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**The Relationship between Ethos, Learning
Habits and Educational Outcomes of
English Church of England Secondary
Schools and Academies**

by

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Canterbury Christ Church University

Thesis submitted

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedication

To the glory of God who gave me all my abilities, moulded my professional life and has been the author of the unfolding narrative of Church schools.

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Abstract

This thesis represents my reflective journey to explore the relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes of Church of England secondary schools and academies. Leaders of Church schools often suggest that their Christian ethos contributes to their favourable outcomes although they offer limited evidence to support this. Using published inspection reports for Church schools I argue that it is possible to find a statistically significant relationship between an aggregated score for ethos and an aggregated score for educational outcomes. Focusing on one school with a particularly strong match as a case-study, and drawing on the work of Jeynes (2003) in the United States, I argue that there is a perception amongst the stakeholders of this school that its Christian ethos contributes to success through cultivating the learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance. Further, I argue that the values, theology and actions of the headteacher have contributed significantly to this ethos and these related learning habits. In proposing these findings I argue that my role as a self-professing Christian and serving Church school headteacher provided me with a unique experience to obtain this data grounded in my own story. Through personal biographies and further enquiry, I suggest that these learning habits may be applicable not only to the case-study school but to all successful Church schools. Finally, in arriving at all these findings, I maintain that the employment of a range of methodologies throughout this thesis enabled me to illuminate the different dimensions of the relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes in Church schools.

In an age when there is evidence of growing opposition to all 'faith' schools, I suggest that the findings from this study provide important insights into the relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes, not only of Church schools but other schools too.

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The journey in producing this thesis over the last six years could not have continued without the support, guidance and encouragement of a number of people. I would like to thank, in particular, the following:

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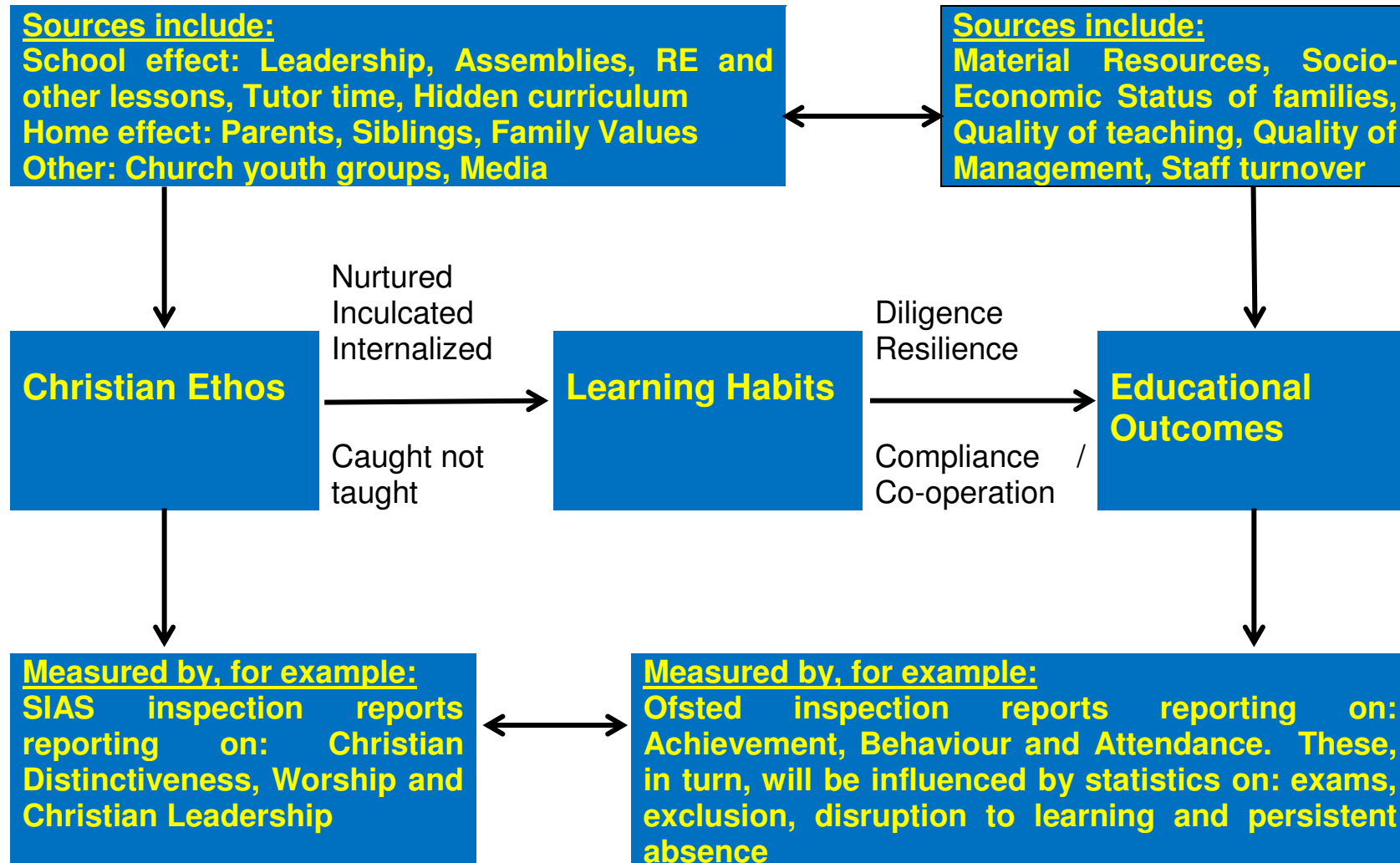
On a practical note I would like to thank the Governors of Canon Hall School (a pseudonym) for sponsoring me to carry out this research in the first place by releasing me for one day a week and meeting the cost of all the university fees. I hope that I haven't taken too long and diverted too much money from the school's budget.

I would like to thank my Vice Principal for running the school on the frequent occasions when I was absent whilst I was carrying out research or attending tutorials and conferences. I hope that he benefitted from the opportunity for professional development as much as I did.

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Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, I would like to thank my wife and family. A headteacher's spouse sees notoriously little of their partner during the school year. It is therefore remarkable that my wife seldom complained when she didn't 'see me' during the evenings, week-ends and holidays either. To her, I am, as always, most grateful.

