ethos within a high-performativity, high-accountability education context. Using Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model of individual development, my analysis emphasised the macrosystem's importance in shaping leaders' practices. The SIAMS inspection process, from the perspectives of leaders, highlighted differences in the assumptions made by the leaders and the SIAMS inspector concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. My interpretation was the headteacher sought to provide an education underpinned by a Christian values-based ethos that met the National Society's expectations (2013b), the local Diocese, parents, and Ofsted. The other leaders endorsed the headteacher's approach. Education in a Christian manner mattered more to leaders than education into Christianity, following Astley's (1994) categorisation of Christian education's purposes.

In contrast, leaders implied they interpreted the inspector valuing education into Christianity (Astley, 1994). The inspector expected to see instruction in Christian values and aspects of prayer. They found that the inspector also placed a high value on Christian symbolism in the school's environment. When considering the power dimensions in leadership, the analysis suggested the National Society (2013b) criteria for judging Christian distinctiveness exerted power over the leaders. It limited their autonomy in developing Christian education ethos. The message for leaders was to strengthen their loyalty to a new brand for Church schools.

Leaders' compliance with the SIAMS criteria appeared necessary for them to be considered successful in their leadership and secure the school's prestige and reputation in the educational marketplace. Performative mechanisms, however, have been widely criticised for undermining professional values based on critical reflection and practice, imposing external, often data-driven priorities. It could suppress the more creative aspects of the work of teachers and leaders (Ball, 2003; Galton and MacBeath, 2012; Sachs, 2003).

The analysis provided insights into how the perceived mishandling of an inspection and unexpected outcome could cause leaders and the school to experience harm. I interpreted a loss of personal dignity in the headteacher's case. Without the leaders careful handling of the school's response, and established relations, there was a danger the incident could have threatened the relational trust between school, home, and the local community. To avoid costs to leaders' and the school's reputation, leaders suggested they needed to resort to guarded behaviour and stage-managed procedures in SIAMS in the future. The findings resonate with James' (2018) research into leaders' responses to SIAMS in Church school (Section 3.2).

There was a danger that continued surveillance through the SIAMS could lead to a lack of innovative forms of Christian education in the longer term. Leaders could become less critical of their practices. Sachs (2003) argued that dissent was crucial for professional innovation through system adaption. It enabled the growth of transformative professionalism generated by internally generated professional values rather than externally imposed models of practice. To take risks, leaders needed emotional resilience to cope with unexpected outcomes and keep sight of their core values in Christian education development. The analysis pointed to the importance of leaders reaching out to the community, monitoring their views and values to sustain relational trust. Through leaders' continuous diagnoses and reflection on contextual factors, they could seek to minimise threats to the continued development of a Christian education ethos, capitalise on their strengths and celebrate opportunities.

The analysis raised questions for the Church of England at National Society and Diocesan levels. First, what level of trust would they be prepared to place in the leaders' development of Christian distinctiveness? Secondly, did they seek a one-size-fits-all approach in establishing a recognisable brand of schools or innovative approaches to Christian education that best meet pupils and the community's needs? Church Academy leaders indicated they needed permission to be creative and take risks, which required trust between the partners to provide Church school education. Also, if the leaders were to be encouraged to be open and share their expertise across the family of Church schools, this would require trust. Building trust suggested the employment of ethical and transformative approaches to leadership at all levels of the system. These approaches emphasise positive relationships, the demonstration of values, diversity, social responsibility, and sustainability in leaderships practices (Shields, 2010; Begley, 2012; Fielding, 2012). Predictability in education mattered. Therefore, expectations concerning the nature of distinctively Christian education required clarity.

Chapter 9

Presentation of Study 2

Part 2: Interpretative account for Church Academy pupils and discussion of the findings

9.0 Introduction

In this Chapter, I interpret the pupils' experiences of their education within the Church Academy's education ethos. In the first Section, I present an interpretative account for the group using the table of themes I derived from the data (Chapter 5). I use the same presentation conventions as with Study 1 (Section 7.0). In the second Section, I discuss the findings using relevant literature on education ethos (Chapter 2) and Christian education ethos (Chapter 3). Also, I use the following frameworks: Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model of human development, Wenger's (1998, 2002) communities of practice and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power. Through using an IPA methodology, the claims made are tentative.

Owen, Shaun, Henry, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Louise were Year 6 pupils in their final year of primary education. Their school experiences include their school journey memories from when they started school in Reception or Year 1. This table supplies some information about pupils:

Figure 9.0 A table providing a summary of the pupils' characteristics

Name	Gender	Declared religiosity	Interests and hobbies
Owen	Male	Christian	Science, IT
Shaun	Male	Christian	Music, playing the piano, science, reading
Henry	Male	Non-Christian but believed in God	Cars, sport
Sarah	Female	Christian	IT, writing, singing
Elizabeth	Female	Non-Christian but believed in God	RE, singing
Louise	Female	Not religious – no particular faith	Art, design and technology

9.1 Pupils' experiences of their education

I identify three superordinate themes, which encapsulate the meaning pupils made of their educational experiences within the school's ethos:

1. Valuing school values
2. Special people, places, and practices
3. Aspirations and achievement.

These themes provide insights into what the pupils considered it like to be a pupil at the school, the school's feel, and pupils' learning aspirations. They encapsulate the sense the pupils made of the school's values, practices and the nature of the relationships encountered between people at school. Also, they indicate what the pupils valued most about their education.

9.1.1 Theme 1: Valuing school values

The pupils valued the school's values. Henry and Elizabeth photographed school noticeboards communicating the values. Out of all the pupils' photographs, they considered the ones symbolising aspects of the values were of particular importance in their school lives. Pupils used the language of school values to describe the school's atmosphere, the nature of the relationships experienced, and the behavioural expectations placed on them.

'Our core values are forgiveness, friendship, trust and compassion (FFCT). Friendship for caring, kindness. Forgiveness for starting a new leaf. Trust for being able to depend on someone. Compassion for helping, or caring for' (Elizabeth, PRC2).

Henry suggested the values represented aspirations for the community's behaviour (Henry, DWT2):

'This is a picture of our core values: trust, friendship, compassion, and forgiveness' (Henry, PRC3).

'They are important to me because they are what the school runs by. They're not like the rules, but they are what we try and be friends and try and trust each other' (Henry, 12L365-366).

The pupils described gaining recognition for demonstrating values-related behaviours. Louise explained staff use of the values-award board in the hall to celebrate pupils exhibiting values-related behaviours:

'In the hall, we have a board, which has people from around the school, so one person from each class, which the teacher thinks (...) meets the core values (...). (Name of a child) has just been put up there (...). If you read underneath, it tells you what she has done to deserve it. R got put there because she smiles all the time and opens doors for people, and she shows friendship and forgiveness (...). She is in our class. She deserves it, and she is a very nice friend' (Louise, I3, 58 70).

Sarah, who described herself as Christian, considered all four values made her school special (Sarah, DWT2). She felt comfortable in the school amongst other Christians, sharing her faith. Against a symbol of the cross, she wrote:

'It is nice to be a Christian. Being in a school like this is brilliant' (Sarah, DWT1).

Louise connected the values to her learning about God and the school's Christian identity. She admitted not having thought about the school's Christian identity before. She was curious about whether her educational experience differed from that of pupils attending non-Christian schools:

'I never thought about the school being Christian, and if we weren't, would we still be learning about forgiveness? We might do a lesson on it, but I have not heard of other schools having core values because they are not Christian. My cousins go to a non-Christian school, but they do learn about God but do not think deeply about it' (Louise, I3L32-35).

In the final interview, the pupils linked the school values to Bible stories with confidence and appeared eager to express their views:

Henry: *The Good Samaritan is forgiveness and friendship.*

Shaun: *Well, also compassion because he helped that man. The Samaritans have sworn enemies of the Jews, and the Jewish priest just walked past.*

Henry: *The story of Jonah is forgiveness as Joseph did not want to go to Nineveh to say you are going to be destroyed because of your wickedness.*

Shaun: *So, he set off in the opposite direction.*

Henry: *Yes, the thunderstorm comes, and he is thrown overboard. The fish comes, and he asks God to forgive him, and he gets chucked up onto the beaches in Nineveh (...) Nineveh is also forgiven.*

Kind relationships

The pupils experienced kind, supportive relationships amongst staff and peers, influencing their sense of happiness and wellbeing at school. They viewed the staff as kind and helpful. They helped them learn in class, develop positive relationships with peers and mend broken friendships (Shaun, DWT2; Elizabeth, DWT2). The pupils trusted staff to keep them safe and drew staff offering assistance when they had fallen over at playtime and were upset.

'Our teachers care about us a lot and put lots of effort into growing our education. School feels like my second home. Although we work hard in class, we're always having a laugh and having fun. All the teachers care about the fire alarms, and they are always looking out for us' (Elizabeth, DWT2).

'The teachers + TAs + caretakers + head + dep. head are very kind' (Henry, DWT2).

In a two-stage action-drawing, Shaun depicted himself crying after falling to the ground and then smiling after an adult helped him up (Shaun, DWT2).

'I've put at the top that the teachers are very kind. I've got me that's fallen over so I've got a smiley face and then I realise I've hurt myself so then I put a frowny face, and then the teachers come up and give me first aid (...) When you're finding something hard in a lesson, they will come and help you.' (Shaun, I1).

Louise valued the welcoming she received from the office staff each morning when she entered the school to do her jobs. She drew office staff smiling at her and welcoming her into the school:

'How welcoming everyone is. This is a picture of the school office – everyone is very merry and happy – always smiling' (Louise, DWT2).

Happiness

All the pupils portrayed themselves as being happy at school in their DWTs. The emotion of happiness appeared to connect with them feeling valued by peers, their opportunities for play, their friendship experiences, and their learning of their favourite subjects. This sense of happiness is evident in Louise's drawing of herself and another girl with beaming smiles, dressed in school uniform, playing together in the playground. In a thought bubble, she made explicit her thinking:

'At X (School Name) school, we are all happy. I enjoy doing art and DT' (Louise, DWT1).

Other pupils' tasks also feature happy looking pupils undertaking school tasks and being with friends (Owen, DWT1, DWT2; Elizabeth, DWT2, DWT3).

Friendship

Pupils cherished friendships. As a school value, they viewed friendship as relationships sensitively cultivated through the favourable treatment of others, acts of kindness and offerings of support and encouragement. Friendships were also about wanting the best for others. They drew or photographed friends they trusted.

'Friendship for caring and kindness' (Elizabeth, PRC2).

'Friendship – to be friends' (Henry, DWT2).

Their friends helped them develop resilience and experience success. Shaun selected three pictures of friends in his diamond nine to convey how much he valued friendship (Shaun, PRC1, 5, 8). Elizabeth ranked the school values in order of importance, which helped her reflect on the meaning of the values in her life and how they connected (Elizabeth, PRC2). She ranked friendship as the most important school value and considered its dependence on developing trust, compassion, and forgiveness:

'X and Y (Children's names) in-class shows friendship, which I think is an important value to have as without it, we would just be filled with hatred. Friendship is an incredibly special value, but first, we must have trust, compassion, and forgiveness' (Elizabeth, PRC1).

'We just have friendship with whatever we do now because when we first joined Year R, we didn't know anyone. We became friends, and now we're all still friends' (Elizabeth, I2L61-62).

Henry also linked friendship and trust, indicating that trust was a quality he looked for in friendship:

'Trust –when you can trust a friend' (Henry, DWT2).

Friends were special people with whom they wanted to spend time and learn. Opportunities to learn together in class, and play in the playground, seemed important in enabling them to make and retain friendships. They described occasions when the loss of, or breakdowns in, friendships negatively influenced their wellbeing, happiness, trust in others and sense of belonging to their school community. The pupils provided examples of the times they had fallen out with others or experienced bullying in the past, which caused them pain, upset, frustration and anxiety.

The pupils valued friendships with boys, girls, and younger pupils beyond their immediate class. Three pupils drew themselves mentoring younger pupils (Owen, DWT1, Henry, DWT1, Sarah, DWT1). They sought to enrich younger pupils' lives by playing with them and supporting them in their development. In return, these interactions contributed to their wellbeing as they brightened up their school days (Sarah, PRC3, Shaun, PRC2):

'This photo of Year Rs' playing means a lot to me as it gives you such a good feeling seeing them playing and developing personalities. Year Rs' brighten up your day. They can't get enough of you, and you can't get enough of them' (Shaun, PRC2).

Elizabeth and Sarah viewed friendships and happiness role-modelled by teachers as influential to their happiness and sense of security:

'I really like that our teachers are so friendly. They always have a smile on their face and are really happy. It's like contagious because I am always smiling' (Elizabeth, DWT1).

'This shows friendship also between teachers. They love communicating and will help a child' (Sarah, PRC6).

Compassion

The pupils associated the value 'compassion' with their engagement in charitable work, empathy, and sacrificing time to help others. They experienced compassion when mentoring younger pupils or when empathising with the suffering of seriously ill people. Elizabeth perceived that she acted with compassion when she witnessed the bullying of another child. She helped the child and empathised with the emotions felt from being victimised.

'Compassion is to sacrifice your time to help others' (Sarah, DWT2).

'Compassion –You put yourself in someone else's shoes' (Henry, DWT2.)

'Compassion for helping, or caring for' (Elizabeth, PRC2).

The pupils considered that engagement in community fundraising not only enhanced the lives of others; it was also great fun (Elizabeth, DWT3). Two girls aspired to create charities and raise funds for pupils in need, which would make the school proud of them. Sarah desired to establish a charity *'to give people confidence'* (Sarah, DWT3). Elizabeth aimed to raise money for cancer as she sympathised with the different cancers affecting others (Elizabeth, DWT3). Her dream was to involve the school in her venture. Elizabeth photographed the school charity board displaying the certificates the community had gained for their efforts:

'Our charity board is special as I really enjoy taking part in them. If I were to sponsor a charity, it would be cancer research as there are so many different types of cancer' (Elizabeth, PRC3).

As a school council member, Harry recounted how he was encouraged to share his ideas for fundraising with the headteacher.

Trust

The pupils considered 'trust' essential to their school. Elizabeth interpreted trust as *'being able to depend on someone'* for love, comfort, or advice (Elizabeth, PRC2). Sarah described herself as acting in a trustworthy manner when she looked after younger pupils. She photographed a young friend made in the reception class to demonstrate the trust and friendship that developed from her acting as a mentor:

'Trust - To be able to believe that someone can borrow something or can tell secrets' (Sarah, DWT2).

'(Name of child) was the first friend I ever made that was in Year R. This shows friendship and trust' (Sarah, PRC4).

While only three pupils used the word 'trust' explicitly in their DWTs and captions, the pupils photographed a range of people they depended on for help or advice at school. I considered special people in more depth under superordinate theme two. The pupils felt staff expected them to be responsible in Year 6 and entrusted them to look after younger pupils as play buddies, mentors, monitors, or playground mediators. They displayed enthusiasm concerning their positions of responsibility and showed pride in doing their jobs well. They aspired to be school prefects once the school introduced this new role.

'They give us jobs to do, like to help, like in Year 6 you have to be really responsible. They're going to introduce prefects, and we do milk monitoring and mediation' (Sarah, I2L391-392).

Louise held a range of responsibilities. She monitored reception pupils at break times twice each week, acted as a peer mediator, assisted with collective worship on Fridays and rang the handbells on Wednesdays. Owen drew himself with a reception child he mentored, himself and another child he looked after, and himself with another mediator sorting out a dispute between two pupils. He commented, *'I like science and my jobs'* (Owen, DWT1). Sarah also drew herself as a stick person mentoring a reception pupil (Sarah, DWT1).

'We just play with them at playtime and lunchtime, and I do x (Name of child), and sometimes he'll try to put things in his mouth, but we try to stop him. We look after him but also play with him' (Sarah, I1L255-257).

Henry considered his experiences as a mediator helped him develop trust, alongside forgiveness and friendship. He was eager to become a mediator to do the job responsibly. As a younger pupil, he had experienced distress when he considered an older child abused his position of trust as a mediator.

Shaun: To be honest, we don't sort it out for them but help them to sort it out for themselves. And we're neutral as well.

Henry: It shows trust as well.

Shaun: Yes, because we are going to do it properly.

Henry: And we also trust them that they're not going to fight each other.

Shaun: And one of the reasons I wanted to become a peer mediator is I know just how bad the old ones were because X used to bully me' (I2L554- 563).

Concerning mediation, Shaun was familiar with the rules for engagement; two people needed to be present, and both parties had to consent to mediation and act reasonably:

'If one person doesn't want it, you can't give it. There's meant to be two mediators, mediating two people, and if the other is not there, go and find another. And thirdly, you're meant to help sort it out. I think he made it worse because he took sides' (Shaun, I2L571-574).

Forgiveness

Pupils valued the act of 'forgiveness', which they experienced as acts of rebuilding broken friendships, restoring love and giving others a new chance:

'Forgiveness is giving people another chance' (Sarah, DWT2).

'Forgiveness is starting a new leaf' (Elizabeth, PRC2).

'Forgiveness is when your best friend has just been mean to you, maybe they've punched you or something. If they're sorry, they say sorry, you say, 'Yes, I forgive you, and you won't do it again, really' (Louise, I2L539-541).

The pupils considered forgiveness entailed listening rather than people *'just shrugging you off' and going 'Oh yeah.'* They found acts of forgiveness a challenge. Shaun described forgiving a boy who had bullied him and getting to a position where he could get on with the boy.

9.1.2 Theme 2: Special people, places, and practices

This superordinate theme represents the unique people, physical places, artefacts, and practices pupils valued, which helped them make sense of the school's identity and their place within the school.

Special people

Concerning special people, Louise, Henry, and Owen photographed the headteacher in his office and other staff on a staff identification board. Pupils considered staff members looked after, supported, and offered them encouragement throughout their school lives (Louise, PRC4, PRC5; Henry, PRC1, PRC2; Owen, PRC4, 5&6). This theme linked with that of kind relationships considered earlier.

'This is a picture of Mr X (headteacher). He's important to me because he's helped me in my school life in Year R until now. I'm in Year 6, and he has encouraged us all and has been a great headteacher. Finally, it's a picture of all the teachers in the school, including dinner ladies and TAs. They're important to me because they've helped over the years and been great teachers, really' (Henry, PRC1 and PRC2, 12L382-386).

Pupils valued their class teacher (Louise, PRC1; Owen, PRC4&5). Shaun explained how supportive the class teacher had been in sorting out friendship issues or bullying incidents he experienced. After dealing with an upsetting critical incident to his satisfaction at the beginning of the year, she earned his trust.

The pupils appeared to connect with peers who shared their interests. For example, Shaun photographed children he saw reading, as he enjoyed and valued reading. He viewed reading as crucial to his education:

'This photo is of Year 1s reading, and it's important to me because reading is very important to me and important to others also' (Shaun, PR6).

'Reading is lovely, it's a gift, and it's just nice to see people enjoying books' (Shaun, 12L468-469).

Pupils photographed artefacts they cherished, such as those representing the personal contributions they had made to their school's physical environment. Henry photographed flowers he planted in Year 4, which reminded him of new life and the resurrection of Christ (Henry, L333-334).

'This picture is of the flowers we planted ourselves. They are very beautiful' (Henry, PRC8).

'The flowers they make me feel how because they keep on growing back and being alive, they make me think how every year, the new year is a fresh new year.... It sorts of reminds me of a bit like Jesus – how he dies and comes back to life, reincarnation' (Henry, 12L402-404).

Elizabeth's photograph of a large, colourful patchwork cross-hanging from the piano in the school hall mattered to her. She contributed to making this Christian artefact and viewed it every collective worship:

'The piano plays our hymns in assembly. It has a cross on it, which we made when I was in Year 2, the whole school made different features of it' (Elizabeth, PRC9).

Other artefacts were associated with memories of pleasurable experiences. A photo of the school choir singing at the O2 Arena in London on display in the corridor evoked in Sarah the memory of the pride and pleasure she experienced representing her school:

'Last year, the choir went to the O2 to perform in the Young Voices. It was a memorable experience for me' (Sarah, PRC8).

'The photo of the piano is important to me because I play the piano, and I like many others, find music very important and love it' (Elizabeth, PR9').

'The photo of these trophies is important to me as it signifies the school's achievements' (C2, PRC6).

The pupils photographed social spaces, such as their classroom and parts of the playground they shared with friends or peers, which provided a sense of enjoyment and security.

'It is important to me because it shows my class and my teacher, which is really important to me and that is why it is number one' (Louise, PRC1).

'The playground is where I talk about things' (Owen, PRC7).

Significance of the cross

The symbol of the cross, which children viewed in their school environment, appeared influential in them making sense of the school's Christian identity. Two children included the cross in their DWTs. Sarah celebrated the pleasure of being at a Christian school. She wrote next to a symbol of the cross, *'it is nice to be a Christian, being in a school like this is brilliant'* (Sarah, DWT1). She associated the symbol of the cross with her faith and with the school's Christian identity.

Elizabeth drew four crosses of varied sizes, which signified those she observed around her school (Elizabeth, DWT2). To her, the Christian designation of the school made the school distinctive. She linked the crucifix to her attendance at collective worship. Henry drew a cross signifying the school's Christian designation. Henry perceived prayer and collective worship practices made it different from a school without a religious foundation. For two children of the Christian faith, the cross held the special meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus:

'I have put a cross and said our school is a Christian school and different to a normal school as we have worship with a song and a prayer and maybe a story from the Bible sometimes' (Henry, DWT3, I3).

'The photo of the cross in the foyer window is important to me as it represents Jesus dying on the cross' (Shaun, PRC4).

'A cross represents when Jesus died on the cross and sacrificed his life for us' (Elizabeth, PRC5).