Executive Summary – Diagrammatic representation of the possible model of transmission



Glossary of Terms

AASSH	Anglican Academy and Secondary School Heads. This body is run by and represents Church of England Secondary School and Academy headteachers and Principals.
Academies	Academies are independently managed schools set up by business, faith or voluntary groups in partnership with the Department for Education (DFE). They are answerable directly to the sponsors and indirectly to the DFE. The ethos of these schools will reflect the ethos of the sponsors.
Achievement	This term has changed with successive revisions of the Ofsted framework. In this thesis, the term achievement is used to reflect how well pupils perform in exams relative to how well they were expected to perform given their academic starting points.
ASCL	The Association of School and College Leaders replaced The Secondary Heads Association (SHA) at the turn of the millennium. The Association represents Secondary School headteachers and senior leaders in England and Wales. Some Church school headteachers are more active within ASCL than they are within AASSH. This may be because the former is a bigger organisation which is less focused on Church issues.
Attainment	This term refers to exam results irrespective of the background and starting points of the pupils. It is the proportion of pupils who pass an exam above a certain grade whatever their background or ability.
BHA	The British Humanist Association is a charitable organisation, which promotes humanism and aims to represent "people who seek to live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs" in the United Kingdom by campaigning on issues relating to humanism, secularism and human rights.
Church	The word 'Church' throughout this thesis is taken to be the Church of England. The word 'Church' is used for the purposes of brevity. Where an alternative meaning is required, this will be made explicit in the text. On occasion, in the literature, the word 'Anglican' school is used. This is also an abbreviation for a 'Church of England' school.
Church schools	Unless otherwise stated, throughout this thesis the term Church school refers to a maintained Church of England secondary schools or Academy. This group comprises all those who are eligible to be members of AASSH.
Community schools	These are run by the local authority who employ the staff, own the land and buildings, and decide on the admission criteria. The ethos of these

	schools will reflect the wishes of the local authority.
DBE	Diocesan Board of Education. Each of the 43 dioceses of the Church of England in this country will oversee a number of Church of England primary and secondary schools. In practice this will be carried out by the DBE made up of clergy, laity and a number of paid professionals (or 'officers') led by the Diocesan Director of Education. The DBE is ultimately answerable to the Bishop.
DFE, DFEE, DFES, DCSF	The Department for Education is that policy making branch of Central Government which is led by the Secretary of State for Education and oversees all maintained schools in England. In recent years this department has seen many incarnations as the Department for Education (DFE), the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE), The Department for Education and Skills (DFES) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
Ethos(es)	Ethos is a Greek word meaning 'Character'. The plural, from the Greek, is ethe or ethea. In this thesis I adopt an anglicised spelling which adds es to words ending in s. The plural of ethos used in this study is ethoses.
Faith School	In this thesis, I adopt the current socio-political understanding of a faith school as any school which has, as its sponsor, one of the faith traditions. The ethos of faith schools will aim to reflect the sponsoring faith tradition and will be enshrined in the trust deeds of the school. The designation as a 'faith school' is resisted by the Church of England in favour of 'Church school'.
Federations	These are becoming increasingly popular within the maintained sector due to the difficulties of attracting experienced leadership to smaller schools. Federations allow schools to work together by pooling resources (soft federation) or by shared leadership and governance with the joint employment of staff (hard federation).
Free schools	Free schools are similar to academies but are formed in locations where there is no predecessor school or local authority catchment area. They are typically formed by a group of parents, or teachers, who get together with a sponsor to provide an alternative to the local authority schools.
GNB	The Good News version of the Bible.
The Message (MSG)	A version of the Bible in contemporary English published by the Navigators Press and translated by Eugene Peterson.
Multi-academy trust (MAT)	This provides a structural solution similar to a hard federation (see above) in maintained schools. The accountability and responsibility for the schools within the MAT is held by the members and directors of the MAT. They are accountable to the Secretary of State for the funding agreement and standards; they will delegate responsibility, as

	appropriate, to a local governing body for each school, but the latter only has delegated power, the MAT members being ultimately responsible.
National Society	Founded in 1811 as the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, this organisation subsequently became known by its present title. Together with the Church of England Board of Education, the National Society negotiates with Government in all matters pertaining to Church of England schools.
Performativity	This is a term used by Stephen J Ball in the 1990s to reflect society's emphasis on statistics, testing, grades and goals. Although not solely applicable to education, it has found a special relevance to education ever since the publication of schools' league tables after 1992.
R ² (r-squared)	The Coefficient of determination, or R-squared, is frequently used as a statistical measure in Social Science to calculate the strength of the relationship between two variables; a high value indicating a stronger relationship than a lower value. In this study the two variables are a measure of ethos and a measure for educational outcomes.
SIA(M)S	All Church of England dioceses and now the Methodist Church use the National Society's framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. As a result of the 2011 Education Act, SIAS was renamed SIAMS in order to acknowledge the Methodist component of the revised framework. This study spans both incarnations of this inspection framework, however, for consistency, I use the word SIAS throughout this thesis as most reports scrutinised were published before the advent of SIAMS in 2012.
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
(T)NIV	(Today's) New International Version of the Bible.
Voluntary Aided schools	Following the 1944 Education Act, education in the maintained sector in England and Wales followed a dual system. Some schools were controlled by local authorities – and called community schools, while other schools were controlled by the Church. The latter type of school was either Voluntary Aided (VA) or Voluntary controlled (VC). VA schools may fill all the teaching places with staff of their faith and may apply a 'faith test' for this purpose. Also, in VA schools, religious education is taught in accordance with the school's trust deeds.
Voluntary Controlled schools	Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools are similar to Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, with the key difference being that the local authority is able to exercise more control. Religious education in VC schools usually follows a 'locally agreed' syllabus drawn up by the local Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Preamble – extra dimension or Christian ethos

In 1994 I was part of a management team in a Voluntary Aided Church of England secondary school looking at the future prospects of that particular school in the light of a new education landscape brought into existence by the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Education (Schools) Act of 1992 which introduced new plans for school inspections¹. In the course of the discussion, I recall the headteacher saying: “Of course, we have that extra dimension in our school.” As a newly appointed senior teacher having come from a community school, this comment intrigued me. The other factor that intrigued me was that nobody else on the management team seemed to challenge what the headteacher had just said.

Almost twenty years passed before I had the opportunity to revisit this question. What is (or was) that ‘extra dimension’ that the headteacher, now retired, and his senior management team believed in?

Whilst the headteacher of the time used the phrase ‘extra dimension’, within the current literature the phrase ‘faith school effect’ is generally used in relation to faith schools, and the term ‘Christian ethos’ is generally used within the context of Christian schools. From henceforth, I will use the words (Christian) ethos to cover this idea of extra dimension.

The political paradigm for Church of England secondary schools has changed significantly since 1994 (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012; Archbishops’ Council, 2013; 2014a; 2014b). The dual education system of Church and State established in 1870 could be called into question in the light of declining Church attendance and opposition from secular groups (BHA, 2006; NSS, 2014). A number of criticisms are made of Church schools but I wanted to address two in particular. The first criticism of Church schools is that there is “no magic ingredient” (BHA, 2006:4 *speech marks used in the original text*) which makes their ethos superior to community schools (BHA, 2006, p.4; Oldfield, Hartnett and Bailey, 2013). In response to this, I wanted to explore if it was possible to use both quantitative and qualitative data to see if there was any relationship that could be identified between the Christian ethos of a Church of England secondary school and its educational outcomes.

The second sustained criticism of Church schools which I address is the argument that they achieve good results because they are selective and attract children from more affluent and ambitious families (BHA, 2006, p.1; Oldfield et al., 2013). Although this belief is contested (Arthur and Godfrey, 2005; Godfrey and Morris, 2008), the debate surrounding the success of Church schools has focused on social privilege (see, for example: Pritchard, 2013; Oldfield et al., 2013).

Research in the United States by Jeynes (2003) attributed the success of religious schools not to social privilege, but to different learning habits nurtured in the students. This notion of

¹ For example, it was at this time that a new ‘watchdog’ for schools was introduced – Ofsted.

different learning habits has not been explored in the context of Church of England secondary schools in England. This therefore was a fruitful area of research worthy of further investigation.