School practices: Worship, singing and prayer

Pupils indicated that collective worship and prayer were central to the practices at their school. Elizabeth provided the most detailed insights into worship and prayer. She perceived worship made her school special. She drew lots of crosses and candles and wrote:

'We have candles in worship. The person who is leading the assembly will say. Jesus is the light of the world.' Then we say, his spirit is with us': We also get told stories and get to volunteer' (Elizabeth, DWT2).

On the tour of the school, the pupils took me to the prayer table. Sarah informed me of her role in the school prayer group. She was proud of the prayer board and eagerly read prayers out for me. These were prayers asking for help for family members and pets who were unwell. She

photographed a Biblical quotation on the wall as she perceived it was about hope and mattered to her as a Christian and for the school:

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:10-12' (Sarah, PRC9).

'Being a Christian makes this an important phrase. It is also important to the school. It is saying God has plans for you' (Sarah, PRC9).

One boy disclosed not understanding what the Biblical extract meant, which led to pupils discussing the Bible's significance in their lives. Sarah, a Christian, remarked that she read the Bible every night but said she was the only one in her family who liked to do this. To others, reading consisted of studying the Bible in RE lessons. Sarah conveyed an awareness of her relationship with God and sensed God's working through the community members.

Pupils appeared to use the terms 'worship' and 'assemblies' interchangeably. Memorable worship experiences included the use of plays, experiential learning, and the singing of modern songs. Role-play of Bible stories made the content meaningful. The collective worship leader had consulted them about ways of improving assemblies, and they had got '*much better*.'

'I think to be quite honest; assemblies were boring up to Year 4 because literally, it was the same old people droning on about the same old Bible story every day. So, on Monday, 'Hello everybody, we're going to hear the story of'... Here's Friday, 'hello everybody, we're going to hear the story of Zacchaeus' (Shaun).

Exploring faith, God and religions

In response to the first DWT, Owen's views about his religious beliefs prompted a reaction from other pupils about their religious beliefs. He wrote, '*I believe in some religions*' (Owen, DWT1). Louise and XXX perceived that they did not have a designated faith. Louise commented, '*I am not any religion, but I feel I can talk about God*' (Louise I1). Sarah perceived that she respected people's religious views from some religions, '*I believe a few religions in their beliefs*' (Sarah, DWT1). Pupils were eager to share their perspectives on faith (11L283-352):

Owen: I believe in Jesus, but I am kind of visiting loads of religions. I believe in God but believe you come back down to earth as a baby with your memory wiped out.

Interviewer: That's a very interesting idea.

Louise: *Because apparently, Hinduism is when you believe you are born another person when you die.*

Sarah: *When I die, I want to stay in heaven.*

Louise: *Once I've died, that is the end of me.*

Harry: *I believe in God, but I don't believe everything.*

Shaun: *My question is, how did he get created because he created the world? Who created God? It just goes on and on and on.*

Elizabeth: *I believe in the big bang. I believe that the big bang made the world, and God made the rest.*

Shaun: *But who made the big bang?*

Pupils appeared curious about the big questions, such as what happens after death, the creation narrative, and whether everything in the Bible was true. They seemed comfortable in sharing their views and beliefs. The Bible featured a discussion topic when Shaun expressed that he did not believe every part of it. They appeared to show respect for other religions. They were aware that religious commitment to a set of beliefs determined a person's lifestyle and behaviour (12L354-360, 818-827). They were also eager to find out about the rituals defining other religions. They considered being at a Christian school restricted their learning in this respect.

Shaun: *I don't believe everything in the Bible. It's a bit of science fiction, but I can respect a good story.*

Louise: *I admit it's too hard to believe.*

Shaun: *Don't get me wrong; the Bible's a great book. I really like reading what's in there, but the only thing is, some of it is like how on earth is that possible?*

Sarah: *I find some of the other religions quite inspiring because everyone has their different ways.*

Louise: *We're around Christians because we're in a Christian school, so we don't get to really see what they do, but I like other religions, although I don't have a religion.*

Elizabeth: *Personally, my favourite is Sikhism because they have strict rules because they can't cut their hair and they have to wear a turban around their head, and you're not*

allowed to smoke or anything like that and if you have tattoos that is discrediting God because they want you to be natural.'

9.1.3 Theme 3: Aspirations and achievement

This superordinate theme encapsulates pupils' hopes and aspirations. It includes their perspectives on what mattered to them in their learning, the support they received and what they wanted to achieve that would make their school proud of them.

Doing something good and being successful

Pupils aspired to achieve highly at school. They sought to comprehend what their teachers taught them, meet learning targets, and demonstrate self-confidence. Achievement at school entailed making academic progress and '*getting rewards for doing good work*' (Henry, DWT2). Interestingly, Sarah considered doing something good would enable her to go to heaven:

'I want to make heaven by doing something good that I want to do. Not what people want me to do' (Sarah, DWT1).

Pupils indicated familiarity with National Curriculum levels of attainment, the system used by their teachers to assess their academic performance (Elizabeth and Henry, DWT3). Henry envisaged the school would be proud of him when he achieved level 5/6 in English and mathematics (Henry, DWT3). He drew a picture, which looked like a book page with more answers to questions marked right (ticks) than wrong (crosses). He included the grade '*LV6*' at the bottom.

Pupils considered demonstrating confidence, courage and overcoming anxieties mattered to the community. Louise drew herself overcoming her fear of heights, showing courage by mastering the high wire walk in venture week (Louise, DWT3). Pupils were used to self-assessing their confidence in attempting learning tasks and their comprehension of them in lessons using traffic light colours:

'Green is confident, amber is getting there, but you need more practice, and red is you need help from the teacher. At the end of each lesson, you traffic light your work to explain why you picked that colour, and when the teacher marks it, she will say whether you have fully understood it. She will highlight a row and put a smiley face if you have understood or straight face if you struggled a bit' (Henry, 13L93-98).

The pupils considered that helping others was part of their school lives. Shaun aspired to '*sort everything out as fully*' as possible when managing friendship disputes as a playground mediator

(Shaun, DWT1). Owen explained how a friend helped him find the area of a triangle in a mathematics lesson by reminding him of the equation he required. Henry and Shaun expressed gratitude for what they had learned during their entire time at the school. When leaving the school, they would cherish the friendships they had formed, their preparation for managing positive relationships and the support received with their learning:

'I will take away with me everything I have learned and how to make friends' (Henry, I3140).

'They have helped me prepare for Level 6 and with tests, and I will cope better with them in secondary school' (Shaun, I3 L141).

All the pupils aspired to succeed in their future careers. Henry wanted to become a famous footballer and achieve academically. Shaun saw himself as a *'successful aviation designer'* and *'RAF piloting instructor'* (Shaun, DWT3). His lifelong dream was to fly and win a Victoria Cross for outstanding bravery. Sarah wished to write her autobiography and establish a charity *'to give people confidence'* (Sarah, DWT3). Owen sought to become a traffic police officer or stuntman. In the short term, Elizabeth wished to create a charity to raise money. She enjoyed raising money at school events.

Effort

The pupils indicated that the community valued effort. They considered the teachers put effort into teaching, responded sensitively to their needs and ensured they understood what they should learn (Shaun, DWT2). They valued receiving evaluative feedback, praise, and rewards, which challenged them to improve and ultimately contributed positively to their achievement (Owen, DWT1; Sarah, DWT1; Henry, DWT1). They enjoyed gaining rewards for individual *'effort'* and *'improvement'* (Owen, I3; DWT1). In DWT3, Elizabeth drew herself receiving a sticker for reaching the learning target set by her teacher. Her smile was indicative of her satisfaction with the interaction and the teacher's acknowledgement of her effort. The other pupil participants responded positively to her picture by congratulating her for doing well. Earning the opportunity to share their learning with the headteacher mattered as this resulted in them gaining a headteacher's reward (Sarah, DWT2).

'Our teachers praise us whenever we do good work. We always get 'T', which means target, where our teacher will give us something to improve on' (Elizabeth, DWT3).

Having fun and enjoying learning

The pupils enjoyed learning at school. They included favourite subjects in their tasks. Shaun loved history and *'learning and reflecting on people and things that made the world what it is today'*. He read about different periods in history at home (Shaun, DWT1). For example, Sarah liked writing. Having studied autobiographies at school, she aspired to write her own (Sarah, DWT 3). The pupils appeared respectful of each other's interests and talents. Louise and Henry marvelled at Shaun's capacity to recall historical facts. Henry commented:

'Your brain is like a file where it has a history, and it comes up with Vikings, and then there's all the facts that come down, and you just can remember them like that?' (Henry, 11L851-852).

There was a consensus amongst the pupils that interactive learning was the preferred mode, which they commented on as part of their RE lessons. Their view was that experiencing religious customs and role-play enabled them to develop respect for other religions, understand the sacred texts, and enjoy their learning.

'I really enjoy RE as Mrs X always makes us act out the stories from the Bible and the Quran and more. It is a really fun way to help us understand' (Elizabeth, DWT3).

Louise: *Sometimes, people prefer RE lessons that are a bit more fun because I think a few people in our class get bored with RE quite quickly if we just listen to a story.*

Elizabeth: *It keeps your brain working because if you just listen to a story, you're probably just sitting there* (11L783-784, 791-792).

Gaining encouragement

The pupils valued receiving support and encouragement from peers, teachers, and parents as it enabled them to experience success. Owen drew himself, receiving help and wrote, *'I like how everyone is encouraging for whatever you want to do.'* Three pupils photographed the large angel sculpture made by Year 6 as a team to symbolise the collaborative work ethic in their class. They perceived it represented the support received from peers, which enabled them to succeed and was indicative of them demonstrating perseverance and resilience as it was a challenge to construct (Shaun, PRC3). The sculpture stood in the school hall.

'This is a picture of the angel we made. I chose it because many times, I feel like giving up, and then my friends tell me to keep on going' (Owen, PR9, 12).

'It was good. It kind of got a bit hard, and then everything went wrong and then you felt like giving up. Our group had to start again about ten times' (Owen, I2L248-250).

'This photo of our angel sculpture is important to me as all of Year 6s worked so hard to produce this work of art' (Shaun, PRC3).

The pupils viewed the teachers as sensitive, caring, and helpful. Henry drew his teacher, asking him if he was okay, whilst he sat at a desk. He wrote: *'The teachers are very kind'* (Henry, DWT1). Similarly, two other pupils mirrored his interpretation of the teacher's kindness. Shaun drew himself on two separate occasions receiving support from teachers. His drawing showed him at a desk learning maths wondering whether ' $\pi=2PR$ ', with his teacher providing reassurance saying ' $\pi=2PR$ ' (Shaun, DWT1). When describing what made his school special, he drew an action sequence showing the interaction between a teacher and two pupils. The first action depicted two pupils sitting at a desk with anxious expressions and one child with a hand up asking for help. In the second picture, he showed both pupils smiling after they had received support.

The pupils reported receiving positive encouragement from their parents and tutors outside school. Their view was that their parents wanted the best education for them and for them to succeed. Sarah perceived that her mother helped her achieve in Year 6, and her father placed value on her receiving a sound education to further her career prospects:

'They have got good jobs, but my Dad says if he had had a better education, he would have started his own business' (Sarah, I1L304-305).

9.1.4 Summary

Within the first part of this Chapter, I interpreted the sense a small group of pupils made of their educational experiences within the Church Academy's education ethos using three superordinate themes. They were valuing school values; aspirations and achievement; and notable people, places, and practices.

Pupils articulated their views confidently and creatively. In the DWTs, they used their preferred forms of communication, including cartoons, drawings, phrases, and symbols. The inclusion of Christian liturgy, artefacts and school values in the tasks indicated that the school community valued these. Their references to unique people, places and cherished school memories conveyed their sense of attachment to their school. Collectively, the analysis indicated that the

pupils experienced a caring and supportive school ethos. They depicted themselves as achieving well academically and holding hopes for a bright future.

9.2 Discussion of the pupils' experiences

In the second part of this Chapter, I analyse the pupils' experiences using my professional expertise, the literature on education ethos and each of the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 4:

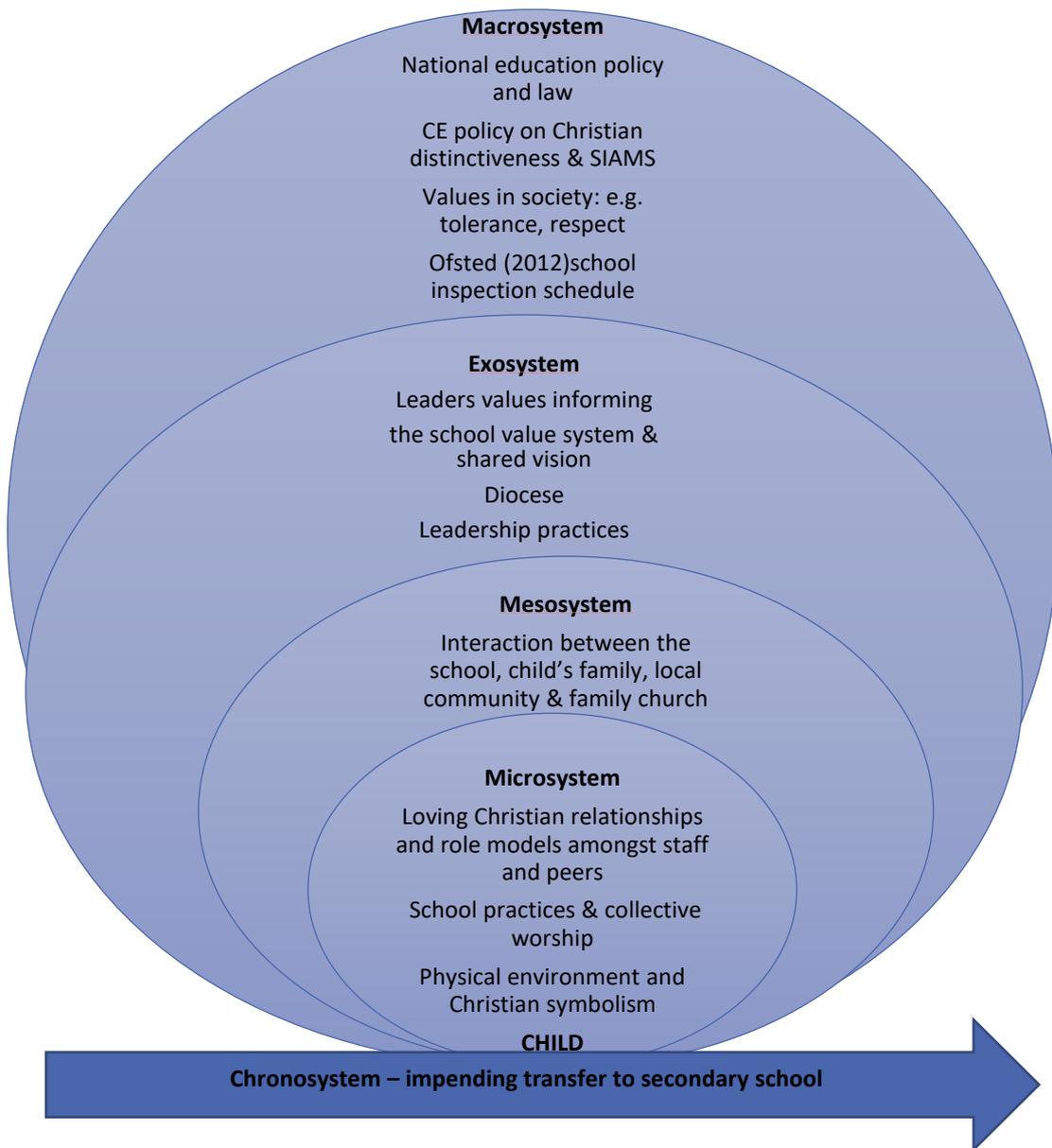
1. Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of human development (2005);
2. Wenger's (1998, 2002) communities of practice; and
3. Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power.

9.2.1 Analysis using Bronfenbrenner's PCCT model of human development

The analysis of the pupils' tasks indicated a complex range of social influences acting on their educational experiences, within and beyond those present in the school community. In Figure 9.2, I illustrated these influences based on the context element of the Bronfenbrenner (2005) PPCT model of human development. In Chapter 4, I explained the nature of these contextual influences. I focused on analysing the relationship between the pupils' exosystem and microsystem. These systems were significant in the research. The exosystem represented the system encompassing events in which pupils did not directly participate but could indirectly influence their educational experiences and personal development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2005). This system incorporated the decisions leaders made about developing and implementing the vision for the school's education ethos. The microsystem represented the school's ethos as experienced by pupils.

An important finding from analysing the leaders' and pupils' data was a strong alignment between leaders' espoused ethos and pupils' experienced ethos. This finding contrasted with those of Eisner (1994) and Donnelly (2000). They identified a gap that existed between leaders' intended ethos and the pupils' experienced ethos. Green, E. (2009c) also found that this gap existed between the espoused Bible-based ethos of leaders and the pupils' experienced ethos in a CTC. Green (2009c) found that while secondary pupils demonstrated a sound knowledge about the Bible, and enjoyed learning about religion, the school ethos did not transform their worldviews as intended.

Figure 9.2: Contextual influences on pupils' experiences of their education based on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model of human development



Proximal processes: Interactions between people

Regular and sustained interactions between people within the school could influence the pupils' experiences of the school's education ethos. Bronfenbrenner (2005) referred to these interactions as proximal processes. The pupils suggested experiencing a supportive, inclusive, and achievement-focused ethos. High-quality relationships underpinned this ethos, based on the school's Christian value system and rights-respecting practices. Friendly and supportive

interactions contributed to the pupils' sense of security and happiness at school. All pupils suggested feeling valued and accepted as individuals within their school community. They possessed clarity about their contribution to this community. Their tasks conveyed a sense of fairness in the ways staff and peers treated them (Henry, DWT1; Owen, DWT1). The pupils did not speak of teachers failing to implement rules consistently or inequitable treatment of some pupils over others.

The pupils suggested the emotional and pastoral support provided at school was of high quality, as leaders intended. They felt safe. They appeared to trust their teachers to look after their wellbeing, safety, and academic progress (Shaun, DWT2). The pupils described staff as '*kind*' and their peers as encouraging, which influenced their self-confidence (Elizabeth, DWT2; Henry DWT2). Being young, they sought adult assistance, guidance, or moral direction to resolve any conflicts or friendship issues. They admired the teachers, who listened to them and acted on their concerns. With their growing maturity, they indicated they were developing strategies to manage their relationships better.

The high-quality relationships experienced by the pupils supported the findings of Jelfs (2008) and Hemming (2017), who found high-quality relationships characterised a Church school experienced ethos. Furthermore, Robinson (2014, p.6) reported that positive relationships between adults and pupils, together with the absence of bullying, contributed significantly to primary pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils at this Academy indicated the caring relationships amongst staff and pupils contributed to their enjoyment of school.

Children's levels of wellbeing have been an aspect of concern in the UK since the publication of the UNICEF Child Wellbeing Report in 2007, which compared wellbeing in OECD countries. Although the pupils at this Academy conveyed happiness at school at the time of data collection, they had experienced incidents that caused them considerable anxiety and discomfort in their past. These incidents included conflicts or friction with peers. They disclosed experiencing bullying themselves or witnessing this act at the school. Donnelly (2000) and Graham (2012) established ethos as a dynamic, changeable phenomenon. Graham (2012) found that pupils' perspectives of school education ethos could change depending on the acts of solicitude experienced, both positive and negative. These could influence the mood of a pupil group. Pupils' growth in maturity and training as playground mediators could develop their confidence and capacity to resolve conflicts and stand up to bullying. Being the eldest pupils in the school, they would no longer experience older-year groups' unfavourable behaviours. It could have contributed to the upbeat mood of this pupil group.

They valued friendships as they considered these contributed significantly to their happiness and sense of belonging to their school (Sarah, PRC1; Elizabeth, PRC1). Consequently, they rated friendship as the most important of all the four school values. They did not want to be friendless or suffer from broken friendships. Identification with and acceptance by their peer group was of high importance to their wellbeing. They sought to work hard to fit in, sustain friendships and avoid feeling isolated. The importance pupils placed on friendships appeared to justify school leaders' emphasis on building positive relationships between pupils across year groups.

The features of friendship children view as significant vary depending on their maturity (Dunn, 2004). Intimacy and loyalty gain significance as the children mature, including having someone to confide in (Woltering and Lewis, 2009; Doherty and Hughes, 2009; Dunn, 2004). The Academy pupils depicted friends as special people in their lives with smiling faces who could be relied on and trusted. They connected the virtues of loyalty and trust with friendship. As Riley (2009) argued, there can be no assumption of trust; it needed earning. Friends were people with whom the children could share concerns. Also, they gained fulfilment from spending time with friends playing, learning in class, and sharing activities they enjoyed. They looked to friends to provide them with support and encouragement, which influenced their abilities to act courageously, tackle challenging tasks in class and persevere (Owen, PRC9; Shaun, PRC3). Through school leaders encouraging friendships and exploration of the meaning of friendship, it was likely that pupils could learn to practice this virtue and learn about their own identity or character.

The pupils indicated their friendships with and mentoring of younger pupils had reciprocal benefits. Although the younger pupils might benefit from being well-cared for and observe older pupils acting as positive role models, the nature of the interactions brightened up the senior pupils' lives (Shaun, PRC2). The pupils appeared genuinely interested in young pupils' development and indicated their growing sensitivity to their needs. They enjoyed friendships with the younger pupils and were willing to sacrifice their time to be with them and gain satisfaction from watching them play. These experiences could benefit the pupils' mental health by providing them with necessary respite from the Year 6 curriculum and national testing arrangements.