In 2010, now a headteacher of 10 years' experience myself, my governing body agreed to release me for 1 day a week to probe further into this question of the relationship between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. Using regression analysis, I first explored the relationship between Christian ethos and outcomes using data from inspection reports of Church schools. Then, using the work of Jeynes (*ibid.*) as a starting point, I explored what impact, if any, the ethos of Church schools had on learning habits and how this, in turn, affected educational outcomes. With a few exceptions (see, for example: Deakin Crick, 2002a; 2002b) this was an area of research which was largely uncharted within the context of Church of England secondary schools.

I explored the perceptions of staff and others within one Church school and also of headteachers of other Church schools. Did these people share the view of that management team of 1994 that Church schools had a special ethos (or extra dimension) which led to improved educational outcomes and, if so, what role did learning habits play in this?

1. Introduction

I. The aim of the research (the three research questions under-pinning this thesis)

The brief anecdote above serves as a basis for this thesis. On what empirical evidence did that headteacher and his management team make the claim that a Church school ethos provided an extra dimension to educational outcomes? Secondly, if there was a connection between ethos and outcomes what contributed to it? Finally, although not mentioned by the headteacher, was there an implicit assumption that a Church school ethos created better learning habits in the children?

Today, both the Archbishops' Council and the National Society for the Church of England make a similar claim for the importance of ethos in Church schools (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012; Archbishops' Council, 2013). In addition, it is claimed by many serving headteachers of Church schools that their distinctive ethoses² have a profound impact on outcomes in their schools (see, for example: Roberts, 2012; Peers, 2012; Coates, 2014). Again, on what empirical evidence is this based? What might be the factors contributing to such a connection and is there any evidence of belief that ethos has an effect on learning habits?

In this thesis I maintain that there is a lack of empirical evidence on which leaders of Church schools make the claim that the ethos within their schools has an impact on the performance, or outcomes, of those schools. There is a need for some (more) evidence on how the variables of ethos and outcomes are interrelated (chapter 7). Secondly, I argue that there is a general lack of consensus as to the precise reasons why and how ethos affects outcomes (chapter 4; chapter 8). Finally, I suggest that one of the possible reasons may revolve around learning habits. There is a need to explore whether the work on learning habits carried out by Jaynes (2003) in America can be applied to our understanding of Church schools in this country (chapter 9).

My personal journey both as a Christian and a professional in education has also fired my enthusiasm for this subject and impacted upon the nature of this thesis. This journey and some of its implications are covered in chapter 3 section I.

Taken together, the above hypothesis and my personal journey have led me to the three research questions which underpin this thesis and upon which this study is built in terms of the literature survey, research design, methodology, analysis, presentation and recommendations. The three research questions are:

² See glossary for the use of the plural of ethos.

1. To what extent does the correlation between SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades support the view that ethos contributes to educational outcomes in Church schools?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders in one Church school and the headteachers of a sample of Church schools as to the connection between the ethos and the outcomes in their respective schools?
3. What contribution does the research on learning habits by Jaynes (ibid.) in the United States make to explaining, understanding and interpreting the perception of these stakeholders about ethos and outcomes in Church schools within England?

II. The importance of this area of research

In July 2013 a report was published by the Church of England entitled 'A Diocesan Board of Education for the Future' (Archbishops' Council, 2013). This sets out a challenge for all the 43 dioceses to ensure that over 90% of their schools are judged by Ofsted to be either good or better. This statistic underlines the high standards demanded of the Church by the Government in the field of education. Although this represents a 'sea-change' from the comfortable relationships fostered in the 19th century between Church and State, the present situation is not out of line with the development of education policy with regard to Church schools in the last 15 years.

Following the election of 'New Labour' in 1997 the educational climate in England began to change significantly. The mantra adopted by the new Government was diversity - within an increasingly pluralistic society. Faith schools were one aspect of this diverse provision of education. Indeed, the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, championed faith schools and sent his son to a faith school in London. The vast majority of faith schools were either Church of England or Roman Catholic with only a few from other denominations or other world faiths. About 68% of faith schools were supported by the Church of England (Oldfield et al., 2013, p.21). Faith schools were popular with parents as a result of perceived better exam results and discipline which were reported in the press (Pyke, 2000; Glover, 2004). However, as we will see below, this belief did not go unchallenged.

Before 2001, it was rare to read the word ethos in publications concerning Church of England secondary schools. The publication of the Dearing Report (Dearing, 2001) changed this. The word 'ethos' appeared in this report no fewer than 12 times. It was also at about this time that the then Secretary of State for education, David Blunkett, commented "If we can only find out what faith schools are doing and bottle the secret of their success." (Pyke, 2000).

In the light of this it is perhaps surprising that there is so little qualitative research on the effect of ethos in Church schools upon their outcomes (Green, 2009b, p.39). More fundamentally there is also little research into what is meant by a distinctive Church school ethos in the first

place (ibid., p.42). Given that this was a significant theme of the Dearing Report (Dearing, 2001, p.9) this fact may be regarded as a failing on the part of the Church of England (Street, 2007; Jelfs, 2008). The quantitative evidence on the correlation between ethos and outcomes, however defined, is, if anything, more sparse and also a cause for concern. However, of greater concern perhaps are the findings that many serving headteachers of Church schools are unsure of how their Christian ethoses relate to outcomes in their schools (Colson, 2004; Street, 2007; Jelfs 2008). All of this is covered in more detail in chapter 4. My research of one Church school in depth and the headteachers of a sample of Church schools mirrored these findings. This is covered in chapter 8.

Nine years after the publication of the Dearing Report, the election of the Coalition Government in May 2010 accelerated the 'rolling back' of local education authorities. A vacuum was created for school improvement work, hitherto the preserve of the LEAs (Local Education Authorities), and the dioceses, amongst others, were invited to fill it (Chadwick, 2012). This dovetailed with the Coalition Government's vision of a 'Big Society' (Conservative, 2010) and the voluntary sector taking over more aspects of public life. The then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, commented in 2012: "Faith schools are the direction of travel that we want to take because they are popular and successful" (Times Educational Supplement, 2012). This belief in the efficacy of 'faith' schools by the Government was reinforced by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, who accepted a place at a maintained Church of England secondary school in Westminster for his daughter in March 2015 (Chapman, 2015).

Allied to this notion of 'success', I explore the prevailing performativity and utilitarian model of education throughout this thesis. I examine whether the obtaining of good examination results should be the foremost aim of a Church school. In chapter 3 section I part b, I develop my own theological and philosophical views of education with regard to this question together with the resulting tensions, outlined in part d.

Given the Government's performativity view of education, together with the increased role of education provider afforded to the voluntary sector, including the Church of England, it is hoped that this research will help address the following questions for leaders of Church of England secondary schools:

1. Is there evidence from inspection reports on ethos and outcomes of Church schools which can assist schools like ours in developing our educational provision by strengthening our Christian ethos?
2. How would the stakeholders in our school describe its distinctive Christian ethos and how do they perceive this to impact upon our own educational outcomes?
3. How does the ethos of our school shape learning habits in our school?
4. How can this knowledge of the suggested relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes inform policy making and school development planning in our school?

These themes are developed further in chapter 10 section IV part a.

One of the threads that runs through this thesis concerns the need to justify the continuation of Church schools within an increasingly secular society. In order to fully understand the relevance of this research it is important to acknowledge the existence of opposition to Church schools so as to build up a complete picture. This is because, despite Government interest in the ethos and outcomes of faith schools since 1997, the expansion of numbers and influence of such schools has been met with significant political opposition. At least four main organisations have emerged to voice their concerns. The British Humanist Association (BHA, 2006; 2014a; 2014b), the National Secular Society (NSS, 2014), the Accord Coalition and the newly launched Fair Admissions Campaign have, together, according to a Christian think tank report, voiced concern in four main areas (Oldfield et al., 2013):

1. Faith schools are socially divisive;
2. Faith schools are exclusive and elitist;
3. There is no 'Faith school effect' in terms of ethos and outcomes;
4. Faith schools do not offer a distinctive education experience.

In this thesis I will touch on all four areas in chapter 2, although the main focus of the thesis is on addressing the third area above. I argue that a Christian ethos may be conducive to favourable educational outcomes, or in the language used above, that there IS a 'faith school effect'. In so doing, I maintain that the case against 'faith' schools is significantly weakened.

The relevance of this area of research in the light of the recent expansion in numbers of Church schools (chapter 2 section I part c), together with their attendant Christian ethoses and claimed favourable outcomes, is as strong as ever.

III. A note on terminology

Before outlining the structure of this thesis, it is important to clarify a number of terms. Definitions adopted by researchers are often not uniform and a consistent approach is important.

Ethos

Forster (1997) notes that ethos is difficult to define. As a result, a number of definitions are used within the literature. These are outlined in chapter 4 in section II and III. In choosing a working definition for ethos in this thesis, I used a definition which reflected the broad views found within the literature whilst, at the same time, was easy to explain to the participants of my research. Throughout this thesis, I have used McLaughlin's definition:

"At the most general level, an ethos can be regarded as the prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an identifiable entity."
(McLaughlin, 2005, p.311)

In the context of my research into the ethos of Church schools, the identifiable entity is the school. With regard to the need to quantify the Church school ethos, in order to address the

first research question outlined in section I, I used the aggregated SIAS scores from the latest diocesan inspection report of the school. This is explained more fully in chapter 6 section II part a.

Outcomes

Educational outcomes are also difficult to define. In this thesis I have used three attributes of a maintained (Church) school for this purpose. I used achievement, behaviour and attendance. The reason that these were chosen was that it was possible, under the Ofsted framework, to assign a grade to each, following a school inspection. This makes quantification of outcomes easier and facilitates the exploration of the link between ethos and outcomes required to address my first research question. Although the Ofsted process has been criticised (Coe, 2013; ATL, 2013; NUT, 2013; Richards, 2015), it is significant to note that the measurement of these three aspects is not narrow, but broad. For example, the judgement about behaviour does not only focus on an absence of disruptive behaviour but also considers attitudes, relationships, punctuality and manners (Ofsted, 2013). The significance and inter-relatedness of these three measures is more fully explained in chapter 6 section II part b.

Church school

In this thesis, the words Church school refer predominantly to maintained Voluntary Aided Church of England secondary schools or recent academy converters. Christian-based schools are not homogeneous. There is a range of different types of Christian-based school which have been set up for different purposes and with different underlying values. In order to make this research both consistent and manageable, I have chosen one type of Christian-based school. I have chosen the biggest single provider of maintained Church schools, the Church of England. I have also focused on mixed, non-selective, aided secondary schools within the Church of England family. These schools are significant nationally, educating 8% of the secondary school population and they also benefit from an organisational structure which includes a Diocesan Board of Education and the National Society. Most crucially, in terms of this research, they benefit from a periodic inspection report on their Christian ethos. A fuller account of why this type of school was chosen in preference to other types of Christian-based school is given in chapter 6 section II part d.

Faith school

As we have already noted with the language of secular groups, there is a growing use within more recent literature on Church schools of the term 'faith school' which is used to encompass not only Church schools but all schools with a religious basis³. The growth in the number of Muslim and Jewish schools is a reflection of an increasingly pluralistic British society where the term 'faith school' would be considered by many to be more apt than Church of England school.

³ The Church of England rejects the term 'faith school' for Church schools in favour of the term 'schools of Christian character'. Church schools are designed to serve everyone in the local area and not just people from one faith. See also the glossary.

Indeed the religious basis of these latter schools is fundamentally different from most other 'faith' schools. Eade (1999) notes that maintained Church of England secondary schools are not designed to serve a particular denomination or even faith but rather are best described as schools which serve the whole community in the name of the Christian faith. This makes them significantly different 'faith' schools from Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and even Roman Catholic schools (see, for example Stock, 2012). Nonetheless, in this thesis, as stated in the glossary, wherever the word faith school is used, the assumption is made that it also includes maintained Church of England secondary schools. This mirrors the current socio-political understanding of this term.

Spirituality

Although not a large part of this thesis, in researching the case-study school, I refer on occasion to a sense of spirituality. Historically, spirituality has been associated with religion but contemporary understandings of spirituality reflect more of an introspective experience which may be less bound to any religious tradition (see, for example: Comte-Sponville, 2007; Antinoff, 2009). The recurring themes of contemporary spirituality are sensitivity to self, others, the non-human creation and the transcendent. Yet in understanding Church schools it is important to acknowledge not only the self but also the community and the tradition. Building on Tillich's description of faith as 'ultimate concern', Wright offers this definition of spirituality which includes the importance of tradition:

"Spirituality is the relationship of the individual, within community and tradition, to that which is – or is perceived to be – of ultimate concern, ultimate value and ultimate truth, as appropriated through an informed, sensitive and reflective striving for spiritual wisdom." (Wright, 2000, p.104)

This definition also challenges an unreflective emotional response with the need for more reflective critical thinking.

Ontology

In carrying out this research it is important to define certain philosophical parameters. Ontology, as a branch of metaphysics, refers to an investigation of existence, or being (Craig, 1998). Within modernism, the modern 'worldview', or *Weltanschauung*, sees the world as existing independent of human thought, whilst, in contrast, the postmodern worldview claims that the world is a construction of the human mind. In this thesis I reject both views and subscribe to the view that there is a given reality, ontological realism, but that human participation and interaction play a part in gaining knowledge of that reality. This may best be described as a critical realist or relational worldview position:

"Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a co-creative dance, so that what emerges in reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way the mind engages with it." (Reason, 1998, p.43)

In recent years there has been a growth in the influence of critical realism both within the fields of education and theology. As this thesis straddles both academic disciplines, its use in this research is in line with this trend. My theology is heavily influenced by the writings of Anglican theologian N.T.Wright. I therefore subscribe to the view that what matters is eschatological duality - the present age and the age to come, not ontological dualism – an evil ‘earth’ and a good ‘heaven’ (Wright, 2007, p.106). The implications of this theology in both understanding education and running a Church school are covered in chapter 3 section I part c.