The headteacher's vision for the school's Christian education ethos was that it should emphasise the ethic of care. The pupils' observations of interactions between teachers and peers suggested the embedding of the headteacher's ethic of care within the school's ethos. Fielding and Moss (2011, p.40) argued that the inculcation of care was most likely to come about in institutions working ethically in everyday lives and relationships. Within the pupils' tasks, teachers appeared

to respond to what they perceived pupils needed and their expressed needs. For example, the pupils suggested that leaders cared about their academic achievement and their need for immediate care when upset. Noddings (2012, p.773), who has written extensively on care, identified four aspects of the care process, each of which was evident in the pupils' drawings: 1) the carer was attentive, 2) the carer attended, 3) the carer responded and 4) the carer responded to show that the care had been given (Shaun, DWT2). When viewing the pupils' tasks, the headteacher was touched and delighted by the pupils' portrayal of the school's caring ethos. He picked out Elizabeth's description of the school as feeling like '*a second home*' (Elizabeth, DWT2).

Proximal processes: The symbolic significance of the school values

All pupils valued the school values. They demonstrated awareness of the school's four values and their importance within their community in their tasks. They used the discourse on school values, established by leaders, to describe the school's ethos, in terms of what it was like to be a pupil at the school and what made their school special. The values offered pupils the means of making sense of the school's identity and what was valued by the community (Hofstede et al., 1997; McLaughlin, 2005; Hemmiing, 2017). They seemed competent in interpreting these values within their school lives. The pupils also embraced these values. The pupils recognised that the development and demonstration of such virtues or personal qualities were admired and respected. Their identification with these values could enable them to find their sense of place within the community and aid their spirituality.

Specific school leaders, such as the collective worship leader, identified the school values as Christian values recommended by the National Society. Rational values were those based on logical reasoning. The pupils viewed the values as aspirational standards for the community's conduct. In the DWTs, they presented themselves, their peers, and teachers as exemplifying values-related behaviours. The pupils tended to view them as a good set of values by which to live their lives. For the pupils of Christian faith, they could represent transrational values. Through embracing the school values, the pupils indicated they could live and learn well together. It could aid leaders' in keeping a sustainable school education ethos. The pupils could also demonstrate belonging to the community through others recognising their capabilities or competence (Wenger, 1998). Whilst school leaders' implemented school values as a code of conduct to invite conformity, the pupils welcomed the moral guidance the values offered.

The pupils also connected the values with the school's Christian identity. Louise questioned whether other schools without a Christian designation would have values (Louise, 13L32-35). In the last session I spent with the pupils, they exemplified links between the school values and Biblical narratives. Leaders prioritised increasing pupils' knowledge of the Biblical origins of the school values in responding to the school's recent SIAMS. Through leading collective worship, leaders promoted pupils' reflection on the school values and Christian narrative underpinning the school's Christian ethos (Chapter 8).

The pupils' familiarity with the discourse on values suggested school leaders had effectively communicated them amongst staff and pupils. The headteacher's aspiration was that the community live their lives through the school's values (Chapter 8). Pupils' adoption of values was essential for leaders in demonstrating the school's accountability to the National Society (2013b). The SIAMS inspection schedule placed considerable importance on the school values influencing pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and impacting the lives of all community members (National Society, 2013b). The decisions made about what should underpin the value system and how to include and embed the values in school practices rested with school leaders. Pupils perceived that leaders used a means to identify and reward community heroes, representing the behaviours prized by the community (Hofstede, 1997). Pupils found this helpful in visualising the values in their school lives. They could recognise why people they knew received these rewards. However, a critique of leaders relying on a system of rewards to demonstrate values was that it could potentially condition pupils into unquestionably accepting the values.

Pupils could understand the leaders' intended value system. Pupils could identify the importance of the four espoused school values and the school's implicit values. The values 'effort' and 'achievement' formed part of the community's narrative, which they could view through members' behavioural patterns (Wenger, 1998). The emphasis on effort appeared to stem from the headteacher's aspiration that pupils do their best to demonstrate effort (Chapter 8). Pupils knew what was expected of them to succeed in learning and the expected work ethic in class (Owen, DWT1; Elizabeth, DWT3). The focus on effort might appear an instrumentalist strategy to ensure pupils achieve high standards in academic performance. However, I considered the headteacher's concern was with enabling all-round development. These findings support Green, S. (2015), who found the headteacher's work ethic and values were identifiable within the school's ethos.

In Chapter 3, I considered the Church of England policy changed emphasis from an ethos focused on Christian values towards one focused on character development to promote human flourishing (Cefel, 2017; Church of England Education Office, 2016a). In the Academy, leaders aspired that pupils develop virtues through reflection on their behaviours. Leaders emphasised providing opportunities for pupils to talk about the meaning of values in their school lives (Chapter 8). By receiving care, giving care, and reflecting on the care process, the pupils could perceive themselves as carers, friends, and compassionate individuals. The pupils welcomed, enjoyed, and valued the trust teachers placed in them to undertake positions of responsibility. The pupils' experience of playground mediation could help them recognise and empathise with peers' feelings and respond to their needs without staff direction. Pupils could experience values such as love, compassion, and humility through leaders' carefully planned practices. The pupils could develop practical wisdom: the desire and judgment to act with integrity and do the right thing in the community's context. Pupils suggested they were encouraged and supported to think about community members' moral perspectives, characteristics, and actions.

In DWTS, pupils portrayed staff as modelling school values as approachable and responsive to injured or upset pupils. Their drawings indicated teachers engaged in compassionate acts. School leaders intended to act as role models of values-related behaviours for pupils and appeared confident that pupils would see this (Chapter 8). The literature I reviewed emphasised leaders' modelling values and practices in influencing character development (Cefel, 2017; Tomlinson, 2004; Wright, T., 2010; Arthur et al., 2015). Through providing the pupils with regular opportunities to act as mentors and mediators, over time, leaders were likely to develop pupil insights into the importance of the values of compassion and friendship as aspects of human flourishing. Through practising these virtues, pupils could learn to comprehend and share in the emotional responses of others. They could develop empathy and learn appropriate forms of role-taking when responding to human fragility and suffering (Nussbaum, 2014, p.204).

As well as the proximal processes influencing the pupils' experiences, I acknowledged the contribution of each pupil's characteristics or dispositions in their identity formation (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). During the research, pupils presented themselves as confident, reflective, respectful, caring, enthusiastic and open-minded. Their aspirations to learn appeared high, and they desired to make a positive contribution to their community. Their characteristics influenced their active participation in learning, school practices and the willingness to embrace the school values. However, they were conscious of their expected part in the learning process. They understood the need to take responsibility for their learning.

Proximal processes: Interactions with artefacts

As well as the school values holding symbolic significance, the pupils identified certain artefacts in the school's physical environment and school practices of importance to them or their community. These artefacts and practices provided visible aspects of ethos, which enabled them to make sense of their community and facilitated their sense of belonging (Hofstede, 1997; Schein, 2010). They valued artefacts of emotional significance. Some, such as a piano, they associated with positive memories, such as lessons or subjects they enjoyed. They connected others with their experiences of play or positive relationships. Some, such as the charity board, were associated with them engaging in compassionate acts. Other artefacts represented memories of aspects that helped them establish their presence within the community. For example, the flowers Henry planted in the school grounds (Henry, PRC8).

The appearance of Christian artefacts in pupils' tasks as valued aspects of the school was of interest in interpreting their identification and comprehension of the school's Christian education ethos. The Church of England viewed Christian symbolism in the physical environment as crucial in establishing Christian education ethos (Dearing, 2001). The pupils included enlarged symbols of the cross in DWTS or photographs of crosses in the photo-ranking charts. In Hemming's (2017) research into Christian ethos, primary-aged pupils included crosses as symbolic of the school's Christian identity. In the Academy, the pupils perceived crosses as representative of their faith, community, and school's Christian identity. They also connected the cross to the practices of school worship and prayer. The symbol inspired them to reflect on the Christian narrative; the resurrection of Jesus (Henry, DWT2; Sarah, DWT1; Elizabeth, PRC5; Shaun PRC4). Pupils' interactions with Christian artefacts around the school and within worship could have promoted their spiritual development, enabling them to explore their connection with God.

Ofsted (2016) considered pupils' spiritual development indicative of their capacities to reflect on their beliefs, religious or otherwise, that informed their perspectives on life. It was indicative of their interest in and respect for others' faiths, feelings, and values. The pupils appeared willing to discuss their religiosity. They demonstrated an open mind when considering their religious beliefs and those of others from different religions. An openness to faith conversations with peers implied that the school community represented a safe environment to discuss faith perspectives. It was one where they could explore their sense of self and connection with their community. Hay and Nye (2018, p. 111) viewed pupils as possessing 'relational consciousness'. The pupils suggested experiencing the trusting relationships required to support an exploration

of life's spiritual dimensions. They seemed fascinated by the omnipotence of God. They appeared eager to explore the big questions about life, the earth's origins, and what happens after death. They could provide an informed opinion on matters of faith and religion. They suggested that they respected people who held different religious beliefs, feelings, and values.

The pupils appeared willing to engage in collective worship, indicating they respected these practices or accepted them as part of their community's everyday routine. Their engagement in Christian practices and reflection on the school's Christian values and aspects of faith would typify them experiencing the purposes of Christian education as education about Christianity and education in a Christian manner (Asley and Day, 1994). They valued leaders consulting them about their experiences of worship. Pupils appeared familiar with the use of the Bible and candles in worship and prayer. They suggested they had been listened to, and their suggestions made collective worship more enjoyable and understandable. From a children's rights perspective, through leaders consulting them on matters affecting the pupils, I considered leaders valued pupils' voices and rights. The pupils' engagement in issues that affect the community was indicative of leaders employing democratic or transformative leadership practices (Shields, 2010).

9.2.2 Analysis using Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice

I embedded Wenger's (1998) communities of practice framework within the pupils' microsystem. Wenger's (1998) communities of practice served as a helpful framework for understanding pupils' learning as a process of 'becoming' and 'belonging'. The pupils presented themselves as possessing high learning aspirations, levels of wellbeing and a willingness to embrace the school's values and practices. Through engagement in school practices, pupils could become central participants in the modes of thinking and acting that mattered to the community. They would learn the meaning of forms of interaction and the school values to the community. This understanding could help them to participate fully and meaningfully in their education. The pupils possessed clarity about the expectations placed on them as learners and the personal characteristics they were developing as part of their identities. Collectively, they shared the awareness that the school would be proud of them for persevering, demonstrating the values, being courageous, achieving learning targets and getting good jobs. They understood the nature of the school's education and the focus on achievement.

Wenger (1998) considered learning as a sense of becoming through the processes of participation and reification. In interacting with others in particular ways, through established

school practices, the pupils could acquire the knowledge, skills and characteristics required to become competent and successful in their communities. They learned the shared language and meaning of school values, behavioural patterns and interactions that defined the group. They learned how to assess personal competence and how they could contribute positively to the community's success.

Exosystem: Leaders influence on pupils' educational experiences

My analysis of pupils' and leaders' data indicated an alignment between the leaders' vision and aspirational ethos and the pupils' experienced ethos (Section 9.2.0). Seashore Louis et al. (2010) and Day et al. (2009) found that leadership's indirect effects significantly influenced pupils' learning. Academy leaders appeared to foster favourable conditions for pupil learning. They seemed to inspire staff commitment to the school's educational purposes. These leaders influenced pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos directly and indirectly. The direct influence occurred through the types and quality of daily pupil-leader interactions. Leaders also influenced pupils indirectly through their policy decisions, which affected the school's practices and values that underpinned the school's education ethos. The pupils portrayed staff as conscientious, committed to their achievement and influential role-models for school values. Although the headteacher did not have a teaching role, the pupils acknowledged his continuous support and encouragement over the several years they attended the school (Owen, PRC6).

9.2.3 Analysis using dimensions of power

Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power enabled me to analyse the origins and types of power exerted over pupils and how it influenced their educational experiences. In terms of the second dimension of power, leaders established the school's agenda for Christian education ethos through policy-making and implementation. Leaders made decisions in the absence of pupils. For example, leaders sought to control the recruitment of the right kind of staff to model the school values. They also established the shared discourse on school values that underpinned school practices.

Pupils were subordinate to leaders based on the social structures established in the school and the positional authority leaders possessed. A possible interpretation was that leaders could impose their values on pupils and control the nature of the interactions within the school. However, I understood that they sought to inspire pupils' commitment to the values and used power ethically so that pupils would trust them in the provision of their education. The leaders provided pupils with opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purpose of the values in their

lives during RE, collective worship and everyday events (Chapter 8). Furthermore, the pupils actively interpreted the ethos and indicated a choice to engage positively in school life. Concerning Lukes' third dimension of power, the pupils' views suggested leaders experienced success in using an invisible form of power by shaping pupils' thoughts, values, and desires. The pupils' willingness to embrace the values was indicative that they viewed them as being in line with their interests and enabled them to fit into their community.

In the broader context, the SIAMS agenda for Church school education and Central Government's standards agenda ultimately influenced pupils' experiences. It was indicative of the second dimension of power, the exertion of power through agenda-setting. The leaders' interpreted and mediated these agendas. For example, the Year 6 teacher could not ignore examination-orientated learning required for pupils to pass the standard assessment tasks at the end of Year 6. Pupils' tasks conveyed their knowledge of the ways the school judged their performance. The pupils' identification of the values' Biblical origins reflected leaders' priority in teaching pupils about the Biblical origins of the values in response to SIAMS outcomes (Chapter 8).

Broader contextual influences on pupils' experiences

The influences on the pupils' experiences of their education arose from the broader context. The mesosystem represents the interaction between two microsystems for each child (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). As such, it could influence their experiences. Pupils' perspectives suggested an interaction between the home and school microsystems. Leaders stated they valued and sought to promote positive home-school relations and parental engagement in pupils' education. The pupils' views indicated that leaders were successful in engaging their parents in their education. All the pupils considered their parents were interested in their education, work ethic and aspirations in life. They all implied they came from stable, secure families. Their parents encouraged their achievement at school and invested in extra tuition for them outside the school to ensure this. Owen valued his mother's work as a teaching assistant at the school (Owen, PRC1). Sarah stated that her parents' motivations concerned her being educated to a higher standard than they had been. It was so she would achieve success and have a promising career. With effective bi-directional communication between parents and school, a strong mesosystem suggested both parties worked together to benefit pupils. Parental engagement was a likely contributory factor in explaining pupils' complimentary views about their education.

The macrosystem constituted the values and beliefs in society that influenced all other social systems influencing pupils' development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). Pupils seemed knowledgeable of and attentive to the National Curriculum assessment levels used by the school to measure and report on their academic attainment at the time of data collection. They shared the determination to achieve highly at the end of Key Stage 2 national assessment tasks. Their perspectives on their education suggested they accepted assessment and testing as the norm. They understood the significance of Year 6 tests in terms of their educational careers. They were not over-anxious about the tests because they had a certainty about their secondary school placements. They had secured places at secondary schools of their choice and expressed confidence and trust in their class teacher to look out for their learning needs. The references to testing suggested the embedding of performativity agenda in the education system in their school experiences. Their teacher, the mathematics leader, reported tensions between preparing pupils to pass the tests and providing for their all-round development. She might have shielded the pupils from the pressures she faced in securing their achievement to ensure that the school performed well in the published league tables (Chapter 8). Her ambition was to secure an excellent end of Key Stage 2 result and support pupils to achieve academically and experience enjoyment in their learning (Chapter 8).

9.3 Summary

In this Chapter, I interpreted a small group of pupils' education experiences within the Church Academy's education ethos. Relevant to the analysis were leaders' decisions concerning the school's vision for Christian education ethos. The use of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development enabled the identification of the complex range of social influences acting on the pupils' lived educational experience within and beyond the school. The pupils' favourable insights into the school's ethos could result from the cumulative effect of several positive influences forming a strong support network around each pupil. Furthermore, they possessed the personal qualities conducive to learning.

The pupils indicated experiencing an ethos focused on high achievement with a strong care ethic. Further, they could recognise the school's Christian identity. They understood the significance of artefacts and Christian practices within the physical environment to their community and willingly engaged in these. They could use the community's shared discourse on school values to comprehend the ethos and explore their sense of self and relationship to their community. The pupils' experienced ethos aligned with that intended by leaders. Despite

leaders suggesting they felt aggrieved by the SIAMS process, the pupils appeared unaware of any anxieties on behalf of school leaders.

Leaders' influences on pupils were direct, through their daily interactions with pupils, and indirect through the structures, systems, relationships, and physical environment they established. These aspects underpinned the ethos; the conditions pupils experienced influencing their learning and identity development. The use of Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power enabled analysis of the origins and types of power leaders exerted over pupils. These findings highlight the importance of leaders in this school exercising ethical leadership and providing pupils with opportunities to practice, reflect on and evaluate the significance of school values, practices and religious beliefs in their school lives and broader society. The inclusive ethos created by leaders facilitated pupils' development of friendships and a strong sense of belonging. Besides, leaders' use of symbolism within the physical environment, school practices appeared influential in shaping pupils' identities in the ways they intended.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.0 Introduction

In the final chapter, I address the main findings to the research questions and reflect on the thesis's new contribution to knowledge.

10.1 The purpose of the thesis

The thesis focused on interpreting leaders' experiences in two schools in England with a Christian foundation when developing and implementing a vision for school education ethos.

My research questions derived from my leadership experience, the outcomes of a substantive pilot study and gaps in the research identified from the literature review. They were:

1. How do school leaders experience development and implementation of a vision for education ethos in a Christian Free School and Church of England Academy?
2. How do pupils experience their education in the school's ethos?

The thesis highlighted the value of employing an IPA methodology in leadership research. By adopting an imaginative, flexible, and reflective approach to data collection and analysis, I obtained rich first-person accounts of participants' experiences. In interpreting the data, I built up layers of interpretation to understand each part of a participant's data or transcript concerning the whole. The understanding I gained constituted a partial view of participants' experiences. Consequently, my conclusions do not represent generalisable truths as they relate solely to the sample. I recruited the participants for their unique perspectives rather than to represent a wider population.

10.2 The main findings of the thesis

10.2.1 Research Question One

How do school leaders experience development and implementation of a vision for education ethos in a Christian Free School and a Church Academy?

The findings provided rich insights into the complexities of Christian education and school ethos development from the school leaders' perspectives. Leaders faced a range of challenges in developing and implementing their visions for Christian education ethos. The challenges differed

for leaders in each school due to the unique circumstances and contexts in which they worked. In both schools, the headteachers strived to provide an excellent education within the broader educational context (DfE; 2016; Ofsted, 2012; 2015; National Society; 2013b).

A significant insight from both studies was the difference between the headteacher's interpretation of distinctively Christian education and those to whom they were accountable. These differences limited both headteachers' autonomy in developing the approaches to the education they considered appropriate for their pupils. In the Church Academy, the headteacher had prominence in leading the development of the school's Christian education ethos. Before conversion to Academy status, he influenced its education ethos development over several years. In the Free School, the sponsors initially established the school's vision before the school opened. Once the headteacher was in place and the school opened, he sought to establish his vision for education ethos to reflect his values and aspirations.

Both headteachers perceived themselves as accountable for their schools' success in the educational marketplace. In the Free School, the headteacher experienced differences in value positions between himself, the school governors and, to a lesser extent, some staff and parents. By contrast, in the Church Academy, the headteacher experienced differences between his perspectives and those held by the SIAMS inspector.

10.2.2 Study 1: Leaders of the Christian Free School

Insights into the leaders' visions for an innovative approach to Christian education ethos

The headteacher used leadership autonomy to develop an innovative vision for Christian education ethos. This autonomy appeared to be limited by two factors:

1) Accountability to the externally imposed Ofsted (2012) framework

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders saw adherence to Ofsted's specific criteria for excellence as necessary to ensure the school's success. As the expected time of the Ofsted inspection grew closer, the leaders' concerns over the fulfilment of pupil progress measures outweighed the emphasis on the development of the school's Christian ethos.

2) The governing body's expectations that the headteacher should adhere to the founders' vision

The headteacher underestimated the resolve of the governing body when he took up his post. Nonetheless, he was determined to implement his vision to ensure job satisfaction and avoid compromising his value position and personal failure.

The findings support previous research findings that identified the strength of the sponsors' influence on developing Christian education ethos (Pike, 2010; Green, E. 2009). However, the thesis provides a different interpretation of the strategies leaders used to embed Christian education ethos effectively (Section 10.3). Using Lukes' (2005) second dimension of power (power by agenda-setting), I argued Central Government influenced leaders' development of education ethos through the performativity agenda. In addition, the school's sponsors influenced leaders' practices by forming the school vision before the school's opening.

The headteacher's Christian faith significantly influenced his vision for the school's education ethos. He reflected on how his faith informed his leadership of a Christian community. The articulation of his core values of 'excellence' and 'justice' supported him in this process. His vision had three strands, inspired by the Chadwick (2012) Report. These were: 'transformations of lives,' 'excellence in everything' and making 'Christianity, the DNA of the school' (HT, I1L38-49; L295-298). Other leaders embraced this vision. Consequently, the Christian ethos permeated the pupils' entire educational experience.

The cornerstone of the headteacher's strategy for realising the vision entailed implementing the *What If Learning* approach to teaching and Learning (Cooling, Green, Morris and Revell, 2016). The headteacher saw this as the means of focusing on Christian character development. Teachers could link pedagogy to the school's Christian ethos, enabling them to teach lessons through a Christian lens instead of secular/materialistic virtues (Cooling and Green, 2017).

The headteacher's view of the purpose of education focused on transforming pupils' imaginations rather than them absorbing knowledge (Smith, 2009). Through this approach, the school community could signpost pupils to a distinctively Christian way of being in the world, shaped by God's intentions for humanity (Cooling and Cooling, 2013). Pupils could learn what it meant to be human and consider how to use their knowledge and skills to experience 'life in all its fullness' (Cooling and Cooling, 2013, p. 24).

All the leaders' perceived school practices as necessary in pupil formation. In particular, the conduct of worship enabled pupils to engage with and develop an understanding of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ (Chadwick, 2012). The governors viewed the appointment of the right headteacher with the commitment to the Christian faith as significant in implementing their vision for a Christian education ethos.