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to what is believed about knowledge and knowing including the nature, basis and validation of both knowledge and knowing (Funk, 2001). In modernist epistemology, knowledge is thought to be based on objectivity where the world can be understood through discerning facts which are independent of human interpretation. This is in contrast to the postmodern, or relativist view, which asserts that what is known is purely a social construction and all knowledge is human interpretation; the interpretist view. In this thesis I adopt a middle position between these two extremes. That is, there are facts which exist apart from human interpretation but people can perceive the same fact in different ways; epistemic relativism. I will return to this in chapter 3 section I part b when I outline how my personal philosophy is interwoven with my epistemology in explaining the methodology of my research. This methodology is then detailed in chapter 5 section II.

Performativity and Performance

The performativity⁴ agenda has been met with some opposition within education (Ball, 2003; Murray, 2012; Kohn, 2015). In its most extreme form it involves a situation where creativity is stifled as everything is reduced to numbers which can be counted (see, for example Kohn, op.cit.). Perhaps surprisingly the word ‘performance’ is met with less hostility and is more widely accepted within education, evidenced by the teacher unions publishing guidelines for schools on performance management without questioning the etymological origins of the concept. In this thesis, I adopt something of a ‘middle ground’ and suggest that the two terms are more blurred. I argue that a relentless commitment to high performance in exams, through performativity, can be positive.

In chapter 3 section I part c, I outline my views on the current performativity agenda and tie this to my theological understanding of education in terms of eschatological duality (Wright, 2007). However, as covered in chapter 2 section I part d, I maintain that an obsession with performance to the detriment of everything else, including a school’s (Christian) ethos, can ultimately be self-defeating.

Lastly, I acknowledge that the lens through which I view my research has influenced my thinking. As a serving headteacher who has witnessed many colleague headteachers lose their posts by not focusing sufficiently on performance and performativity, I am more than

⁴ This was a term first used by Stephen Ball in the 1990s. See glossary.

sympathetic to those headteachers who do have such a focus. Issues of reflexivity are covered in further detail in chapter 5 section III.

Learning Habits and Christian Distinctiveness

The third research question of this study introduces the term 'learning habits'. In this thesis, learning habits are taken to represent any repeated and practised skill, virtue or characteristic which contribute to enhanced learning. As articulated in chapter 9, this thesis does not attempt to provide a detailed and systematic theological exegesis as to which habits are, or are not 'distinctively Christian' (Dearing, 2001, p.9). To attempt such an exercise would merit a further PhD study. Rather this thesis focuses on the more functional aspect of faithfully reporting what stakeholders of Church of England schools (many of whom are self-professing Christians working in schools with a claimed Christian ethos) perceive to have influenced the educational outcomes of their respective (Christian) institutions.

Nonetheless, throughout this thesis, I suggest that the learning habits identified of diligence, resilience and compliance could legitimately be considered to be distinctively Christian if 'unpacked'.⁵ For example, within Christian teaching, the over-riding commitment to serve others (love your neighbour) can be linked to diligence in 'going the extra mile' for others. The hope in a better world to come in which God restores everything to perfection can contribute to an understanding of resilience and the submission to a higher authority can contribute to a better understanding of compliance. I will return to all these notions throughout this thesis and particularly in chapters 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Learning Habits and Character Education

In recent times⁶ there has been a renewed interest in character education (see, for example: Pike, 2013; DFE, 2015; Jubilee, 2015; CofE, 2015). In this thesis I maintain that there is no strict demarcation between the terms learning habits and character virtues. For example Jeynes (2003) refers to diligence as a learning habit whereas DFE (2015) considers conscientiousness to be a character virtue. Indeed, The Department notes: "We recognise that definitions of character are subject to much debate and there is considerable variation in the specific terminology used." (ibid., para 9).

In addressing educational outcomes as measured by, *ceteris paribus*, exam results (chapter 6 section II), this thesis naturally gravitates to the character virtues of performance as opposed to civic or moral character virtues (CofE, 2015, p.7). However, even here, there may be considerable scope for overlapping. As we shall see later in this thesis (for example chapter 8 section II part a), the stakeholders at the case-study school perceived there to be many moral character virtues contributing to the performance of their school through its distinct ethos. That is, the civic virtues of kindness, caring for others and neighbourliness coexisted with and

⁵ Without over simplifying the theology behind these terms, a good starting point for these three learning habits might be Matt 5:41, Rev 21:1-4, and Philippians 2:5-8.

⁶ Despite the recent resurgence, it is possible to trace the notion of 'character education' back to Aristotle.

contributed to the performance virtues, or learning habits, of diligence, resilience and compliance which accounted for the successful performance of the school in terms of its educational outcomes.

Although I acknowledge that there is a blurring of the boundaries between character virtues and learning habits, throughout the remainder of this thesis I use the term learning habits rather than character virtues as this was the term originally used by Jeynes (op.cit.) in his analysis of the differences in performance between religious and non-religious schools in the USA. It was this study which informed my third and final research question more than any other.

Voluntary Aided Schools

As has been stated from the outset, this research has focused on maintained Voluntary Aided Church of England secondary schools. Although not the subject of debate, a definition of the nature of such schools is important.

Further to the brief description supplied in the glossary, a Voluntary Aided school may be defined in terms of the following nine characteristics:

1. Foundation governors (appointed by the Church) form the majority of governors on the governing body;
2. Legally, the governors employ all the teaching staff although the local authority pay their salaries;
3. The governors have the legal right to appoint practising Christians to key management posts including the posts of headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of RE. Indeed this practice could, in theory, be applied to all teaching posts where there were self-professing Christian applicants;
4. Governors have the responsibility for admissions, exclusions and appeals although, in practice, the local authority will oversee most of these processes to ensure equality and fairness between the different schools in the local area;
5. Governing bodies, as owners of the school buildings, are responsible for 100% of the cost of capital works; however they are assisted by a 90% grant from the DFE;
6. Religious education must be consistent with the religious foundation of the Church of England. Voluntary Aided schools are therefore free to follow their own RE syllabus which is different from the locally agreed syllabus of local authority schools;
7. Christian distinctiveness, worship, RE and Christian leadership are inspected periodically by the diocese according to the SIAS/SIAMS framework. Free schools are exempt from this requirement;
8. Governors are responsible for the whole curriculum: the national curriculum and the RE curriculum. Academies and Free schools do not have to follow the national curriculum whether or not they are sponsored by the Church of England;
9. The Diocesan Board of Education is the education authority for Church schools. However, in the past, if the local authority had serious concerns about a Church school, it was able to put pressure on the DBE to act in a specific way.

IV. Outline of the thesis

a) Methodology used

As I have noted, ethos by its very nature is difficult to define and measure with a range of explanations found in the literature (Alder, 1993; Donnelly, 2000; Solvason, 2005; McLaughlin, 2005). Forster describes ethos as a 'slippery word' (Forster, 1997, p.7). Given its nature, research into the effect of ethos will be complex and subject to sensitive and careful interpretation. This would suggest a qualitative research approach. Set against this, the measurement of the relationship between the two variables of ethos, however defined, and outcomes would suggest a quantitative research methodology. As a result, I was initially drawn to a mixed methods approach in order to address all three of the research questions posed at the start. However, in the course of my research, I felt that I was increasingly able to draw on my own experience in this particular field and, in addition, this input began to make the research richer.

Accordingly I developed a research methodology which drew on many research traditions including my own personal experience and understanding. The overall research approach which most suited this field of study was the integral inquiry approach (Braud, 2009; Braud and Anderson, 1998; 2011). This approach allowed for a range of research methods and strategies so that a comprehensive understanding of this topic was achieved. The integral inquiry approach also acknowledged the possibility of me, as researcher, and my co-participants encountering the research process as a transformational experience.

Therefore, the integral inquiry approach (IIA) was particularly suitable for the following reasons:

1. The IIA integrates a plurality of methods around a central problem in which there is a belief that an answer can be found. In my study, that it was possible to find a relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes in Church schools;
2. The IIA approach goes beyond a 'mixed methods' approach by allowing the researcher to be an active participant in the research process through, for example, an auto/biographical conversation approach;
3. It allows for a range of data to be interpreted by the researcher through careful analysis including quantitative analysis while acknowledging that interpretation plays a part;
4. As such, it accorded with my philosophical assumptions of ontological realism and epistemic relativism under the broad umbrella of critical realism.

The rationale for the IIA together with a more detailed explanation of its nature is covered in chapter 5 section IV.

The research was conducted in three stages. The first stage sought to shed light on whether there was a statistically significant correlation between ethos and outcomes through a numerical comparison of SIAS and Ofsted grades for the selected sample of 100 Church schools. The second stage was designed to 'go beneath' the numerical data and explore the perceptions of

the stakeholders in one school – the case-study school. Finally, stage 3 sought to corroborate or refute the findings of stage 2 by further research involving the headteachers from the original sample of 100 schools.

Overall, the range of research methodologies and instruments employed was one of the key features of this research. By turning on different 'lights' different elements of the topic were revealed. As a result the whole area of ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes came into sharper focus.

b) Stage 1 – Desk Research

Stage 1 consisted of desk research as the respective Ofsted and SIAS grades for each of the 100 Church schools in the sample were input into a simple computer spreadsheet model. Using the software application Microsoft Excel™, a line of best fit was drawn through the data and the correlation coefficient, R^2 , was calculated.

The purpose of stage 1 was two-fold:

1. To identify whether there was a statistically significant correlation between the two variables of aggregated Ofsted and aggregated SIAS grades;
2. To act as a guide to the choice of the case-study school in stage 2.

The results from this exercise can be found in chapter 7 section I parts a, b and c. A critique of using Ofsted and SIAS grades for this research is also addressed in part d. Despite the limitations of this aspect of the study, the quantitative results suggested that there was a small statistically significant correlation between the ethos and the outcomes of the Church schools. That is, schools with a strong ethos enjoyed strong educational outcomes. The next research question to address was what might be the reasons behind this. This was the purpose of stage 2, below.

c) Stage 2 – Field Research

Stage 2 involved undertaking a case-study of one of the Church schools in the sample. This involved me spending 12 days at the case-study school exploring how stakeholders in that school perceived the relationship between its Christian ethos and its educational outcomes with a particular emphasis on learning habits.

The choice of the case-study school was made for the following main reason:

1. The school had a perfect match between its ethos score (measured by the aggregated SIAS grades) and its outcomes score (measured by the aggregated Ofsted grades).

However, there were a number of significant subsidiary reasons:

2. The school was willing to be researched, it was an opportunistic sampling method;
3. The school was explicit in its aim of being a distinctively Christian school with a strong Christian ethos;

4. Although the school was in a different diocese from my own school, it was not too far away to make travelling costs prohibitive;
5. The school had a national reputation for high quality education provision.

In line with the integral inquiry approach, the research of the case-study school involved a range of different research methods. As the researcher, I sought to immerse myself, as far as possible, in the life of the school. The limited time span, and my status as a headteacher, however hard I tried to disguise it, meant that a full immersion was not possible but the case-study did incorporate elements of ethnographic research.

I was keen to hear the voices of the actors (leaders, other staff, pupils and parents) at the school about how they interpreted the experience of the school stemming from its Christian ethos. For this reason, I not only spent time observing lessons but also listening to key staff tell their stories in auto/biographical interviews. The results of this qualitative research can be found in chapter 7 section II.

The results revealed that while the stakeholders in the case-study school, henceforth Bishop Pritchard School (a pseudonym), felt that the school ethos did have an impact on its outcomes, there was a lack of consistency and clarity as to why this might be so. When asked about learning habits, these were felt to be significant. In particular, analysis of the data obtained revealed that three learning habits were perceived by the stakeholders to be significant in explaining the success of their Church school. These were diligence, resilience and compliance or co-operation. The next step was to see if these perceptions were also prevalent in other Church schools. This was the purpose of stage 3, below.

d) Stage 3 – Corroboration through further enquiry

This stage sought to add further light to the findings from stages 1 and 2 from the perspective of the Church school headteachers. The idea was to broaden the scope of the research from one Church of England secondary school to 100 such schools. There were two aspects to this. Firstly, an internet survey to all 100 headteachers in the sample and, secondly, a group interview at the Church school headteachers' annual conference in September 2013. This was facilitated by the fact that I had an article published on this topic in the Anglican Academies and Secondary School heads (AASSH) journal for 2013. Fortuitously this journal had been distributed to all delegates at the conference in the joining packs.

Although the headteachers interviewed were adamant that the ethos found in their schools did have an impact on their educational outcomes there was, once again, a general lack of consensus as to how and why. Although initially reticent to accept that learning habits had a profound impact, there emerged a belief that the habits identified in stage 2 - diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation - were relevant. The findings are presented in chapter 8 section III part b with a further discussion in chapter 9.

V. Contribution to knowledge

At a time when policy makers grapple with how to improve the quality of education provision, this study was designed to contribute to this debate. While there are a multitude of studies about school improvement, this thesis investigates the extent to which a Christian ethos might contribute to improved learning habits and, *pari passu*, better educational outcomes.

Although there are many statistical studies on Church of England secondary schools (see, for example: Francis and Robbins, 2005; Arthur and Godfrey, 2005; Godfrey and Morris, 2008) there are fewer qualitative studies examining the link between Christian ethos and educational outcomes. Research by Deakin Crick (2002a; 2002b; 2006), Green (2009a) and Pike (2010) shed some light in this area but none of these studies directly address the nature of the link between Christian ethos and educational outcomes.

In this thesis I argue that there is an inadequate amount of empirical evidence to date to justify the link that the Church of England and many of its headteachers make about the impact that ethos has on their schools. I also hold that there is a lack of guidance from the Church of England Education Division as to how measures to enhance the ethos of their schools could result in better educational outcomes. There is currently no research on the impact that a Church school ethos might have on learning habits and thereby educational outcomes of Church schools in England.

The findings of this research suggest that amongst the small number of stakeholders of Church schools I surveyed, there was a belief that ethos in their schools did have a positive effect on the educational outcomes of those schools. Indeed my quantitative analysis of inspection grades using SIAS and Ofsted reports of Church schools would lend further weight to this. However, when asked, there was a general lack of clarity amongst Church school leaders as to how and why this might be so. Learning habits were identified as important although there was no evidence from either the case-study school nor the sample of headteachers that this knowledge and understanding was used in policy making or school development planning.