Leaders used their leadership autonomy over the curriculum judiciously, illustrative of legitimate or ethical leadership (Western, 2013; Begley, 2012). An innovative aspect of curriculum design

entailed opportunities for pupils to engage in community service. The purpose was to help pupils learn about, and experience, service.

Insights into the different paradigms concerning the nature and purposes of Christian education

A significant insight from Study 1 was the different interpretations leaders held on the nature and purpose of Christian education. The headteacher believed it his Christian duty to enable every child's life chances. His focus on achieving excellence was a matter of social justice. Whereas he promoted education in a Christian manner, he considered his governors emphasised education about Christianity. In this regard, he perceived several differences in his perspectives and his governors. These included religious education's contribution to Christian education ethos, who should teach RE and how to judge the impact of the Christian ethos on the community. The headteacher also experienced differences between Christian parents' value positions concerning open-mindedness, personal autonomy, and pupils' critical reasoning skills. The findings suggested the headteacher required personal qualities, such as resilience, empathy, perseverance, and diplomacy, when addressing conflicts in value positions between leaders.

The findings provided insights into the challenges the headteacher experienced in persuading the school's governing body and individual teachers that embedding *What If Learning* across the school was the right approach. In applying Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power to understand leaders' viewpoints, I suggested the headteacher use the second and third dimensions of power to implement his vision. The second dimension entailed establishing the agenda for education ethos development. The third dimension entailed using power to shape the thoughts, values, and desires of members of the school community. The headteacher sought to persuade teachers that implementing *What If Learning* was in pupils' best interests to ensure they received a good education. Whilst the headteacher promoted *What if Learning*, there were limitations to his power. The findings provided insights into leaders' perceived needs to be inspection ready and ensure that pupils met the Ofsted (2012) progress indicators in their subjects (HT, I2L67-70). To keep the teachers' trust, the headteacher saw the need to reduce teachers' demands until after the school's first inspection, which was illustrative of situational or adaptive leadership. Whilst he understood teachers' anxieties, he maintained that he did not necessarily agree with them.

10.2.3 Study 2: Leaders of the Church Academy

Reconciling tensions between academic excellence and a strong ethic on care

The headteacher of the Church Academy was pivotal in developing and implementing the vision for education ethos. His goals aligned with those of governors, senior and middle leaders. Leaders presented a unified focus on achieving excellence, using the criteria for an outstanding school as judged by Ofsted (2012) and SIAMS (National Society, 2013b). They placed considerable importance on the ethic of care. Since starting at the school, the headteacher's vision was consistent: achieving academic excellence within a caring atmosphere (HT, I1L41-50). In shaping his notion of excellence and care, he took account of parents' values and Church of England and Central Government policies. Excellence was about performance and effort, reflective of the performativity culture. Maintaining the school's reputation and prestige as a high-performance school was vital. It required leaders to be sensitive to parental expectations for their children to achieve high standards and receive an education following the Christian faith. Based on leaders' accounts, the headteacher's authority and judgment appeared to be well-respected within the community. He reported having transformed the school's ethos from a low to a high achievement-focused ethos.

The findings highlighted the importance leaders placed in building a sense of community and positive relationships amongst stakeholders. The headteacher provided a role model for the community. He trusted his leadership team, exemplifying a distributed leadership approach to embedding the school's Christian education ethos. I used Wenger's (1998) model for a community of practice to interpret that leaders appeared to negotiate standards of accountability over time, which defined the school's identity as a community of practice.

Insights into the influence of SIAMS on leaders' autonomy in developing Christian education ethos

The study provided valuable insights into leaders' perspectives on SIAMS. The effect of the inspector's report on the headteacher was noticeable. The headteacher accepted responsibility for not playing the game and stage-managing the process (HT, I1L467-475). He felt accountable for the outcomes despite leaders self-evaluating their provision against the SIAMS framework and undertaking a mock SIAMS preparation for the inspection. Other leaders' accounts suggested they experienced disappointment, frustration and confusion following the SIAMS inspection. They considered the outcome did not accurately reflect the school's position and was arrived at through a flawed process. They were shocked by the experience of SIAMS as a

tick-box enterprise. Historically, the headteacher indicated he could exercise greater autonomy in interpreting the nature of Christian distinctiveness.

Through SIAMS, leaders detected changes in Church policy towards a more 'evangelistic' or instructional approach to religion (CWL, L426-430). The message for leaders was to strengthen their loyalty to a new brand for Church of England schools. Leaders' views suggested this required instructing pupils in Christian values and practices. Previously, leaders valued pupils experiencing the school's Christian education ethos through high-quality interactions and demonstrating school values.

The incident raised issues about power relationships between partners influencing Christian education, leaders' autonomy, and aspects related to ethical leadership. Leaders viewed the inspectors as promoting Christian symbolism in the environment and instruction in prayer. The enforced implementation of an agenda through regulatory enforcement was illustrative of the inspector's use of Lukes' (2005) second and third dimensions of power. They were exercising overt power in setting the agenda for education ethos and covert power over the thoughts and desires of others. The consequence was leaders' perceived loss of control or authority over the nature and purpose of Christian education and an increase in National Society control. In terms of the second dimension of power, leaders had to accept aspects of Christian distinctiveness they saw of marginal importance. In terms of the third dimension of power, concerned with manipulating leaders, they were to act as efficient managers with operational power (Simkins, 1997).

Resilience stemmed from school leaders keeping sight of their core values and developing strong relationships built on trust between the school and its local community. Through the SIAMS inspector criticising leaders for non-compliance, there was a danger this might foster alienation between the school and the Church. It could result in the loss of leadership expertise and creativity at a school level. Brown, Stoll, and Godfrey (2017) and Spielman (2020) also raised concerns about the pressures of accountability systems causing headteachers to align school structures and systems to accountability criteria in instrumentalist ways.

The headteacher viewed the SIAMS inspection outcome as a loss of trust by the Church in the school's leadership. The headteacher sought to regain the Diocese's confidence by cross-checking decisions and engaging in leadership development to comprehend the Church's vision for Christian distinctiveness. He would better understand the inspection criteria to play the game in preparation for the next inspection. Meeting the performance criteria could enable him

to predict a good inspection outcome better. This understanding could help him secure the school's ongoing effectiveness and leaders' credibility and prevent future loss of personal dignity and respect.

Hirschman's (1970) conceptions of exit, voice and loyalty provided the means of explaining how school leaders could exercise power in response to unsatisfactory outcomes. As members of a broader family of Church of England schools, the Church Academy leaders did not have an exit option similar to how dissatisfied parents could exit a school. Hence the school's loyalty to the Church brand, not through choice but because of institutional ties.

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development provided a means of interpreting the varied social influences acting on leaders, which they needed to consider in their decision-making. In embracing complexity, the headteacher might have had to compromise his professional values and what he stood for. This compromise entailed focusing more on instruction in prayer and the development of Christian symbolism in the school's physical environment. Professionals could have their values challenged and displaced by the terrors of performativity (Ball, 2003).

10.2.4 Significance of the findings

The importance of vision, integrity, and moral courage in the development of Christian education and school ethos

Both studies raised questions about the level of risk-taking for the headteachers as they needed to stay safe by demonstrating loyalty to externally imposed inspection criteria.

Leaders in both schools saw the necessity of establishing a clear vision based on a core set of values. The headteachers exhibited moral courage by being willing to stand up to adversity, take calculated risks, and interpret the policy as they saw fit and manage uncertainty. They demonstrated passion and perseverance in striving for what they believed. However, they required empathy and diplomacy to diagnose, listen and work through differences in value positions within the school's context concerning the purposes and nature of Christian education.

Justifying their visions for Christian education could be based on trans-rational and rational values rather than personal preferences (Hodgkinson, 1991). Leaders in both schools sought to communicate transparently the school value system and education purposes, indicative of acting with integrity and demonstrating authentic leadership (Begley, 2012).

Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power provided the means of understanding how leaders used power to develop and implement their Christian school ethos vision. Ideological power, Lukes' third dimension, was significant in understanding how leaders built relational trust amongst pupils and embedded school values. Headteachers needed to monitor changes in the school's context, including the concerns and value positions of members of the community and maintain the trust–power relationship (Moos, 2009) within a range of policy constraints. They had to reconcile attention to developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school with academic excellence.

The perspectives of headteachers in both schools suggested that while wishing the functional aspects of education serve pupils' personal needs (Fielding, 2012), achieving such a position was not straightforward. The headteacher's drive for excellence in a Christian context suggested the importance of enabling pupils to learn what it was to be human. It was not about merely providing an education that met externally prescribed accountability criteria. Leaders required a longer view of education focused on the development of character. The headteacher in the Free School saw promoting academic excellence as enhancing pupils' life chances. For him, it was more than achieving any personal rewards and prestige for leading a school. However, at stake were the reputations of the headteachers in both schools. I argued that failure was not an option as it could impact their credibility and their schools. In the context of performativity, there might have been little flexibility from policymakers and the public to enable opportunities for experimentation.

An important issue facing these leaders was the potential value of their actions rather than the effectiveness of their actions. Leadership reflection on the value of their activities and school practices was paramount in developing a Christian education with a moral and spiritual dimension. Leaders sought to move beyond a 'what works' approach to education, the agenda of evidence-based practice (factual judgments), to focus on the educationally desirable (value judgements). I argued that this required leaders to imagine the nature and purpose of Christian education (Smith and Smith, 2011; Wenger, 1998).

In the Free School, it was possible to identify the headteacher's focus on transformative leadership across the data sets for pupils and leaders, emphasising individual, institutional, and social transformation. Shields (2010, p.62) argued this form of leadership has great potential to meet social justice and academic excellence requirements in a complex, demanding, and diverse education system.

10.2.5 Research Question Two

How do pupils experience their education in the school's ethos?

The findings in both studies indicated that pupils interpreted their education and the school's ethos in unique ways, reflective of their development, personal qualities, and personal history. An original aspect of this thesis was the framework I established to interpret the meaning pupils made of their school experiences (Chapter 4). Concerning pupils' experiences, the most valuable aspects were Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time model of human development, Wenger's (1998) communities of practice model, and Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power,

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model enabled exploration of the interaction between two ecological systems influencing the pupils' learning. These were the exosystem and microsystem. The exosystem constituted the leaders' intentional education ethos, including the espoused school values and decisions concerning school practices. Pupils accounts of their school experiences were positive in both schools. It was indicative of the strong network of supportive influences around each child, which influenced their characteristics, such as their emotional states and their engagement in their education.

The importance of school values in generating a sense of belonging

In both schools, pupils' understanding and experience of school values, as an aspect of the school's education, appeared central in enabling them to make sense of the school's ethos and experience a sense of belonging. This belonging was about their comfort in being who they were and feeling emotionally and physically safe (Riley, 2017). Pupils captured the school atmosphere using the established discourse on school values in their DWTs.

In their tasks, pupils interpreted the meaning of the school values and their significance. In both studies, pupils were aware of the importance of their school values to their communities. The values provided them with clarity about the types of behaviours expected of community members and established standards for their achievement. Pupils in both schools sought to embrace the values, which emphasised the transformative nature of values.

In the Free School, pupils saw the school values provided the community's code of conduct, 'the school way' of doing things instead of a set of rules (Jade, DWT2). 'Excellence in everything', a theme within the pupil data, represented the headteacher's umbrella term for the school values and the community's standards (Joshua, DWT2; Jade, DWT2). Pupils appeared to understand this and embraced the high expectations placed on them. Pupils presented themselves aspiring

to achieve academically, wanting to change lives and 'make someone's dream come true' (Jade, DWT3). In the Free School, *What if Learning* and opportunities for reflection enabled pupils to make sense of the meaning of values and practices across the curriculum.

In the Church Academy, pupils also understood their school values provided standards by which they aspired to live their lives. Community values appeared to be implicit as well as explicit. In the Church Academy, pupils indicated that achieving excellence was an unspoken assumption known to the community. They associated it with making their best effort in all that they did.

Using Bronfenbrenner's (2005) PPCT model of human development, it was possible to comprehend the pupils' experience of the community's values within their daily interactions. These interactions enabled them to build friendships and trust in peers, staff, and leaders. When people did what they said they would do, the pupils could develop their trust. Pupils appeared not to contest the school values but empathised with them and welcomed their guidance in enabling them to live well together. Pupils may have embraced the values as it made sense to do so from a rational perspective (Hodgkinson, 1991). They either recognised that they established a positive work ethic and aided positive community relations or perceived them as relevant to their faith or beliefs (Hodgkinson, 1991). From Smith's (2009, p.25) perspective, they would become 'surreptitiously embedded' in pupils through participation in the school's rhythms and daily rituals.

The findings indicated the importance of these leaders, providing opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on school values in education ethos development. They suggest leaders attended to pupils' holistic development, friendships and sense of belonging, and aspirations for their academic performance. The pupils' understanding of academic performance appeared to reflect the Central Government's discourse on target-setting, National Curriculum tests and emphasis on pupil progress measures at the time of the data collection.

The meaning placed on Christian artefacts, symbols, and Christian practices

In both schools, the pupils' responses to the tasks provided rich insights into the significance of Christian artefacts, symbols, and Christian practices in their education. These insights would be hard to elicit using more traditional IPA interviews. Enlarged drawings of the cross appeared in specific tasks completed by the Free School pupils. These indicated that they understood its symbolic significance within this Christian school community and its use in worship. Pupils saw reflection, prayer, and collective worship as essential aspects of their education. However, they experienced some autonomy in their behavioural and belief choices. In the Church Academy,

pupils conveyed that they felt comfortable and confident reflecting on faith-related matters, such as God's omnipotence and personal faith (Sarah DWT1; Owen, DWT1). Their perspectives indicated that leaders had created safe, inclusive spaces for dialogue on matters of faith.

The influence of the leaders' vision on pupils' perspectives of their educational experience

As leaders and pupils were part of the same community, I explored the relationship between the headteachers' visions for education ethos and pupils' experiences of Christian education ethos. In both studies, pupils' expectations for their conduct, academic performance, and how they should contribute to their communities appeared to relate to the headteacher's aspirations and value positions. I identified congruence between the intended education ethos of the headteacher and pupils experienced ethos. The findings represented a departure from Green, E. (2009), who found dissonance between leaders' espoused values and those experienced by pupils.

Despite the headteachers in both studies experiencing conflicts in value positions concerning the nature and purposes of Christian education, the pupil data indicated an unawareness of these conflicts and the anxieties and pressures placed on leaders. Whilst the headteacher of the Church Academy expressed concerns at the SIAMS outcomes, leaders' worries appeared not to affect how the pupils experienced the school's ethos.

Pupils' views indicated the education established by leaders influenced them positively. Pupils felt the school met their learning and care needs. In the Free School, pupils valued 'service'. They appeared to be concerned with fulfilling the hopes and dreams of others. Their stances reflected the emphasis the headteacher placed on enabling social justice and service. In the Church Academy, the mentoring systems promoted friendships and trust between Year 6 pupils and younger pupils. Pupils valued exercising responsibility. Establishing positive community relations was central to the headteacher's vision for Christian education.

The findings of each study were consistent with ethnographic research findings by Lumb (2014) and Green, S. (2015). The headteacher's values and associated discourse significantly influenced pupil perceptions of a Church school ethos. Leaders considered their role-modelling of values was important. From pupils' perspectives in both schools, they perceived teachers as effective role models for school values. Leaders influenced pupils directly in their microsystem and indirectly through establishing conditions for learning in the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Lukes' (2005) dimensions of power enabled an understanding of how leaders exercised power over pupils. Lukes' (2005) main concern was power as domination. However, he acknowledged

transformative or emancipatory possibilities in using power. My interpretation was the leaders successfully persuaded pupils that the school values were in their best interests, illustrative of Lukes' third dimension of power. However, leaders gave considerable thought to the ethical use of power to not suppress pupils against their wishes.

10.3 The new contribution this thesis makes to knowledge

The thesis makes a new contribution to knowledge concerning the complexities of developing Christian education ethos from the unique perspectives of leaders in two state-funded schools with a Christian designation. Previous research exploring education ethos development in schools with a Christian foundation has not used the combination of theoretical lenses used in the thesis to interpret leaders' and pupils' experiences. By investigating a small sample of leaders' views of education ethos development within each school rather than examining a more extensive selection of headteachers views across more schools, I could explore their interactions, the similarities and differences in their perspectives, and their unique roles and responsibilities concerning education ethos development. I could also use my headship experience and the literature review to interpret leaders' and pupils' experiences.

10.3.1 Insights into the effects of clashing assumptions about Christian education paradigms

Both studies provided unique insights into the practical challenges the leaders perceived they faced in developing a school Christian education ethos. It included the draining effect on headteachers seeking to resolve clashing assumptions about Christian education paradigms. These occurred between senior leaders and those with authority over their leadership. In the Academy, the clash in perspectives occurred between senior leaders and the SIAMS inspector, who had the power to grade the effectiveness of the distinctively Christian ethos against the National Society's (2013b) criteria. In the Christian Free School, the clash of assumptions occurred primarily between the headteacher and the school's governing body and the school chaplain to a lesser extent.

In the Christian Free School, whilst all leaders strived to put Christianity at the heart of the school, the preferred strategy for achieving this differed. The headteacher wanted the pupils to experience a Christian education in a Christian manner (Astley, 1994). At the same time, governors believed the pupils should receive instruction about Christianity. The headteacher's central strategy for embedding Christian education ethos enabled pupils' Christian formation through *What If Learning*. To the headteacher, establishing high academic standards mattered and could be reconciled with Christian nurture to enhance pupils' life choices. To the governors,

the reconciliation of high academic standards and Christian nurture were hard to achieve. Instruction about Christianity required pupils' engagement in worship and extra time learning about Christianity in religious education. The governors valued the time pupils spent in community service. In contrast, the headteacher perceived the quality of the community service experienced was of greater importance than the length of time pupils spent on it.

Leaders' interpretations provided valuable insights into the headteacher's challenges in implementing *What If Learning* across the school. Leaders' accounts elucidated assumptions made about the nature of excellence and nurture in a Christian context. In the Church Academy, the new knowledge focused on leaders' perspectives on the SIAMS inspection process and its influence on their leadership autonomy. In both schools, the headteachers' commitment to their core values was crucial in enabling them to respond to the enormity of their tasks. To some extent, this commitment helped them navigate their way through the proliferation of expectations placed on them by the range of stakeholders, the community, and Central Government policy. However, the conflicts they experienced in people comprehending the nature of Christian education caused both headteachers frustration and limited their autonomy as leaders.

Research in the first part of the millennium found headteachers could not articulate Church school Christian distinctiveness. I discovered the headteachers possessed clarity about their visions for Christian ethos development. Those exercising power over their decision-making caused confusion over the meaning of Christian distinctiveness and the strategies for realising Christian distinctiveness.

10.3.2 Contribution to the literature on pupils' experiences of education within schools with a Christian foundation

The research provided rich insights into pupils' educational experiences within the Christian education ethos leaders created, which were essential to the headteachers successfully embedding their visions for education ethos. These insights included what mattered to pupils, their views of the school's value system and the expectations leaders placed on them.

The data analysis highlighted the complexity of influences acting on pupils' identity development. Previously, few studies provided in-depth perspectives of pupils' experiences of Christian school ethos (Green, E, 2009; Hemming, 2017). The data collection methods used in earlier studies restricted pupils' ability to articulate their views on such a complex phenomenon or gave insufficient attention to their voices compared to other community members. Through

novel yet creative modifications to the conventional data-collection method, all the pupils could have a voice.

The pupils' perspectives indicated the valuable contribution learners' voices could make to Christian educational leadership research. Pupils were the 'experts in their own lives' (Clark and Stratham, 2005, p.45) and could provide insights into their educational experiences.

10.3.3 A method for leaders to investigate the relationship between the espoused vision for Christian school education ethos and pupils' experiences of that ethos

I generated a method that school leaders could adapt to investigate potential relationships between the espoused vision for Christian school education ethos and pupils' experiences of the school ethos. The use of the draw-and-write tasks and photo-elicitation tasks was inclusive, enabling pupils to respond creatively, producing rich data. Pupils could engage positively with research. They could find out about themselves, others, and their schools. The tasks helped redress the power imbalances between myself, the adult researcher, and the pupils. As an outsider-insider researcher, there were limits in the extent to which I could engage pupils as active participants in the research process.

The methodology has potential as a pedagogical or leadership tool. The headteachers' interpretations indicated they gained invaluable insights into the influence of the conditions they developed on pupils' education experiences. For the method to be most effective, I recommend leaders attend to the pupils' sensitivity by establishing the optimal conditions for dialogue. Leaders working with pupils in schools could encourage them to take varying leadership responsibilities in the design, execution, analysis and reporting of data. From children's rights perspectives, leaders could listen to pupils' voices about matters affecting them (UNCRC 1989, Article 12). It could help headteachers to review the pupils' data for their school.

10.3.4 Recommendations arising from research concerning the complexities and practicalities of implementing a vision for Christian education

The research findings identified various complexities and practicalities associated with implementing a vision for Christian education ethos. I recommend leaders consider a range of issues when developing and implementing a vision for Christian education ethos.