A fruitful area of further research would be to delve more deeply into the learning habits emanating from a Church school ethos. This could involve using a self-assessment questionnaire for one year group across say, half a dozen Church schools and half a dozen similar non-Church schools, to reveal which learning habits were most prevalent in each of the two types of school. Alternatively, the data obtained from this study in response to research question 1, could serve as a signpost for a more in-depth qualitative study of specific schools or groups of schools. It may be possible to set up an immersive ethnography in a specific school to explore more fully the themes suggested here. Areas for future research are developed further in chapter 10 section IV part b.

VI. Originality

In addition to the insights on learning habits in English Church schools, the originality of this research is in its cross-disciplinary approach and its diverse methodological framework.

While this thesis is a sociological study in education it incorporates a wide range of other academic disciplines including education theory, philosophy, theology, political economy and statistics. The broad sweep of subjects is embedded in the thesis as a result of the wide scope of the research questions set out at the start.

The integrated nature of the research makes use of a diverse methodological framework incorporating a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods, all of which were designed to shine light on the topic. Moreover, with 25 years' experience of working in Church schools including 15 years as a headteacher, my chosen methodological approach allowed me to integrate my experience and understanding into the research outcomes in a positive and unique way as a further form of illumination.

A further feature of this research is that it addresses an academic question about a subject of faith from a Christian perspective. In what may be regarded as an increasingly secular society, Christian scholarly research is at risk of being marginalised:

“The perceived collapse of a Christian consensus and the apparent demise of institutional religion, potentially challenges the role of Church of England schools today. The marginalisation of religion in academia has meant that significant educational issues are addressed without the inclusion of a religious perspective.” (Jelfs, 2008:20)

Moreover, debates about Church schools may often be carried out in a generalized way without recall to research (Riley, Marks and Grace, 2003; Grace, 2003).

In this thesis, I attempt to respond to the alleged marginalisation of Christian scholarly research and the related accusation that debates about Church schools are not grounded in research.

VII. Summary

This introductory chapter has sought to outline the framework for this thesis including its aims, relevance and structure. I have also sought to explain what original contribution this thesis makes to this particular field of academic research. In starting to explain the connection between ethos, learning habits and outcomes of Church schools, chapter 2 looks at the context within which all Church schools operate. This starts with a history of Church schools in England so that the Church schools of today can be seen in the light of their past. This is then followed by the current socio-political context surrounding Church schools including the current opposition that they face

2. The Context

I. History of Church Schools in England

a) From Watson to Durham

The earliest schools in England of which we are aware, were established in the late 6th century and were based around the cathedrals and monasteries. Unsurprisingly, their aim was to educate boys for monastic life and the priesthood.

The latter part of the 18th century was a period of revolutionary change in Europe which gave birth to modern sociology as people sought to understand their new world. More critically perhaps, the ruling classes in Britain were concerned that this revolutionary fervour would spread. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a growing acceptance of the need to educate children, “as a growing prophylactic against revolution.” (Harvie, 1984, p.448). In 1808, Joseph Lancaster, along with fellow Quakers, formed the Royal Lancastrian Society which then became the British and Foreign School Society with the aim of educating “the labouring and manufacturing classes” (Cruickshank, 1963, p.2; Murphy, 1971, pp.4-5). The Church of England’s response to the success of this initiative came three years later with the founding of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. The aim was to establish a school in every parish in England and Wales. Subsequently this organisation became known simply as ‘The National Society’. The man attributed with the foundation of the National Society was an English wine merchant and philanthropist, Joshua Watson, who is widely regarded as the founding father of Church of England schools (see, for example: Wickham, 2013; Worsley, 2013).

Both these two Societies shared a common aim: “the salvation of souls and the permeation of all instruction by religion.” (Cruickshank, 1963, p.2). The National Society however, insisted on the teaching of the doctrines and liturgy of the Established Church, something deeply resented by the Non-Conformists and a source of heated contention throughout the 19th century. Indeed, to this day, the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from acts of worship in Church of England schools stems, not from other world faiths or humanists, but from the original objections by the Non-Conformists. Nevertheless, rapid progress was made by the National Society in establishing schools and by 1812, one year after it started, the National Society had 52 schools. This rose to 3,670 schools in 1830 and 17,015 in 1851. In terms of pupil numbers, there were 8,620 children in National Society schools in 1812 and 956,000 by 1851 (Murphy 1971, p.40). Both Societies shared the view that, as education was fundamentally a religious enterprise, the State should have no part in it. However, from 1833 onwards, the Government began to provide grant aid to Church schools administered by a newly created Board of Education. It must also be added that the first Methodist schools were founded at this time and, shortly after this, in the 1840s, the Catholic Poor School Committee was set up.

The inability of the Church to provide sufficient school places for the growing child population, particularly in the rapidly expanding urban areas, led to an intervention by Government. The Education Act of 1870 established school boards whose task was to provide schools for each area of the country financed from the rates. The Education Act (1870) was a defining piece of legislation because it gave the voluntary (non-State or Church) schools a legitimate place of partnership within the national educational system; a place which they still hold to this day.

By the end of the nineteenth century a number of defects were endemic in the educational system in England. There was too little secondary provision and glaring inequalities between the board schools and the voluntary sector (Cruickshank, 1963, pp.69-70; Chadwick, 1997, p.16). The response of the Government was to pass the Education Act (1902) which replaced the school boards with local education authorities (LEAs) and mandated them to support voluntary schools from the rates. This was a defining moment as the Act confirmed a dual system (Church and State) as part of a new national framework for education. What had previously been a pragmatic reality was now enshrined in legislation and Church schools were recognised as an essential and enduring part of the national provision (Street, 2007, p.179).

By the time of the Second World War (1939-1945) the national education system was in grave need of reform, if for no other reason than so many Church schools were appallingly old and barely fit for purpose. There was also a growing consciousness that education would have to play a crucial role in the reconstruction of national life and the preservation of a liberal democracy once the war was over. The threat of Nazism caused many to acknowledge the contribution that Christianity made to the liberal democracy which the country was now enjoying (Chadwick, 2001, p.478).

In 1942 the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, appointed R.A. Butler to be President of the Board of Education. Churchill viewed the role of the Board to be one of maintaining the status quo since Churchill's view was that the Church school debate was a 'can of worms' best left unopened; a philosophy that many Prime Ministers have held to this very day. However Butler was determined to modernise and reform the education system (Johnson, 2005, p.116). Apart from Butler, the key figure in the debate leading to the Education Act (1944) was William Temple who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942. Butler's ability to bring about a settlement on the religious issues owed much to Temple's personal qualities, particularly his understanding of the Church educational system and his ability to achieve consensus with potentially conflicting parties (Hastings, 2001, pp.256-7).

The two types of Church school – Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided were brought into existence by the Education Act (1944). The defining characteristics of this latter type of school have already been outlined in chapter 1 section III.