Issues for headteachers/senior leaders to address:

1. The findings highlighted various visions influencing Christian education ethos development (Sections 6.2.3; 8.2.3). Leaders need to consider whose vision and values should influence the school's vision. The theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 4 might assist leaders in analysing the sources and types of power influencing the school's education ethos development.
2. Leaders need clarity about their personal qualities and values. They need to reflect on how their faith affiliation, personal characteristics, and unique life experiences underpin their aspirations for the school's Christian education ethos development (Sections 6.2.1; 8.2.1). They need, however, to consider how to work effectively within bureaucratic or policy constraints and identify strategies to promote a unified vision and a sense of common purpose. Headteachers should reflect on their positional authority, utilise the leadership team's expertise, attend to the school's Christian identity and consider what it means to lead a Christian community (Sections 8.2.2; 8.2.3). They should identify appropriate external sources of support to advance education ethos development. Headteachers need to consider how to manage value conflicts with other stakeholders. Categorising values and their origins may help leaders understand people's motives for action (Section 2.3). Headteachers need to provide staff with the space and time to reflect on how their faith, spirituality, and values influence their professionalism and roles.
3. Leaders must establish a shared paradigm for meaning and purpose in Christian education and consider how to interpret excellence within a Christian context (Section 8.3). They need to enable staff and governors to explore potential tensions between developing a high-achievement academic education ethos and one focused on inclusion or Christian distinctiveness (Sections 6.2.2; 6.3.3; 10.2.2, 10.2.3). Headteachers need to build consensus amongst staff and governors concerning pupils' faith development. In Church of England schools, leaders should consider balancing education's service and domestic functions (Section 8.2.1).
4. Leaders need to establish measures for success in Christian education ethos through devising appropriate criteria (Section 8.2.1). To aid this process, they could investigate

what matters most to the community concerning pupils' education and the types of pupils the school community wishes to develop. They should reflect on the usefulness and limitations of using the Ofsted and SIAMS criteria in formulating, implementing, and evaluating the school's vision for Christian education ethos (Sections 6.1.1; 8.1.3). They could identify specific virtues to enable pupils to develop holistically and spiritually, going beyond approaches concerned with securing pupils' performance in national tests. They could consider how pupils could experience human flourishing, create a sense of belonging to their community and learn to live well together in a multifaith, diverse society (Section 7.1.1). Leaders need to monitor regularly stakeholders' interpretations of the school's Christian education ethos and how stakeholders view its impact on pupil outcomes.

5. Leaders need to agree on their strategies for Christian education ethos development (Section 6.2.2). They should consider the contribution of institutional values, school practices, Christian symbolism in the school's physical environment, collective worship, prayer, and religious education. Leaders may find visual models of culture helpful in evaluating the contribution of various components to education ethos development (Section 8.1.3). Leaders should debate how to emphasise Christian distinctiveness within the curriculum and teaching and learning practices. Leaders could consider the value of pupils' reflection on the Bible, learning about Christianity as a religion, and using a Christian approach to teaching and learning (*What if Learning*). (Section 6.2.2).
6. Leaders should promote a shared understanding of what their school stands for and enable pupils, staff, and parents' sense of belonging. By making the school values explicit, leaders can act as role models and build relational trust with pupils and parents (Sections 7.2.3; 8.2.1; 8.2.2; 9.2.1; 10.2.5). Leaders need to enable pupils' critical reflection on the meaning and importance of the school values, religion and Christian practices in their lives and formation (Section 6.1.2; 7.2.1). Leaders need to consider how they can help the community understand the biblical origins of the school values while respecting that community members may interpret the values as universal human values (Section 6.1.2).
7. Leaders need to decide how to promote positive attitudes to worship and reflection and consider how worship can be meaningful, inclusive and contribute to pupils' sense of

belonging to their community (Sections 6.1.2; 7.1.2; 9.1.2). Potential challenges include enabling pupils' exploration of their connection with God and what it means to be part of a Christian community. Leaders need to cater to pupils' diverse theological literacy and provide pupils of other faiths or no faith the opportunity to engage in or be present at worship. They should investigate pupil views on worship, consider the invitational nature of prayer, and promote staff, pupils, and local church participation in leading worship (Sections 7.1.2; 9.1.2).

Issues for governing bodies to address:

1. Governors need to understand their expectations of the headteacher in developing and implementing the school's vision for Christian education ethos (Section 6.1.3). Governors require clarity over the level of autonomy they intend to give to the headteacher. As critical friends, governors should carefully monitor the trust and confidence they place in the headteacher. Headteachers and governors need to agree on how they might realise their aspirations in education ethos development.
2. Governors need to decide how to work with the headteacher in making strategic decisions concerning the school's Christian education ethos development. Governors need to consider balancing support in leaders' developments with appropriate challenges to drive continuous school improvements (Section 8.2.2). Governors should ask searching questions to evaluate the school's Christian education ethos, the effectiveness of the strategies employed in its development, and their impact on the school community. They should decide what data or feedback they require to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Christian education ethos. They might use the method outlined in Section 10.3.3 to investigate potential relationships between the espoused vision for Christian education ethos and pupils experiences of the school's ethos. Governors face making crucial decisions about how their evaluations can contribute to the school's continuous improvement planning processes.
3. Governors need clarity over how teachers interpret their responsibilities in embedding the school's Christian education ethos (Section 6.2.3). They need to consider how to induct staff into their duties and what support they may require to understand the school's Christian distinctiveness (Sections 6.1.3; 8.1.2). They should identify their roles

in communicating and modelling the school's Christian values. Governors should make decisions about the resources to support staff in developing their roles.

4. Within the statutory employment frameworks for schools, governors need to consider how staff appointments contribute to the school's Christian education ethos (Section 6.1.2). Governors in academies and Free Schools can employ a school chaplain or consider how a school chaplaincy team could contribute to the school's ethos. Governors also need to consider how the faith affiliation of staff and levels of Christian literacy amongst staff could influence education ethos development.

Issues for the Church of England Dioceses to address:

1. The Dioceses need to consider how to prepare Church school headteachers and other senior leaders for the challenges and complexities of leading a Christian school community. Leaders need support in understanding the Church's mission for its schools and the criteria used to judge effectiveness in education ethos development (Sections 8.2.4; 10.2.3). They also need help in relating Christian distinctiveness to their leadership and pedagogy.
2. The Dioceses needs to address with governors on a headteacher's selection panel their expectations concerning the headteacher's autonomy in developing and implementing the school's vision for Christian education ethos (Sections 6.1.3; 8.1.1). Governors require clarity over whether the headteacher should lead the school's vision or merely communicate the vision belonging to the Church or governing body. If the latter is the case, leaders require induction into the vision.
3. The Dioceses need to consider how to support governors in understanding what constitutes a Church school education ethos and holding headteachers accountable for implementing the school's vision for education ethos (Sections 6.1.3; 8.1.3). They need to consider how governors might move beyond a tick box exercise concerning criteria for accountability purposes, including supporting governor reflection on what measures to use (Section 8.2.1).

10.4 Suggestions for further research

The research findings indicated differences in perspectives between leaders concerning the nature and purpose of Christian education. In the Free School, the conflicts in value positions were between the governing body and the headteacher. I would welcome the opportunity to return to the Free School to determine whether differences in value positions had a capacity for resolution at a more mature stage in the school's establishment.

Different forms of leadership are emerging in schools since the introduction of the Academies Act 2010. It would be valuable to investigate a systems leadership approach to developing Christian education ethos and individual headteachers' autonomy across a group of schools with different sponsorship arrangements, such as a group of federated schools or those part of academy chains.

It would also be interesting to investigate leaders' approaches to ethos development in schools with a Catholic or Jewish foundation. I would seek to explore how leaders balanced any tensions between promoting Christian distinctiveness, inclusiveness and pupils' academic achievement.

10.5 Reflections on the transformational nature of the research: My development as a researcher

By completing the thesis, I learned the importance of establishing realistic goals for future research and incorporating sufficient time for in-depth, rigorous data analysis and crafting the research outcomes. The formation of precise research questions reflecting the ontology, methodology and research was vital early in the research process, guiding suitable data-collection and analytical methods. Applying criteria for quality in qualitative research to research design, implementation, and data analysis promoted the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. Furthermore, I learned gaining access to institutions and participants should never be taken for granted and requires developing trusting relationships between institutions, participants, and the researcher.

By engaging in reflexivity and seeking feedback about the research process, I learned about the benefits of participants' engagement with research. When the Free School headteacher viewed the pupils' data, he was delighted to discover he was further in his journey in manifesting his vision for a Christian education ethos than he thought. In both schools, pupils' feedback on the research process indicated that their engagement in the tasks had enabled them to learn more about themselves, others, and their schools. They reflected on their time in school, unique

memories, the significance of school practices, values and people in their lives, connectedness to the school, and contributions to the school community. They could also think about their attitudes to learning and the types of people they were becoming.

My thesis transformed my understanding of the nature and purposes of Christian education. I became intrigued by the use of *What if Learning* to reframe pupils' learning experiences from a Christian perspective. The focus on inspiring a learner's imagination as to the ultimate purpose of their learning caused me to think differently about my teaching as a teacher-trainer. I reflected on the long-term view of education and the types of students I wished to develop as teachers who influence pupils. I promoted opportunities for students to explore their value positions and reflect on how these influenced their teaching practices and the types of learning ethos they created on placement. I encouraged students to think more about the ultimate purpose of the learning experience when planning lessons for pupils. Furthermore, the importance pupils placed on experiencing a sense of belonging and quality relationships in the research led to me improving the quality of student experience at the University.

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Table of Statutes

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Education (Schools) Act 1992 (1992 c. 38)

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Appendices

- Appendix A** Example of the information letters sent to case study schools, participants, parents, and relevant consent forms
- Appendix B** Example of the questions/prompts used at interview with school leaders
- Appendix C** Free School: Extract to demonstrate the process for analysing a transcript
- Appendix D** List of emergent themes from an interview transcript with a school leader
- Appendix E** Table of themes for leaders from the Free School with transcript extracts
- Appendix F** Table of themes for leaders from the Church Academy with examples of transcript extracts
- Appendix G** Table of themes for pupil participants from the Free School with examples of data extracts
- Appendix H** Table of themes for pupil participants from the Church Academy with examples of data extracts
- Appendix I** Set of draw-and-write tasks for each child participant

Appendix A

Examples of the information letters sent to case study schools, participants, parents, and relevant consent forms



An Exploration of Christian Distinctiveness in Church of England Academies/Schools

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET FOR ACADEMIES/SCHOOLS

I am writing to introduce myself. My name is Miss Caroline Thomas and I am a Senior Lecturer in Education and PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University, who is carrying out a research project to investigate Christian distinctiveness in three Church of England academies/schools. The study aims to explore how each school is developing a distinctively Christian approach to education from the perspectives of its stakeholders. These include the staff, children, parents, and governors.

Scope of the study and the procedures being followed

I would like to interview staff and governors and observe some sessions and collective worship in the school to find out its ethos, curriculum, and educational approaches. I would also like to conduct separate focus group meetings with parents and pupils to explore their aspirations for and perceptions of the school. Parents/carers and pupils' views are of importance in the development of the school and education nationally. As a former headteacher of two schools in Kent, I have experience conversing with parents and pupils in primary and nursery education to gather their opinions on a range of topics.

I would aim to be in the school for approximately ten days, spread over three to four terms, as agreed with the headteacher. During the course of the study, I would ensure:

- Access arrangements are discussed with the headteacher and are adhered to.
- That all aspects of the research meet appropriate ethical and regulatory standards.
- Children's wellbeing and safety is a primary concern, and would adhere to school safeguarding and data protection procedures.
- Preservation of the anonymity of the school and all the individuals participating in the research.
- No child or adult is involved in the study without a signed consent form.
- I conduct myself professionally at all times as a guest within the school.

The benefits expected to emerge from the study

This study aims to make a contribution to the work of educators engaged in the process of education in each school and members of the Church of England participating in Church of England academies/schools.

I would provide each school's headteacher with a report of the study's findings concerning perceptions of education, aspirations and what is valued in the school. This report would include the collective views of parents, staff, governors, and pupils. It would be for the use of the school and may be used to inform the future development of the school's approach to education and its ethos.

What each school and its participants would be asked to contribute to the study

Each academy/school would be asked to:

- Make a commitment for the school to participate in the project for four terms of the academic year.
- Identify a staff member to be the link/point of contact between the school and researcher.
- Enable the researcher to access the school and assist with the access arrangements.
- Assist the researcher in making the practical arrangements for meetings with governors, staff members, parents, and children.
- Give permission for, and facilitate the researcher in data gathering – including the conduct of interviews, focus groups, observation, and the administration of pupil tasks.
- Help distribute parental permission forms and check that these are in place so that the researcher can engage in data collection.

Parent Focus Group Information

I would meet with a small group of four to six parents, representative of the school population, to discuss their perceptions of the school for approximately 45 minutes. Topics would include the following:

1. The length of time their child/children have attended the school
2. Their aspirations for their child/children and the school
3. Their reasons for choosing to educate their child/children at this school
4. Their perceptions of the school's strengths
5. What they perceive makes this school unique and different to other schools and academies
6. Their views about their child's /children's education and learning at the school
7. Their involvement with the school and their child's/children's education

All participants would need a signed consent form and may contact me with any questions about the meeting. My contact details are at the end of this sheet. The conversation would be confidential. Individual views would be kept anonymous and would not be reported. There would, however, be a report on the collective views of the group to assist the school with its development. At the end of each session, parents would have the opportunity to speak to me alone to follow any matters. All members of the parent focus group would receive a report of the meeting.

Pupil Focus Group Information

A small group of four to six pupils would participate, voluntarily, in a pupil focus group to discuss their perceptions of the school, its education and their aspirations. As part of the process, I would ask pupils to engage in three 'draw and write' tasks:

1. To draw a picture of themselves at their school and write notes around the edge to describe what it is like to be a pupil at their school.
2. To draw and write about what makes their school special
3. To draw and write about something they would like to achieve that would make the school really proud of them.

I would also ask a small group of four to six pupils to take photographs of what they value in their school over the course of one week. Each child would choose nine photographs and discuss the reasons for their choice and rank the photographs in order of importance. With pupil consent, and in line with school data protection procedures, these would be shared with the headteacher, class teacher and parent focus group.

The participating children would need a consent form signed by their parent/carer. Parents of children participating are invited to contact me to discuss the session. Children would be made aware that they could withdraw from the group at any time. Each child would receive a photocopy of their drawings or the photographs chosen. If any images were to be included in the thesis, additional written permission would be sought.

School leaders, staff, sponsors, governors/trustee information

The headteacher and a sample of school leaders, governors and staff would be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview with me to discuss: their aspirations; their perceptions of teaching, learning, the curriculum, and ethos; their role in education and ethos development; and their perception of factors influencing the approach to education inside and outside of the school. All interviewees would receive a transcript/record of the interview to ensure that their views are represented accurately and fairly.

Contextual information

The research would involve me gathering contextual information about the school, its population, ethos, and education through a tour of the school, observation of education and ethos and the collection of documentary evidence concerning the development of education and ethos in agreement with the headteacher.

Confidentiality and security of data

I am taking measures to protect the school's anonymity and participants from identification in the research report and any subsequent publications.

All data and personal information would be stored securely within University premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's data protection requirements. Only I, as the researcher, would access the data. After completing the study, all data would be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data would be removed).

Disseminating the outcomes of the study

I would provide the school's headteacher with a report on the findings from the school. I would write an analysis of the data in my PhD thesis and share the findings through the subsequent publication of articles or reports.

If you would like to participate or have any questions:

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedures or requirements for participation, do not hesitate to contact Miss Thomas. **Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.**

Contact details: Miss Caroline Thomas, Primary Education Department, Canterbury Christ Church University (tel: ,,,,,,,,,,)

Christian Distinctiveness in Church of England Primary Academies/Schools

Child Focus Groups School and Parent Information Sheet

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am a researcher from Canterbury Christ Church University, who is currently at the school conducting a research project on Christian distinctiveness in a small number of Church of England Primary Schools. The purpose of the study is to investigate how academies/schools are developing distinctively Christian approaches to education from the stakeholders' perspectives. These include the staff, children, parents, and governors.

As part of this study, I will conduct a focus group meeting with four to six pupil volunteers to explore their perspectives of the school, their education, and their aspirations.

Your child has expressed an interest in participating in this group. I am writing to provide you with further information about this meeting and to ask whether you would formally consent to your child taking part. Pupils' views are of importance in the development of the school and education nationally.

The meeting will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour of your child's time on two different occasions.

Details of the meeting:

As part of the focus group meeting, I will ask pupils to engage in three 'draw and write' tasks:

1. To draw a picture of themselves at their school and write notes around the edge to describe what it is like to be a pupil at their school.
2. To draw and write about what makes their school special.
3. To draw and write about something they would like to achieve that would make the school really proud of them.

I will also ask the pupils to take photographs of what they value in their school over the course of one week. Each child will choose nine photographs, discuss the reasons for their choice, and rank the photographs in order of importance. With pupil consent, and in line with school data protection procedures, these will be shared with the headteacher, class teacher and parent focus group. Children will be made aware that they can withdraw from the group at any time. Each child will receive a photocopy of their drawings or the photographs chosen.

Parental/Carer Consent

If you consent to your child participating, please sign and return the attached project consent form to the school. You are invited to contact me with any questions about the focus group meeting or if you have any reservations about whether to allow your child to participate. **Should you decide to consent to your child's participation, you will be free to withdraw your child at any time without having to give a reason.** Please contact **Miss Caroline Thomas, Primary Education Department, Canterbury Christ Church University** (tel: 01227 767700)

The conversation with pupils will be confidential. Individual views will be kept anonymous and will not be reported. I will, however, produce a report on the collective views of the group to assist the school with its development.

The conversation with the participants' consent will be recorded to ensure accuracy in the representation of the pupil's views and aid me in my analysis of the findings. At the end of each session, pupils will have the opportunity to speak to me alone to follow up on any matters arising.

The findings will be written up in my PhD thesis and in subsequent publications. Care will be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals and the school.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Caroline Thomas
(Senior Lecturer Canterbury Christ Church University)

Christian Distinctiveness in Church of England Primary Schools/Academies

Parent/Carer Focus Group Information Sheet

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am a researcher from Canterbury Christ Church University, who is currently at the school conducting a research project on Christian distinctiveness in Church of England Primary Schools. The purpose of the study is to investigate how a small number of schools are developing distinctively Christian approaches to education from the perspectives of their stakeholders. These include the staff, children, parents, and governors.

As part of this study, I will be conducting a focus group meeting with four to six parent volunteers to explore their perceptions of the school and their aspirations for their children. I am writing to invite you to be a participant in this group.

Parents/carers and pupils' views are of importance in the development of the school and of education nationally.

The meeting will take approximately 45 minutes of your time, and the following topics are indicative of the nature of the discussion:

1. The length of time your child/children have attended the school
2. Your aspirations for your child/children and the school
3. Your reasons for choosing to educate your child/children at this school
4. Your perceptions of the school's strengths
5. What you perceive makes this school unique and different to other schools and academies
6. Your views about your child's /children's education and learning at the school
7. Your involvement with the school and your child's/children's education

All participants will need to sign a project consent form and are invited to contact me with any questions about the focus group meeting or if you are unsure about whether to participate. **Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.**

Please contact **Miss Caroline Thomas, Primary Education Department, Canterbury Christ Church University** (tel:01227 767700)

The conversation will be confidential. Individual views will be kept anonymous and will not be reported. I will, however, produce a report on the collective views of the group to assist the school with its development.

The conversation with the participants' consent will be recorded, to ensure accuracy in representing people's views and to aid me in my analysis of the findings. At the end of each session, individuals will have the opportunity to speak to me alone to follow any matters. All members of the parent focus group will receive a report of the meeting.

The findings will be written up in my PhD thesis and subsequent publications. Care will be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals and the school.

Should you choose to participate, I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Caroline Thomas

(Senior Lecturer Canterbury Christ Church University)

CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOLS/ACADEMIES

Title of Project: Christian Distinctiveness in Christian Academies/Schools

Name of Researcher: Miss Caroline Thomas

Contact details:

Address:

Canterbury Christ Church University North Holmes Road Canterbury Kent CT1 1QU

Tel:

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Email:

--

Name of School:

Position:

Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
2.	I understand that my academy's/school's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the academy/school at any time, without giving any reason.		

3.	I understand that any personal information I provide to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential and the academy/school will not be named in the research report or subsequent publications.		
4.	I agree to the academy/school taking part in the above study.		

Name of Person consenting Date Signature

Miss Caroline Thomas _____

Researcher Date Signature

Copies: 1 for participant and 1 for the researcher

**EXAMPLE OF THE CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPANTS:
(Adapted for parents/carers in the parent/carer focus group, leaders)**

Title of Project: Christian Distinctiveness in Church of England Academies/Schools

Name of Researcher: Miss Caroline Thomas

Contact details:

Address:

Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

Tel:

Email:

Name of School:

initial box

Please

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information I provide to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential, and I will not be named in the research report or subsequent publications.

4. I agree to take part in the above study.



Name (Participant)

Date

Signature

Miss Caroline Thomas

Researcher

Date

Signature

Copies: 1 for participant

1 for researcher

PARENTAL/CARER CONSENT FORM FOR PUPILS PARTICIPATING IN THE FOCUS GROUP, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHY TASK AND/OR 'DRAW AND WRITE' TASKS

Title of Project: Christian Distinctiveness in Church of England Primary Academies/Schools

Name of Researcher: Miss Caroline Thomas

Contact details:

Address:

Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1QU

Tel:

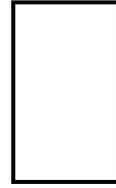
Email:

Name of School:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions through provision of the researcher's contact details and a conversation with her or meeting with her.
2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my child at any time, without giving any reason and my child is free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information my child provides to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential, and my child will not be named in the research report or subsequent publications. Any photographs taken by my child will be shared within the school with my child's consent and in conjunction with academy data protection arrangements.

4. I agree to my child taking part in the above study.



Name of Child (Participant) Date Signature

Name of Parent/Carer taking
Consent Date Signature

Miss Caroline Thomas
Researcher Date Signature

Copies: 1 for participant's parent/carer
 1 for researcher

Appendix B

Examples of the questions/prompts used at interview with school leaders

Role

Can you tell me about your role at this school?

Vision

What is your vision for the school and aspirations for the pupils?

What influenced the development of your vision?

How is the vision shared/communicated?

How has your vision altered/ changed since the school was established)?

What type of education do you seek to provide?

What factors have influenced the development of the education in the school? (Influence of the Church, government policy, Ofsted, National Curriculum, Diocese, community?)

Challenges and Issues

What issues/ challenges/barriers have you faced in meeting your goals

How have you overcome these?

What or who has assisted you in manifesting the vision?

Ethos/Impact

What makes the school distinctive? (Role of worship, values)

How are the values reflected in school/teaching and learning?

What does it feel like to work at the school?

What kind of education do you perceive the children receive at the school?

What has been put in place, which is making/, has made the most impact?

What else would assist you in establishing the school's educational goals?

Anything else

Is there anything I have not asked you, which you think is important to this research?

Appendix C

Free School: Interview extract to demonstrate the process of analysis

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
<p>Personal beliefs underpinning vision</p> <p>Importance of personal autonomy: Starting with a blank sheet</p>	<p>Interviewer: Can you tell me what motivated you to become the headteacher of a brand-new Christian academy?</p> <p>Leader: I think for me, I have personal faith. I'm a Christian, and I have been for a long time, and Christianity and what I believe has always been part of what I am as a teacher and as a senior leader, but to be able from scratch to make that the core of a school, rather than being on the edges and trying to change it, was really an exciting opportunity.</p> <p>The other thing for me is that I, for a long time, have thought about what a Christian school could be and what it means to be a Christian school and a faith education, particularly in a secular environment, in a secular context and knowing that here we were starting with a blank sheet so that I could really make these things happen was just incredibly exciting.</p> <p>Interviewer: Thank you. And in relation to your background before that, had you worked at Christian schools before?</p> <p>Leader: (DELETED CONTENT) I was, therefore, able to see how that worked.</p> <p>Interviewer: Looking back now to your original vision and your aspirations for the school. Can you tell me about your vision for the school?</p>	<p>Personal identity: faith influences leadership position.</p> <p>Sounds enthusiastic about the role</p> <p>Excited</p> <p>Self-motivation and drive</p> <p>Reflective stance</p> <p>Issues surrounding broader education context influencing the leadership of Christian education?</p> <p>Experience of Church of England schools/policy – influence on identity</p>

<p>Education as social justice</p>	<p>Leader: I think at the core, I think education is a justice issue, and so I wanted the school to make a difference to children's lives, which means I believe that children need to have an excellent education and therefore we need to be creating an education that means that children will have outstanding life chances because they gain great qualifications and all the rest of it, and I believe that's a Christian thing. That's one thing.</p>	<p>Vision: justice is important: excellence, outstanding life chances</p>
<p>Christianity to be the DNA of the school</p>	<p>The second is that I wanted Christianity to be the DNA of the school. The experience I had in the Church of England school, which I won't name, is that it was periphery, so the Christian side of the school was a bit bolt-on. It sat over here, we did worship, and we did Christian things, all of which were very good, and then the curriculum and those kinds of things didn't really have anything to do with it.</p>	<p>He relates outstanding life choices to his Christian faith.</p> <p>He appears dissatisfied with the link between Christian ethos and curriculum in CE school</p>
<p>Striving for something new and better</p>	<p>What I wanted to do here was something inherently different where actually our values and what we believed as a Christian school would run through everything we did, so it would affect our curriculum, it would affect how we deliver things, and it would affect our behaviour systems.</p> <p>You would be able to look at it and say, 'actually, this teaching of science here is Christian'. I also wanted it not to be..... I think the danger with that is that you end up with tokenism; you end up with putting Bible verses in lessons and things. I didn't want that either. I wanted it to be real, that it would actually have a genuine impact on how we did things, and therefore we did them better.</p>	<p>Influence of his values and beliefs on the ethos</p> <p>He rejects a simplistic approach to Christian education</p>

Appendix D

List of emergent themes from an interview transcript with a school leader

1. Personal beliefs underpinning vision
2. Importance of personal autonomy: Starting with a blank sheet
3. Building on personal experience
4. Education as social justice
5. Christianity to be the DNA of the school
6. Striving for something new and better
7. Bonding: Sharing the vision
8. Inspiring commitment and engaging others in the vision
9. Tensions within leadership
10. Providing direction
11. Frustration with What If Learning
12. What If Learning: a curriculum planning issue across schools
13. Working within the boundaries
14. Making the values meaningful
15. Core values underpinning school values
16. Embedding values in school policy
17. Values as a code of conduct
18. Transformation of lives
19. Embedding values in worship and form periods
20. Creating an atmosphere and behaviour that is unique
21. Prioritising What If Learning and restorative justice
22. Getting the pressures on children right
23. Tension between excellence and Christian nurture/care
24. Taking academy freedoms seriously to achieve excellence
25. My Christian duty
26. Facing uncertainty
27. Thinking from a parent perspective
28. Governor concerns about care
29. Resolving value conflicts
30. Headteacher as the Christian leader
31. Developing the chaplaincy role
32. A structure to fit with Christian community of kingdom building
33. Limitations in capacity to support staff
34. Aspirations for What If Learning

Appendix E

Table of themes for leaders from the Free School with transcript extracts

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate themes and examples of transcript extracts
<p>Creating a Christian school education ethos with a difference</p>	<p>Christianity at the heart of the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘I wanted Christianity to be the DNA of the school (.....). What I wanted to do here was something inherently different where our values and what we believed in as a Christian school would run through everything we did, so it would affect curriculum, it would affect how we deliver things, and it would affect behaviour systems (.....) I wanted it to be real, that it would have a genuine impact on how we did things and therefore we did them better’ (HT, I1L38-49).</i> • <i>‘We always said that we wanted a school where the Christian faith underpinned everything. It wasn’t just in assemblies, it was on the sports field; it was in the classroom; it was everything’ (CGB, L48-50).</i> • <i>‘This is kind of what we want in terms of how we want the school to be distinctive. What we want to do is create an atmosphere and view it as something that is not directly taught didactically but is more about what children experience (.....) We wanted it to be the whole in which everything else sat really’ (DHT, L132-142).</i> <p>Education as social justice (transformation of lives)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘I think at the core, I think education is a justice issue, and so I wanted the school to make a difference to children’s lives, which means I believe that children need to have an excellent education and therefore we need to be creating an education that means that children will have outstanding life chances (...) I believe that is a Christian thing’ (HT, I1L32).</i> • <i>‘It’s about setting service in a kind of Biblical context, so it’s not just about serving because it’s a moral thing to do. It is about serving as Christ was a servant and getting children to understand that. Obviously, the whole image of Christ washing his disciples’ feet is what it comes down to. It is about serving for its own ends as an expression of love’ (DHT, L103-108).</i> <p>Beliefs and values underpinning the school vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Education for life in all its fullness’ (CGB, L194-194).</i> • <i>‘I have personal faith. I’m a Christian, and I have been for a long time, and Christianity and what I believe has always been part of what I am as a senior leader but to make that the core of the school rather than being</i>

	<p><i>on the edges and trying to change it was really an exciting opportunity (...) I, for a long time, have thought about what it means to be a Christian school and to receive a faith education, particularly in the secular environment (...), and knowing that here we were starting with a blank sheet that I could really make these things happen was just incredibly exciting’ (HT,11L12-20).</i></p>
<p>Inspiring commitment and building a community</p>	<p>Embedding school values in school and classroom practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>‘What I did was mapped from that what I thought we could have as our four or five values that were memorable, that children and staff would be able to work with and live with (...) As a school leader, you need something that is memorable that children can get a handle on, or it just becomes a document on a bookshelf, and I think that’s where it was’ (HT11, L163-166).</i> ● <i>‘We model relationships, so we do restorative justice here, and all the kids had a couple of days on it from world-leading experts (...). Everything is very much focused on relationships and repairing relationships and making restitution for what you have done’ (DHT, L103-108).</i> <p>Building a sense of community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>‘Children don’t see disability and difference here as they are all different in their ways’ (DHT, L324-325).</i> ● <i>‘I was very aware of the risk of the vision being my vision and all the rest of it without including people being in the journey (...) There needed to be real clarity for people to buy into it (...) There needed to be enough flexibility to actually have these conversations and work with people (HT, I176-80).’</i> <p>Importance of worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>‘It’s a big challenge to make worship meaningful (...) X (Name of the consultant to the school) said you should not assume everyone is a Christian, you should differentiate, and I felt awkward about that (...) Who knows what goes on in their heads, and that’s what I want to know’ (CGB, L348-358).</i> ● <i>‘Every day, the idea is obviously to have worship in form time. It’s very much called worship, (...), so that’s quite interesting, quite distinctive. The materials (...) that I’m providing are very interactive. We would have a person of the week. We have skills that we want to develop and an objective and then putting in some seasonal things as well, so we have talked about the Tower of London Poppies (...) responses to the 100th anniversary of the First World War. (...) Winston Churchill as the person and we were thinking about compassion and empathy’ (REL, L93-99; 117-118).</i>

<p>Managing tensions and value conflicts in leadership</p>	<p>Limits to leadership autonomy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘They do a lot of monitoring. They’ve allowed me the freedom to interpret their vision, and I would use that language, interpret their vision and make that into a practical reality, but without allowing me so much freedom that I go off and it becomes my vision, and I think they’ve been very good at walking the line’ (HT, 11L146-150).</i> <p>Tensions between excellence and Christian distinctiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘One of the things the governors challenge me on regularly is how you do high performing and Christian caring and nurturing of children, it’s a tension. I don’t think it’s contradictory. I think the opposite (...), but it’s certainly a tension (HT11, L280-283).’</i> • <i>‘We constantly have to work harder with (...) the teaching staff rather than the children as we are making demands on them. It is a secular education system, and we are making secular demands on them about progress and data (...). They have to reflect more (...) on what the link is between the progress and the data and achievements and pushing children and supporting them in a Christian context. There is no tension in my mind because I think that Christian love does not have to be sweet and a non-demanding thing. It’s the opposite. We will be failing in our duty if we did not help children to achieve the best’ (DHT, L153-160).</i> <p>Nature and purpose of RE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘I am very, very keen that we teach children and equip children with how to think and to me that is one of the fundamentals of education (...). I see RE as having a huge part to play in that, but I see that across all subjects’ (HT12, L323-328).</i> • <p>Managing parental perspectives on critical thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘The response I’ve given to parents who have come in and questioned us on this has been that I’ve worked with (...) first-year undergraduates, who used to come to our church (...) When they came to university, they were hit with other philosophies and ways of seeing life and found it spectacularly difficult (...). I want to see children thinking about and evaluating these bigger questions, and we don’t dictate the answers, we get them to think about the questions’ (HT12, L336-343).</i>
<p>Challenges of implementing <i>What If Learning (WIL)</i></p>	<p>Reflections on the use of WIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘I very much wanted that to be a grass-roots thing, so staff would be excited by it and therefore implementing it, and it would come much more from staff rather than me saying you have to do a what if bit of the lesson. The frustrating thing on that, and I have spoken to X (the consultant) about it, is that the freedom has not been as productive as I hoped it would be’ (HT, 11L110-117).</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'To be honest, I tried using it in all my lessons right from the beginning when you have to use it, but it sort of fizzled out for me. My argument is that especially in the arts you're pretty much doing What if Learning quite a lot (...) In my creative subjects, it's kind of like second nature with it' (DTL, L222-229).</i> <p>Building staff knowledge and expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'We do formal lesson observations, all schools do, with good feedback and so forth, and we do learning walks all the time, so every lesson you could be dropped in on a learning walk. What we do off the back of that is various things but one of the things that has been quite effective we call positive nudging (...) I wouldn't want to get into a battle with people about it. I think that is one of the difficulties of What If. I've felt it wouldn't work to go down a very hard line of must (...), but it does make it slow' (HT, I2L366-382).</i>
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Appendix F

Table of themes for leaders from the Church Academy with transcript extracts

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate themes and examples of transcript extracts
<p>High standards with a Christian caring ethos</p>	<p>Putting children first</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Passionate that the children are always put first' (CWL, L384).</i> <p>Doing our best for others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'I used to have a motto 'only your best is good enough', and I'd say to children, 'it doesn't matter what you attain, what really matters is the effort you put in', and I give them stickers and things and headteachers' awards because I think it's important to recognise that we're all here to do our best' (HT, I1L176-179).</i> <p>Becoming an outstanding school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'I wanted to improve standards, but I wanted it with a caring atmosphere (...) That had to be built up by appointing the right staff and establishing the right culture where it matters that you value children and that is not exclusively Christian (...) So we have teased out values that the Church of England would be proud of, very proud of, by which we can live our lives' (HT, I1L41-50).</i> • <i>I've got a good deputy, and we're of a like mind (...) The SLT are the best SLT I've ever had (...) They've been on 'good to outstanding' courses; they know what the strategies are about being an outstanding teacher; they want to do this (HT L533-534;546-548).</i> <p>Serving parents and the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Prospective parents, part of the talk is that they're coming to a Church of England school. Yes, it serves the community, but it may be different from the school down the road (...). I might say to them we have collective worship every day, and that is one of the values of the Church of England, so we make sure they know that' (HT, I1L93-97).</i> <p>Promoting happiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'For me, it's that everyone is happy, that's the staff, support staff and the children (...) That's fundamental to me if there is a child unhappy I want to know why (...) The children are very happy here, they're very secure (...) Because the children are happy, they have confidence, and</i>

	<p><i>they have independence (...) They're not afraid to go and ask anything or do anything' (CGB, L70-93).</i></p> <p>Educating the whole child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'As much as possible, to try to educate the whole child. Although we seem to focus very much and are not forced, but heavily encouraged to focus on maths and reading and writing, it's about making sure we celebrate and develop all facets and skills that a child has, not just those three (...) that everybody likes to report on' (DHT, L26-30).</i> • <i>'You've got the added pressure of the SATs exams, particularly Key Stage 2 because the school league table position is based on the results. We've done well over the past few years, so obviously, I'm keen to keep that up, but I don't want you to think that I am all about numbers and figures, because I am not (...) I also want well-rounded children when they leave me' (ML, L133-138).</i>
<p>Embedding a Christian way of living</p>	<p>An eye on everything that's worth doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Whenever any of us (...) go off on these courses and come back with all these wonderful ideas (...) he always says, 'how does that benefit the pupils, and will you have time to do that? (...) He's always got his eye on everything that is worth doing if it's going to improve standards (...) That is good but never at the cost of the children and their esteem' (CWL, L384-391).</i> <p>The staff as role models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'The interactions between the staff are generally really very good, so I think the children will see certainly see friendship, compassion (...) but also in the way the staff deal with the children (...) We always try a model that kind of friendship and basic respect of each other' (CWL, L270-281).</i> • <i>'It's lovely teaching in this school - it's friendly, it's really warm. The children just pick up on it so they're just lovely and they care for each other, and they can see that the staff care for each other' (REL, L16-18).</i> <p>Building relational trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'That is Year 6, and they're Year R and what I think is noteworthy about the school and what parents have noted is that Year 6 look after Year R - cut up their roast potatoes and are buddies and play with them and I think that's the large family feel of the school (...) They look after them at playtime' (HT, L2237-240; 245-246).</i> • <i>'Trust (...) we want the children to trust us and talk to us (...) trust us with their learning (...) to help them do what's best for them (...) Parents have got to trust us (...). There has to be a strong element of</i>

	<p><i>trust there, and that comes from the strong nurture, which I believe we are good at' (DHT, L78-92).</i></p> <p>Living our lives through values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'I don't say that they have to be Church of England (...), but I do insist that they hold the ethos of the Church of England dear and sign up to these values' (HT, I1L81-86).</i> • <i>'You will see compassion with adults, you will see friendship at all levels, governors, children, whatever, and that has taken quite a time' (HTI1L50-53).</i> <p>Creative ways of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Children are not empty vessels to be filled up (...) learning (...) it should be enjoyable, interesting, collaborative (...) the teacher poses questions and challenges and gets the children to (...) arrive at answers (DHT, L358-365).</i>
<p>Critical incident: Managing and responding to SIAMS</p>	<p>Feeling aggrieved about SIAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'I just feel aggrieved really, I don't mind if it reflects where we were, but I think we're further on in the journey than she gave us credit for. We're not perfect, and we're not outstanding, but I think there's loads of elements of good' (HT, I1L495-497).</i> <p>Finding out what Christian distinctiveness means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'The first one was looking at Christian distinctiveness, and one of the first things that was said was, 'when you walk into your school, how do you determine that it's a Christian school?' So, we all piped up, 'well there's a cross there', and he said, 'well, what makes it different?' (...) I said, 'we have our values on our policies, and we have this and that', and he said. 'Yes, and what else do you do?' (CGB, L309-315).</i> <p>Matters of faith, RE and collective worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'The biggest thing we are working on is trying to get well the teachers to teach RE next year... I didn't feel that it had the status it should have' (REL, L292-294).</i>

Appendix G

Table of themes for pupils from the Free School with data extracts

Superordinate themes	Themes and examples of their place in the data
Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being myself: <i>'Being myself, being me'</i> (Simon, DWT1). <i>'No worries'</i> (Stephen, DWT2). <i>I did light beams to represent our school to show that we're very kind-hearted and have no worries and are happy'</i> (Simon, I1L297-298). • Belonging: <i>'United together'; 'I did a circle to show that we're united and that we are a small school'</i> (Simon, DWT2; I1L296). • Being proud: <i>'Uniform: This is really important as it is a nice uniform and people are proud to wear it, and it is comfortable.'</i> (Simon, PRC5). • Friendship and love: <i>'Friendly community'</i> (Jade, DWT2); <i>'Everyone's got like a friend and everyone's really happy'</i> (Andrew, DWT2; I1L456). • Special places <i>'My form room is important because we use it every day, and it's a place to reflect when we aren't in worship. Also, we can catch up on some work'</i> (Joshua, PRC8). • Christian school identity <i>'This expresses our own school and shows we are a Christian school. This symbol is important to me as well'</i> (Simon, PRC2).
Excellence in everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence in everything: <i>'Excellence in everything'</i> (Jade, DWT2; Joshua, DWT3). • The School Way: <i>'The School Way: truth, excellence, love, leadership, service'</i> (Jade, DWT2). • Giving and achieving 100%: <i>'I've done 'what went well' and 'even better if' and then the teachers encourage us to do 100% in our work, so there's a quote in our little card saying 'excellence, excellence in everything', so we try our best to get 100%'</i> (Joshua, DWT1; DWT3, I1L555-557). • Experiencing creativity and enjoyment: <i>'I chose the DT/art room because I really enjoy being creative'</i> (Andrew, PRC6).
Valuing Christian symbolism, artefacts, and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship and reflection: <i>'I have chosen the worship hall because I think it is a really important part of the school because everyone uses it (...) sometimes at the beginning of the day we go there for worship'</i> (Andrew, PRC8).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the Bible: <i>'I have chosen the Bible because, even though I'm not a Christian, I still believe in some of the Bible's messages, so if I was in trouble, I could look through the Bible, and it would help me work out what to do'</i> (Andrew, PRC9). • Importance of the cross: <i>'I chose this image of the cross because it's on our logo and we see it every day when we come to school. We also hear passages from the Bible, and sometimes it's about Jesus dying on the cross'</i> (Jade, PRC3).
<p>Making dreams come true</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope and aspirations: <i>'I've done all the words that represent (school name) like hope, truth, excellence, love, leadership and service'</i> (Joshua, DWT2). • Helping others: <i>'Help the community; help people'</i> (Andrew, DWT3). <i>'Making someone's dream come true; making a difference to others lives'</i> (Jade, DWT3).

Appendix H

Table of themes for pupils from the Church Academy with data extracts

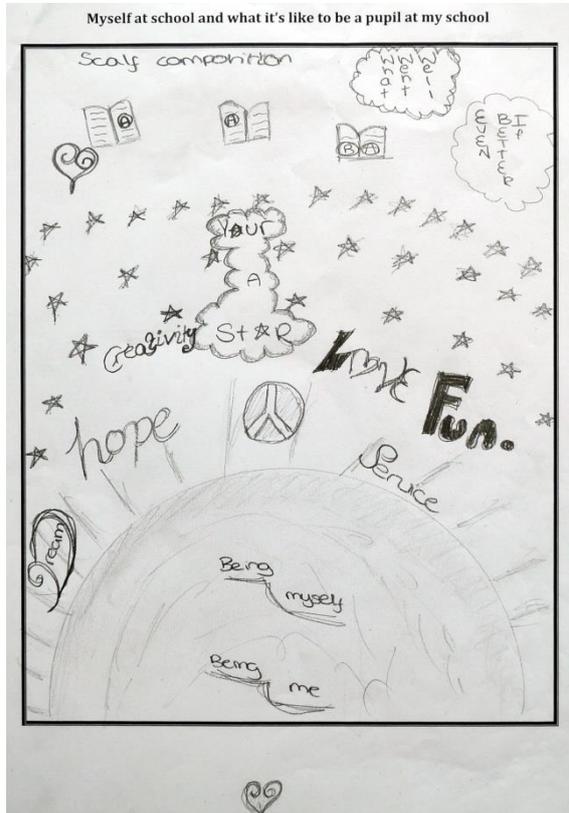
Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme
Valuing school values	<p>Valuing school values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Our core values are forgiveness, friendship, trust and compassion (FFCT). Friendship for caring, kindness. Forgiveness for starting a new leaf. Trust for being able to depend on someone. Compassion for helping, or caring for’</i> (Elizabeth, PRC2). <li>• <i>‘They are important to me because they are what the school runs by. They’re not like the rules, but they are what we try and be friends and try and trust each other’</i> (Henry, 12L365-366). <p>Kind relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Our teachers care about us a lot and put lots of effort into growing our education. School feels like my second home. Although we work hard in class, we’re always having a laugh and having fun. All the teachers care about the fire alarms, and they are always looking out for us’</i> (Elizabeth, DWT2). <li>• <i>‘How welcoming everyone is. This is a picture of the school office – everyone is very merry and happy – always smiling’</i> (Louise, DWT2). <p>Friendship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘We just have friendship with whatever we do now because when we first joined Year R, we didn’t know anyone. We became friends, and now we’re all still friends’</i> (Elizabeth, 12L61-62). <p>Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Trust - To be able to believe that someone can borrow something or can tell secrets’</i> (Sarah, DWT2). <li>• <i>‘(Name of child) was the first friend I ever made that was in Year R. This shows friendship and trust’</i> (Sarah, PRC4). <p>Forgiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Forgiveness is when your best friend has just been mean to you, maybe they’ve punched you or something. If they’re sorry, they say</i>

	<p>sorry, you say, 'Yes, I forgive you, and you won't do it again, really' (Louise, I2L539-541).</p> <p>Happiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'At X (School Name) school, we are all happy. I enjoy doing art and DT' (Louise, DWT1). <p>Compassion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Compassion is to sacrifice your time to help others' (Sarah, DWT2). • 'Compassion –You put yourself in someone else's shoes' (Henry, DWT2.) • 'Compassion for helping, or caring for' (Elizabeth, PRC2).
<p>Aspirations and achievement</p>	<p>Doing something good and being successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I want to make heaven by doing something good that I want to do. Not what people want me to do' (Sarah, DWT1). <p>Gaining encouragement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'This is a picture of the angel we made. I chose it because many times, I feel like giving up, and then my friends tell me to keep on going' (Owen, PR9, I2). <p>Effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Our teachers praise us whenever we do good work. We always get 'T', which means target, where our teacher will give us something to improve on' (Elizabeth, DWT3). <p>Having fun and enjoying learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I really enjoy RE as Mrs X always makes us act out the stories from the Bible and the Quran and more, it's a really fun way to help us understand' (Elizabeth, DWT3).
<p>Special people, places, and practices</p>	<p>Special places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'It is important to me because it shows my class and my teacher, which is really important to me and that is why it is number one' (Louise, PRC1). <p>Special people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'He's the headteacher and my most special teacher really, because (...) he actually looked after me all years other than just the teachers looking after me for one year or two years' (Owen, PRC8).

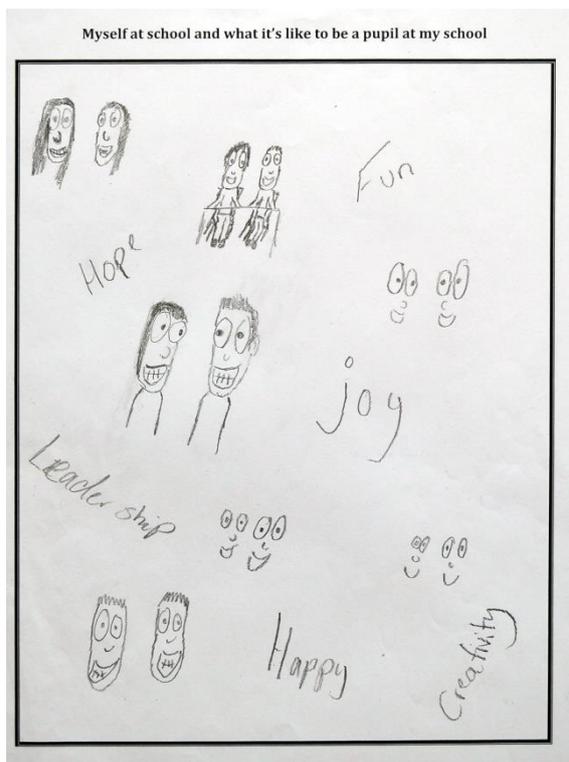
	<p>Special artefacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'This picture is of the flowers we planted ourselves. They are very beautiful'</i> (Henry, PRC8). <p>Significance of the cross</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'The photo of the cross in the foyer window is important to me as it represents Jesus dying on the cross'</i> (Shaun, PRC4). <p>Worship, singing and prayers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'We have candles in worship. The person who is leading the assembly will say. Jesus is the light of the world.' Then we say, his spirit is with us': We also get told stories and get to volunteer'</i> (Elizabeth, DWT2). <p>Exploration of faith, God, and religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'I believe a few religions in their beliefs'</i> (Sarah, DWT1)
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Appendix I
Set of draw-and-write tasks for each child

I1 Free School

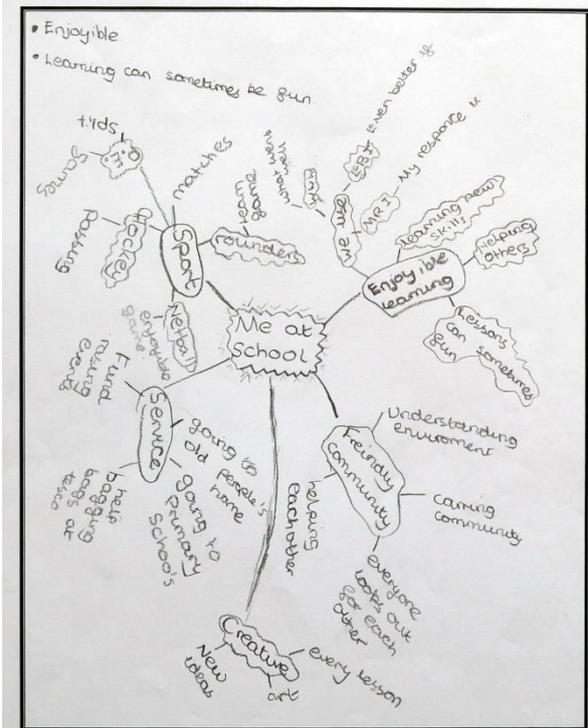


Simon DWT1



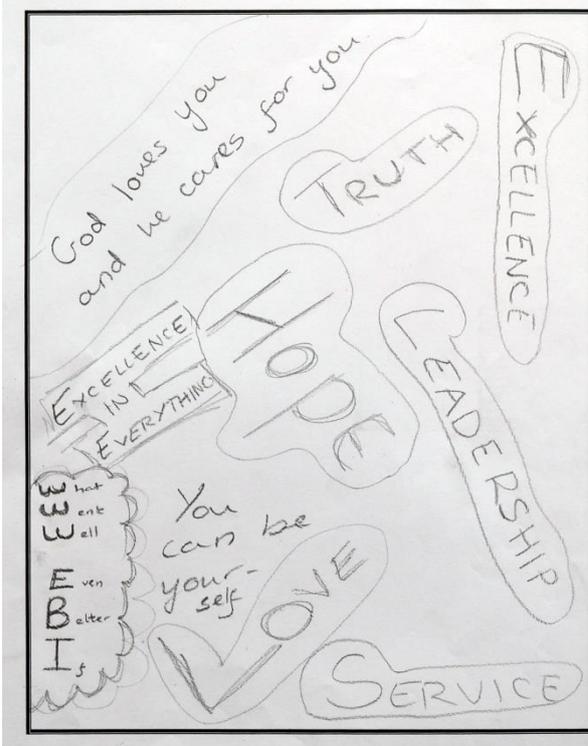
Andrew DWT1

Myself at school and what it's like to be a pupil at my school

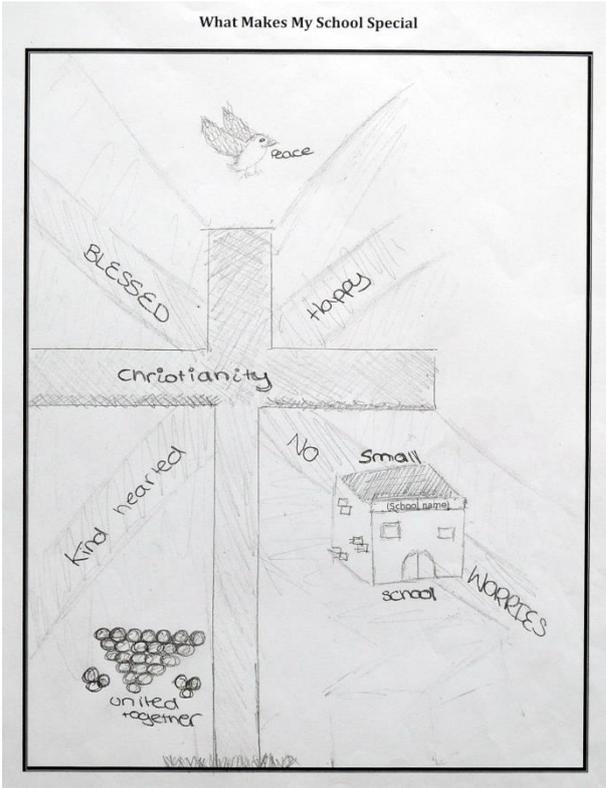


Jade DWT1

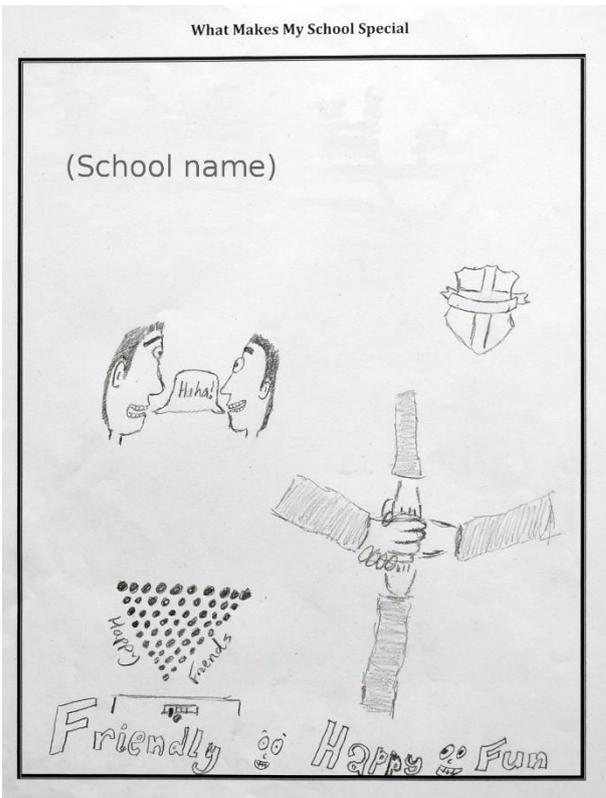
Myself at school and what it's like to be a pupil at my school



Joshua DWT1

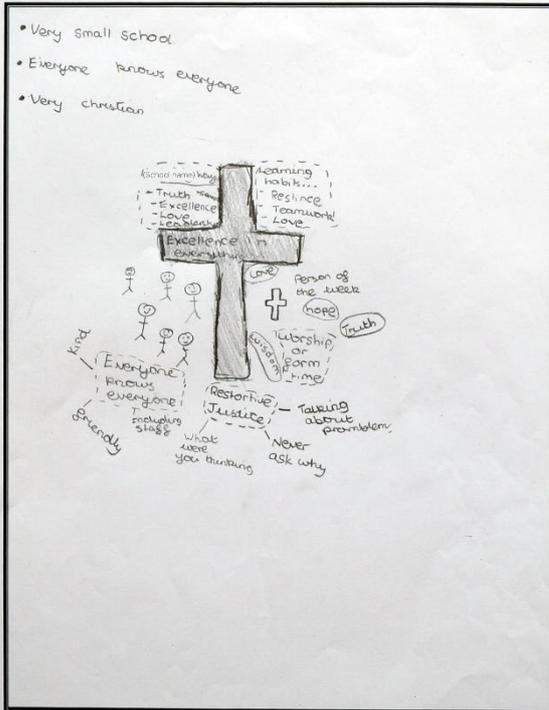


Simon DWT2



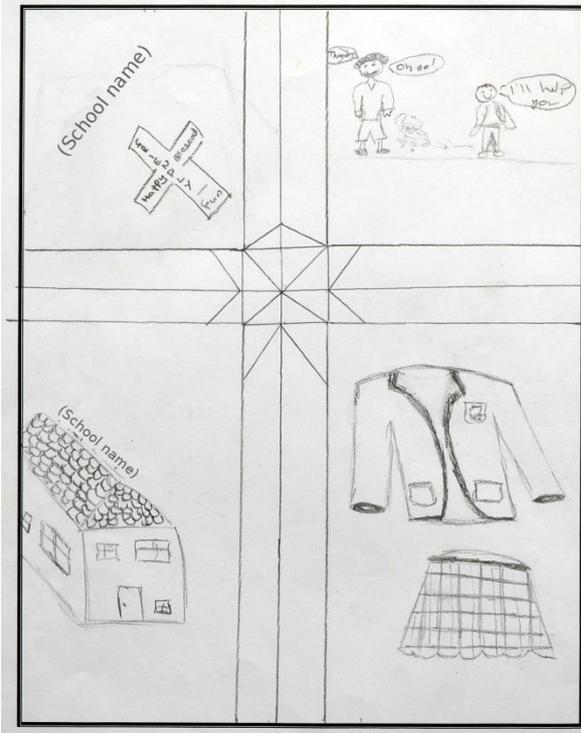
Andrew DWT2

What Makes My School Special



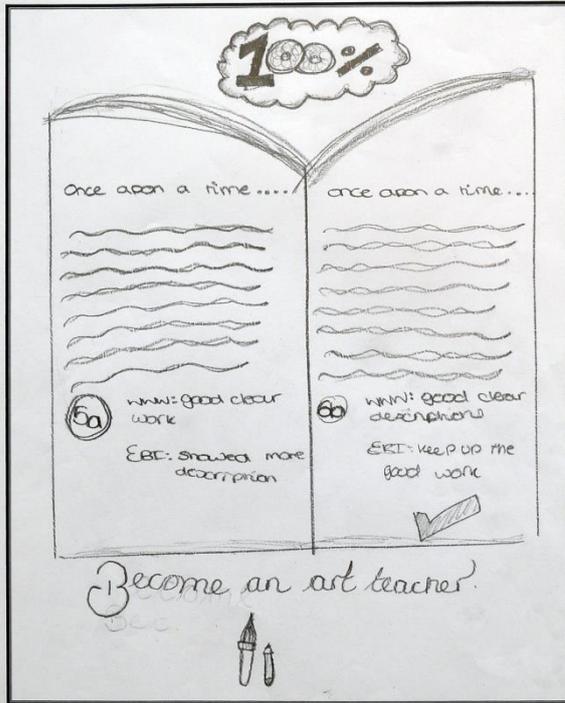
Jade DWT2

What Makes My School Special



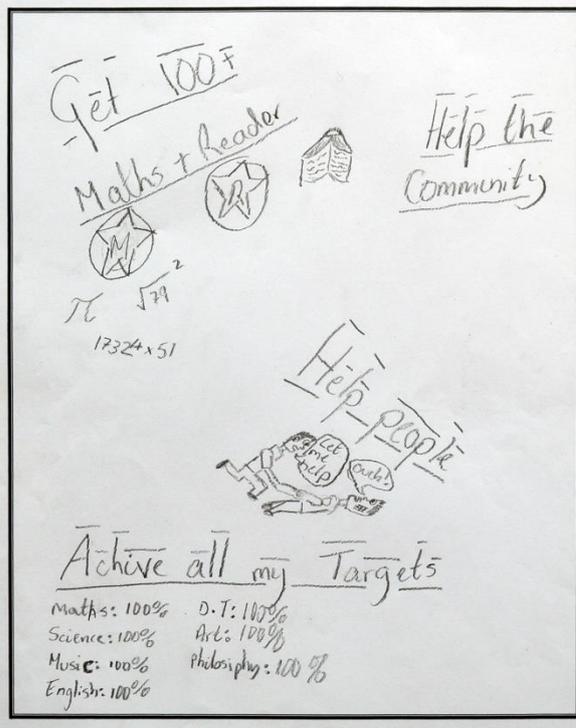
Joshua DWT2

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



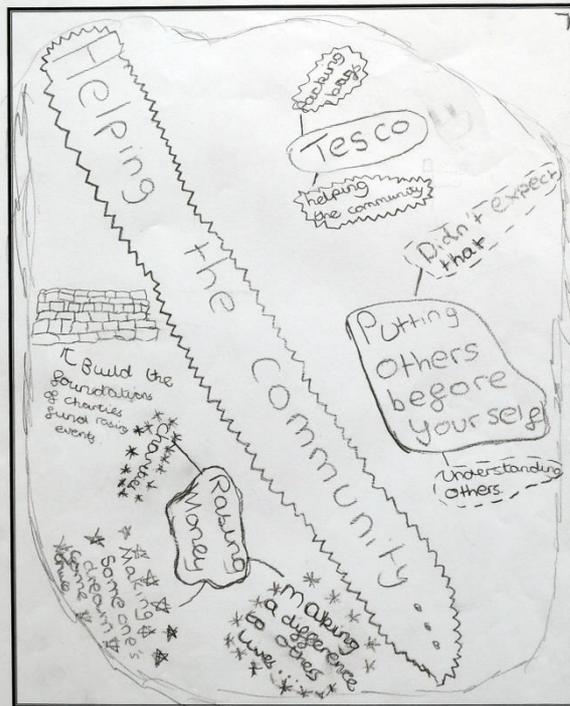
Simon DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



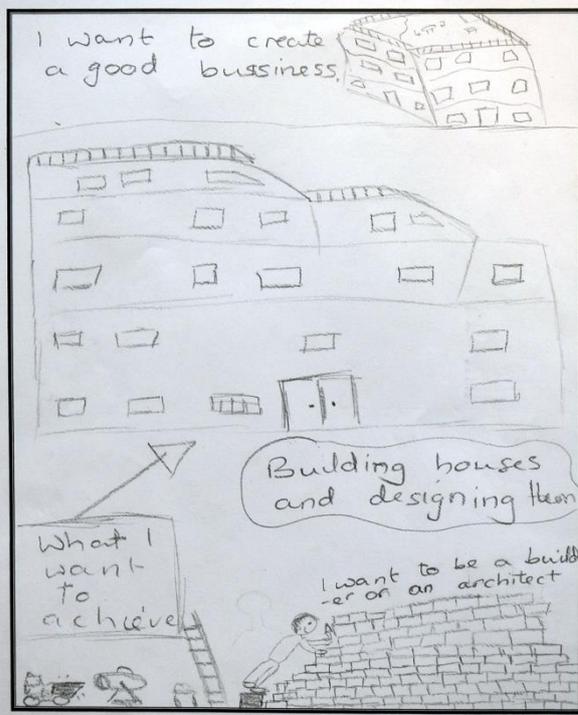
Andrew DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



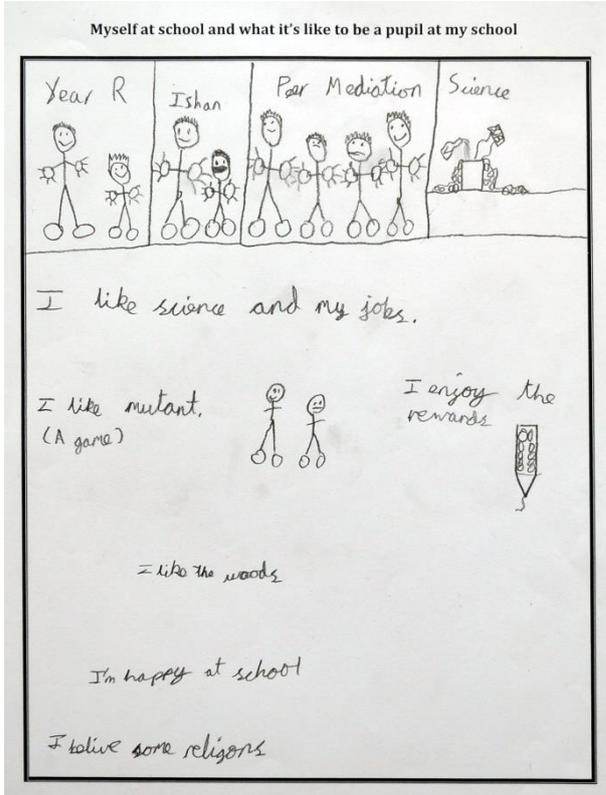
Jade DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me

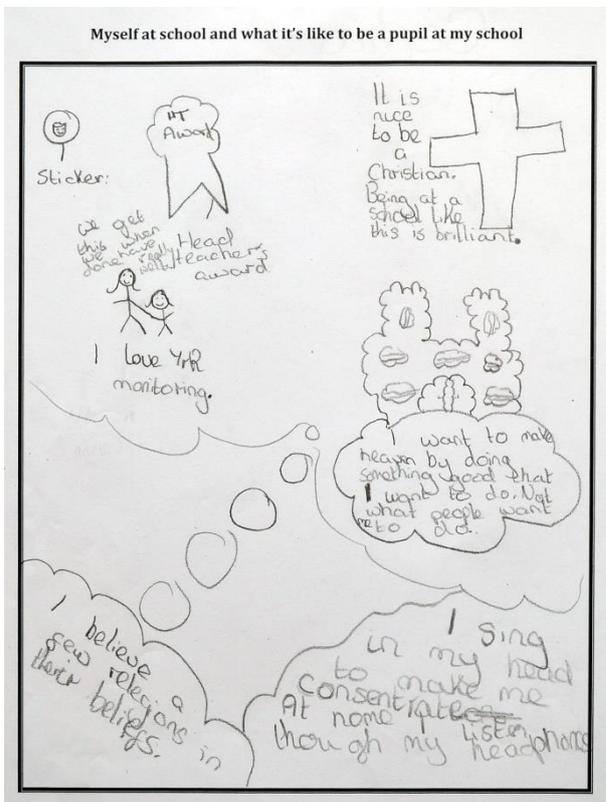


Joshua DWT3

12 Church Academy

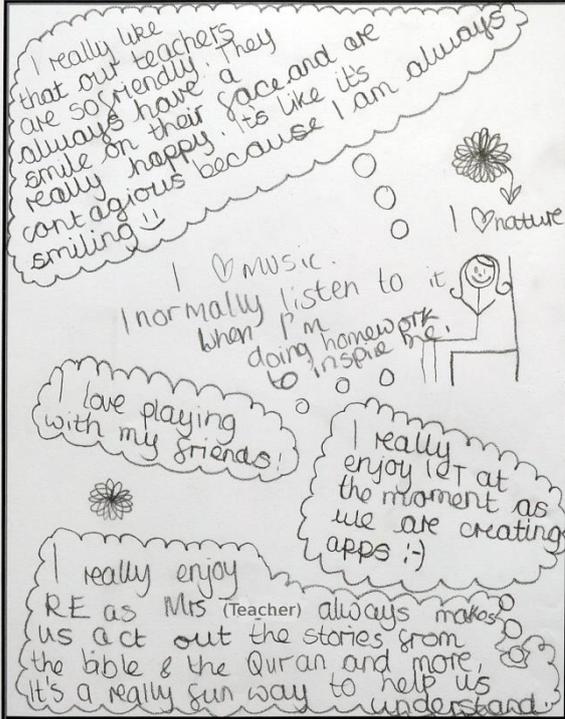


Owen DWT1



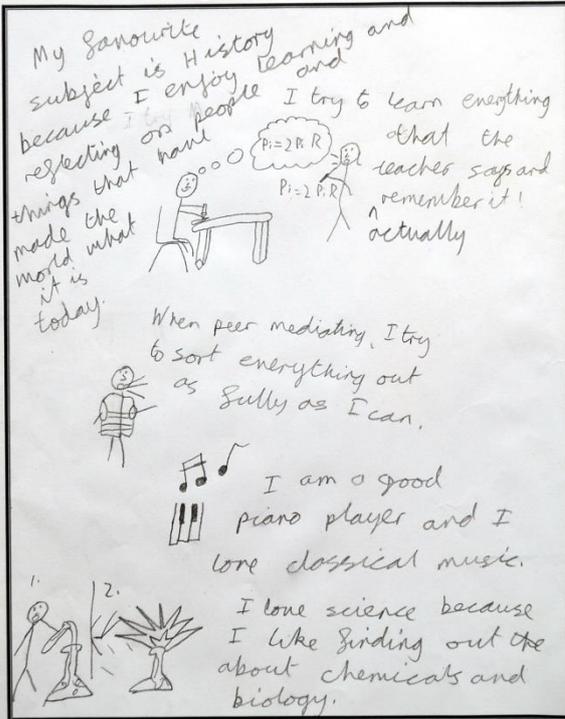
Sarah DWT1

Myself at school and what it's like to be a pupil at my school

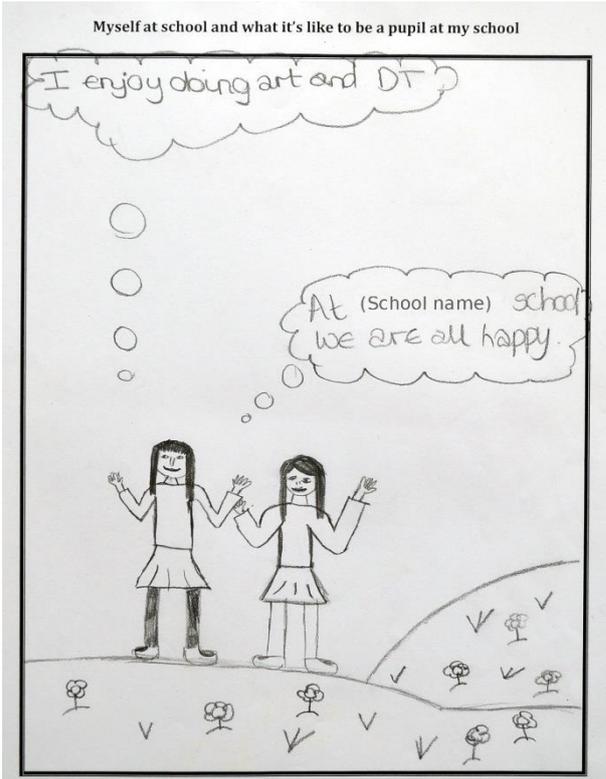


Elizabeth DWT1

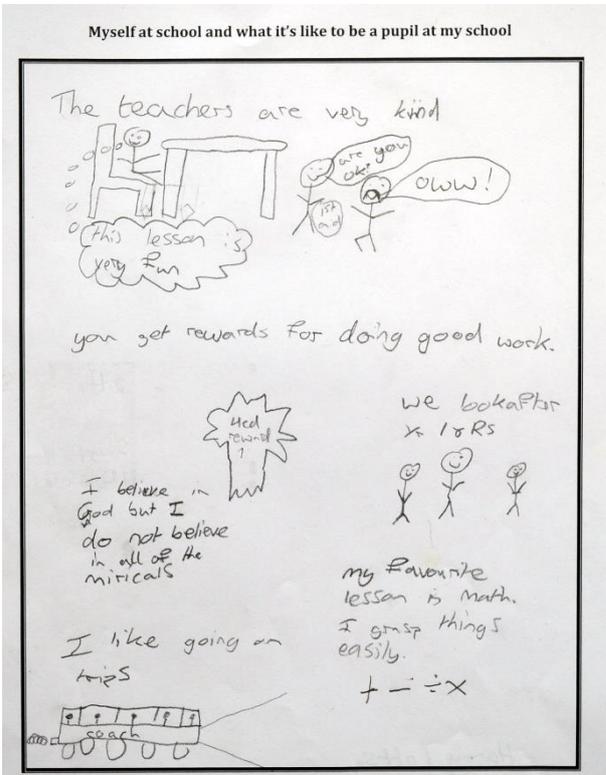
Myself at school and what it's like to be a pupil at my school



Shaun DWT1



Louise DWT1



Henry DWT1

What Makes My School Special

I like being with my friends.



I like ICT, it's special because the subjects change.



I like how everyone is encouraging for whatever ~~they~~ you want to do.

I also like how my school changes

Owen DWT2

What Makes My School Special

Captain Graham

I Love ICT



Staff

I Love English.



Our 4 core values.

Compassion

Compassion is to sacrifice your time to help others.

Trust

To be able to believe that someone can't borrow something or can tell secrets.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is giving people another chance.

Friendships

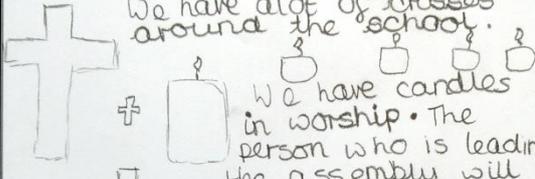
Be friends with someone.

FT
Family Trust

Sarah DWT2

What Makes My School Special

We have a lot of crosses around the school.



We have candles in worship. The person who is leading the assembly will say 'Jesus is the light of the world'. Then we say 'his spirit is with us'. We also get told stories and we get to volunteer.



I ♥ school.

~~We have~~ Our teachers care about us a lot and put lots of effort into growing our education.



School feels like my second home. Although we work hard in class we're always having a laugh and having fun.

All the teachers care about the fire alarms and they are always looking out for us.

Elizabeth DWT2

What Makes My School Special

Teachers/staff

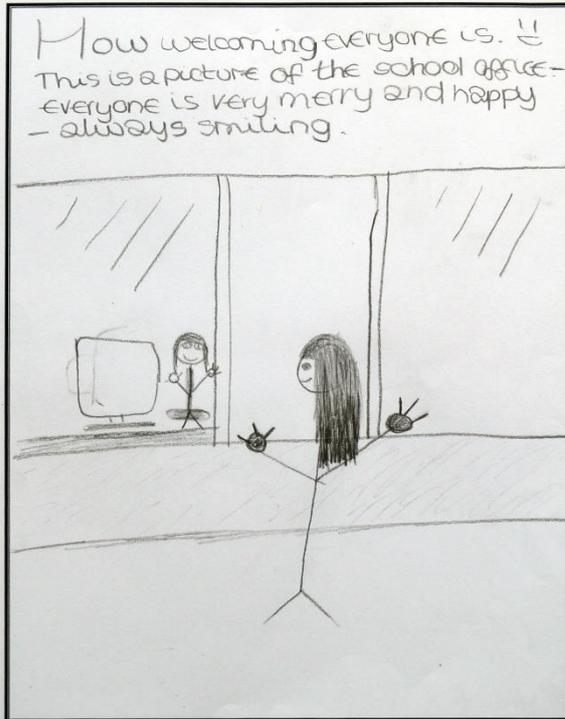


1. 2. 1. 2. 3.

The Teachers are very charity sponsor encouraging when you're stuck.

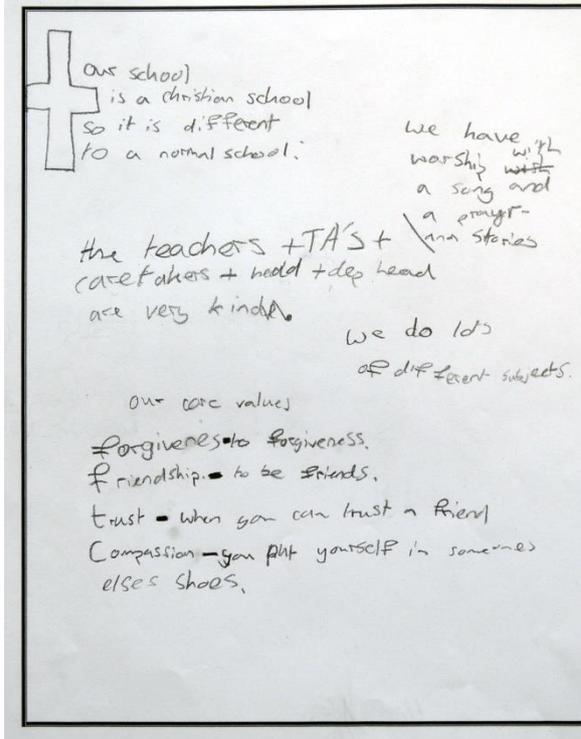
Shaun DWT2

What Makes My School Special



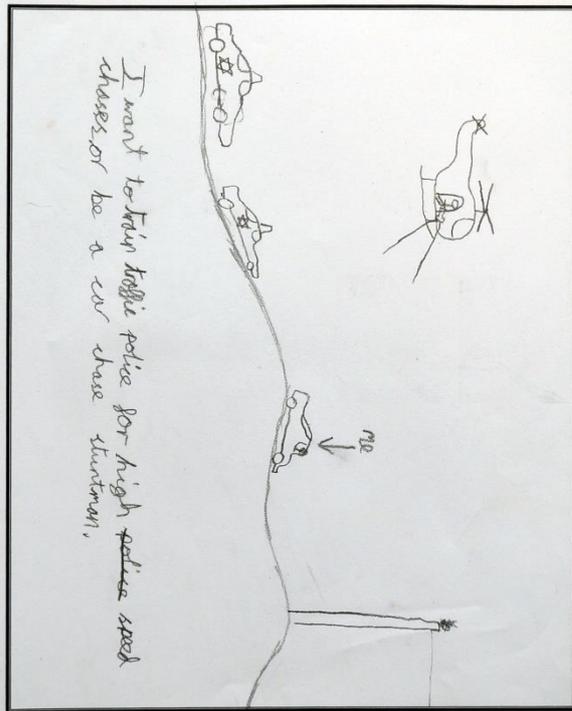
Louise DWT2

What Makes My School Special



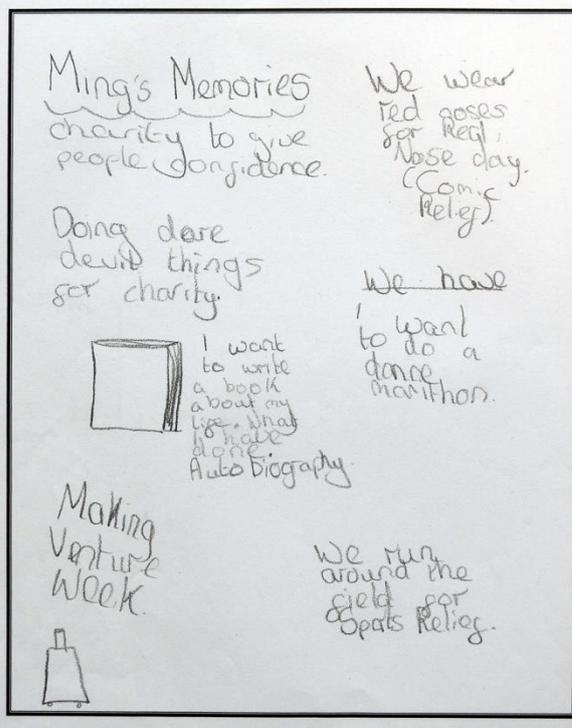
Henry DWT2

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



Owen DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



Sarah DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me

Our teachers praise us whenever we do good work.

When were older we could create a charity which we could sponsor. As we do alot of things for charity, Like dress up for children in Need spotty and striply and bring money. We also do laps round the field for Sports relays.

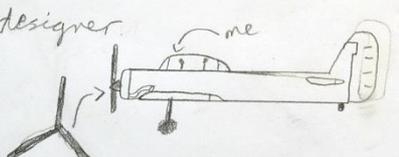
We always get ⊕ which means target, where our teacher will give us something to improve on.



Elizabeth DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me

Be a successful aviation designer.

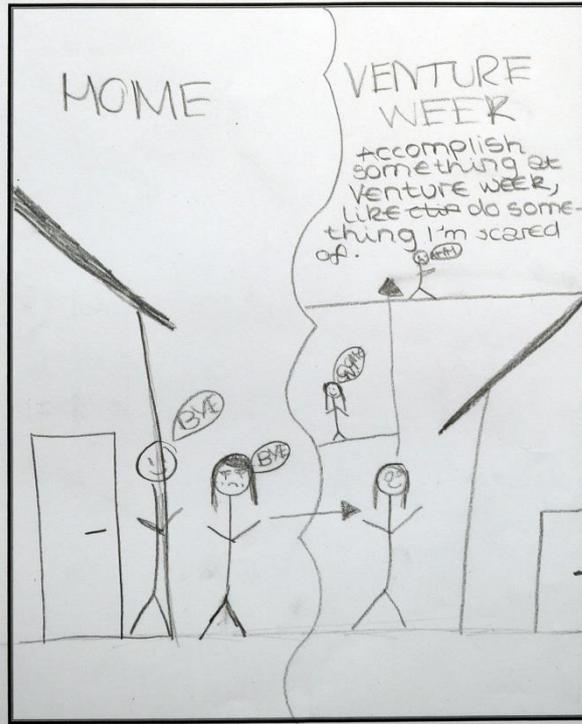


me

join the RAF (as a) piloting instructor (and possibly active service)

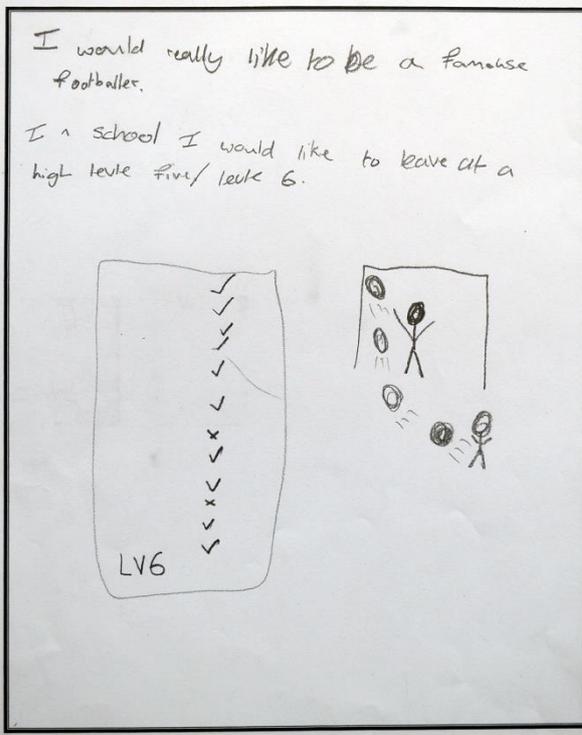
Shaun DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



Louise DWT3

Something I want to achieve that would make my school really proud of me



Henry DWT3

Glossary of Terms

TERM	
Academy	<p>Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academics do not have to follow the National Curriculum and can set their own term times. They still have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs, and exclusions as other state schools.</p> <p>Academies get money directly from the Central Government, not the local authority. They are run by an academy trust which employs the staff.</p> <p>Some academies have sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. Sponsors are responsible for improving the performance of their schools.</p>
Archbishops' Council	<p>The Archbishops' Council, established in 1999, Council is a charity set up in law to co-ordinate, promote, aid, and further the Church of England's work and mission. It does this by providing national support to the Church in Dioceses and locally, working closely with the House of Bishops and other Church bodies. Its objective is to promote high-quality Christian education in Church of England schools and voluntary education settings. It also promotes high-quality Christian education through its Church contribution to other schools, colleges, further and higher education institutions.</p>
Church school	<p>This term refers to the Church of England schools within this thesis.</p>
City Technology College (CTC)	<p>City technology colleges and 'the city college for the technology of the arts' are non-fee-paying independent schools in urban areas. Funded by Central Government, companies can also contribute to financial costs. CTCs emphasise the teaching of science and technology. The city college for the technology of the arts teaches technology in its application of performing and creative arts.</p>
Department for Education	<p>The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships, and wider skills in England.</p>

Ethos	In this thesis, ethos refers to the ambience, atmosphere, climate, and culture of the school. It includes the school practices, symbols and values which underpin the school. Ethos can be espoused or experienced. The espoused ethos includes the intended aims and values communicated by school leaders. Experienced ethos emerges from the interactions between people and their environment (See Section 2.2.3)
Free School	Free Schools are schools for pupils of all abilities. They are funded directly by Central Government and are outside of the control of local authorities. Free Schools establish their own pay and conditions for staff, change the school terms and day's length, and are exempt from following the statutory National Curriculum. They are all-ability schools, so they can't use academic selection processes.
Local Authority	<p>Many parts of England have two tiers: county councils and district, borough, or city councils. County councils have responsibility for school education. There's just one (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services in some parts of the country. The three main types are: unitary authorities in shire areas; London boroughs Metropolitan boroughs.</p> <p>Local authorities promote the interests of children, young people, parents and families and work with local communities to stimulate and support a diversity of educational provision. Local authorities work with headteachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals</p>
Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)	A multi-academy trust is responsible for several academies. It consists of the members and the trustees. The trustees are responsible for the same three core governance functions performed by the governing body in a maintained school. These are setting the direction, holding the headteacher to account and ensuring financial probity. As charity trustees, they must also ensure that they are complying with charity law requirements. Academy trusts are charitable companies, and the trustees are company directors and must comply with company law requirements.

	Individuals who sit on local governing bodies (LGBs) are referred to as ‘local governors’. It is because trustees can delegate governance functions to the local level. Trustees have complete discretion over what is delegated to each LGB.
National Curriculum	The National Curriculum is a statutory curriculum framework. Local authority schools must follow it. It sets out the programmes of study and attainment targets for all subjects across four key stages. All local-authority-maintained schools in England must teach these programmes of study.
National Society	The National Society is a Church of England and Church in Wales education service founded in 1811. The full title is the National Society for Promoting Religious Education but is often referred to as the ‘National Society’. Since 2016 it is also known as The Church of England Education Office (CEEO). Its role is to promote Church schools and Christian education.
National College School Leadership (NCSL)	<p>The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was an executive agency of the United Kingdom’s Department for Education. It offered headteachers, school leaders and senior children’s services’ leaders’ opportunities for professional leadership development. In 2013, the NCSL was merged with the Teaching Agency to become the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).</p> <p>The NCTL has been repurposed and no longer exists. All its functions have been moved into the Department for Education.</p>
SIAMS	All Church of England Dioceses and the Methodist Church use the Church of England Education Office’s framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The SIAMS evaluation schedule sets out the expectations for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican, Methodist and ecumenical Schools. At the time of the data collection, the framework provided a process for evaluating how Church schools are ‘distinctively and recognisably Christian institutions’ (National Society, 2013b). The SIAMS inspection framework was updated in 2018. It evaluates how effective the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established, and promoted by leadership at all levels, enables pupils and adults to flourish (CEEO, 2018).

Value	A value is regarded as something of worth. It is a standard that underpins and guides behavioural judgments. In this thesis, values or standards are referred to being personal, professional, institutional, and societal.
Virtue	Virtue is a quality of character, considered good or desirable within a person from a moral or Christian perspective. Virtues can be Christian virtues, which develop through God's grace, such as faith, hope, and charity.
Voluntary (VA) School	Voluntary-aided (VA) schools are local-authority-maintained schools and often, but not always, have a religious character. In this thesis, the schools referred to are Church of England VA schools. The Church or Foundation governors are an absolute majority. The governing body appoints and employs all staff. The governing body is responsible for admissions arrangements, approved by the 'religious authority' as defined in the Admissions Code. The local authority (LA) and the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) have similar rights to attend governors' meetings and to advise the school. The governing body determines the RE syllabus, which should reflect the Anglican tradition. Worship should reflect the Anglican tradition.
Voluntary controlled (VC) school	Voluntary-aided (VA) schools are local-authority-maintained schools and often, but not always, have a religious character. There are foundation governors, but they are a minority. The governing body has delegated powers relating to the staff, but the Local Authority employs all members of staff. The Local Authority pays the capital work, though there is often a requirement for the school to raise some of the money needed. The local authority is responsible for admissions arrangements. The local authority and Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) provide advice. RE taught represents the local authority agreed syllabus and worship reflect the Anglican tradition.