In the years immediately following the Second World War, Church attendance declined (see, for example WhyChurch, 2014), society became increasingly secular and the Church suffered a steady erosion of self-confidence. During the 1960s the Church experienced further theological discord. For example, the publication of John Robinson's book, 'Honest to God' in 1963 caused

many to lose confidence in the Church by virtue of the fact that the author, an Anglican Bishop, appeared to have severely undermined traditional Christian theology.

Against this background the Church of England Board of Education and the National Society established a commission to enquire into religious education in schools (National Society, 1970). Although the report was ostensibly about religious education, it was entitled 'the fourth R', it also embraced consideration of Church schools in general. The 'Durham Report', as it became known was overseen and written by Bishop Ian Ramsey who was, at the time, the Bishop of Durham. The Report clearly differentiated between the 'general' role of a Church school, defined as providing quality education for the nation's children and the 'domestic' function, defined as equipping "the children of the Church to take their place in the Christian community" (ibid., p.207). The Report recognised that being English was no longer synonymous with being a member of the Church of England and came firmly down on the side of the general function.

The Durham Report was never formally endorsed by either of its two commissioning bodies and as such did not come to represent official Church policy. It did however give an insight into the state of mind of the Anglican Church with regard to its schools at the time. The picture is rather subdued, indeed the report itself rather cryptically commented:

"Only one point is completely clear: on the subject of Church schools the Church of England has never had one generally agreed policy. It certainly has none today." (National Society, 1970, p.217).

More significantly perhaps, the Church's well-established role as a partner with the State in the education system did not go unchallenged. We have already noted the opposition from secular groups in chapter 1 section II and we will return to this debate at the end of this chapter. However, at this particular time, there was an influential report which weakened the position of Church schools. The *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups* challenged the dual system as being inappropriate for an increasingly pluralistic society (Swann, 1985, pp.498-520). Moreover, not all concerned voices came from outside the Church. The report by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City*, criticised the practice of some schools selecting pupils and thereby creating "a middle class white school for children of professional parents." (O'Brien, 1985, p.304).

In 1988 the then Secretary of State, Kenneth Baker, steered through Parliament a bill with far-reaching implications for the future of education in England and Wales. The Education Reform Act (1988) was as significant as the 1944 Act in terms of its impact upon the educational system. However, significantly, and like the 1994 Act, no barriers were placed in the way of Church schools. The dual system of Church and State continued despite objections from increasingly pluralistic voices within society (see above). Indeed, the 1988 Act, in some senses strengthened Christian values in schools with a requirement that all schools should deliver a daily Act of Worship which was "broadly Christian in character" (ibid., para 7.1 and 7.2, p.5). All

schools were also required to give an account of their Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical education provision (ibid., Para 1(2)a, p.1). Here, as in worship, Church schools might be considered to have an advantage, at least with regard to spiritual education, as the newly formed Government watchdog Ofsted inspected schools on their observance of the requirements of the Act.

In 1996 the Association of Anglican Secondary School Headteachers⁷ published the first edition of its journal. Although much of the content of the early journals focused on logistical issues such as admissions and special needs, there was an emerging theme developing within Church schools and amongst Church school headteachers. For the first time, the concept of ethos became important in understanding the distinctive nature of Church schools. Indeed, issue 7 of the journal published in September 2000 was entitled 'Church School Ethos' and included articles by headteachers concerning reflections on ethos in specific Church schools. It was held in this and subsequent journals that the special ethos of Church schools created an environment where pupils could succeed (see chapter 1 sections I and II). However, in this research, I contend that there has never been any substantial empirical evidence for this belief. Further, I argue that if a connection did exist between the ethos of Church schools and their educational outcomes, there has never been a consistent, sustained and coherent argument which would explain why this might be so.

Nonetheless there was a new confidence amongst Church schools and this buoyant note was struck by Canon John Hall, the newly appointed General Secretary of the National Society and the Church of England Board of Education:

“It seems now, perhaps for the first time since the early nineteenth century, Church schools are almost universally recognized and valued.” (Hall, 1998, p.47)

The new Labour Government came to power in 1997 with a track record of opposition to Church schools. However, as we have already noted in chapter 1 section II, the Government at the time was very favourably disposed towards Church schools. The desire for public popularity (Jackson, 2004, p.49) and the overt support of the European Convention on Human Rights meant that Church schools fitted well with the Government's commitment to widening the diversity of education provision. The Convention requires the State to respect the rights of parents to have their children educated in conformity with their own religious and psychological beliefs (Council of Europe, 1950).

Under the premiership of Tony Blair, Church schools continued to flourish from the late 1990s and into the new millennium.

⁷ This first association was called ASH (Anglican Secondary Heads). This was the forerunner to AASSH (Association of Anglican Secondary School Headteachers) which then became the Anglican Academy and Secondary School Heads, in 2011. See also the glossary.

b) From Dearing to Chadwick

It was against this background that the General Synod of the Church of England passed a motion in November 1998 to review Church schools and make proposals for future developments (Lankshear, 2003:17). As it transpired, the General Synod rejected the call for a commission but established a Review Group under the chairmanship of Lord Dearing with the overall task of advising on the achievements and future development of the Church's schools (Dearing, 2001, p.ix). The report, *The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium*, was published in 2001 following nearly 2 years' work. The main theme of the report, which followed the Synod's motion, was the central importance of Church schools to the mission of the Church, not only to children and young people, but also to the long-term well-being of the Church of England. Church schools "stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation." (Dearing, 2001, p.1).

The Report, which became known as the Dearing Report as opposed to the more cumbersome title of 'Church Schools Review Group', called for an increase in the number of secondary school places by the equivalent of 100 new schools over the following 7-8 years, with particular focus on deprived areas. Once again the concept of ethos was developed with all Church schools, and Church universities, being urged to be distinctively Christian. For example:

"...what we see as the fundamental characteristics of a Church school. These include meaningful daily worship and quality religious education as well as a distinctively Christian ethos." (Dearing, 2001, p.9).

In terms of ethos, the Report makes the following recommendations for Church schools:

1. The adoption of an ethos statement;
2. The appointment of a headteacher and/or teaching staff who can support and develop the ethos of the school;
3. The opportunity for all pupils to experience the ethos of the school;
4. A curriculum which reflects the ethos of the school;
5. Admissions criteria for pupils which takes into consideration the ethos of the school.

In this thesis, I maintain that the Dearing Report fails to give an adequate account of what ethos is and why ethos is important for Church schools. Specifically, I argue the following:

1. There is no clear definition of what a Church school ethos is, in a way that would enable Church school headteachers and others to develop it;
2. There is no coherent and sustained explanation as to why ethos is important for Church schools;
3. There are no explicit links drawn between developing a Church school ethos and developing the outcomes of Church schools;
4. There is no recourse to empirical evidence to support a possible link between ethos and outcomes. For example, there are no references to an analysis of inspection reports.

Francis notes that the review process was originally envisioned to be underpinned by research (Francis, 2003, p.41);

5. There is no mention within the report of the impact that ethos might have on learning habits of the pupils and which learning habits would affect Church school outcomes the most.

Other recommendations of the Dearing Report included clergy training, schools linking more with parishes and employing more Christian teachers who saw teaching as a vocation. A clear message throughout the Report was that schools should be concerned with their general role to the whole community and not just to serving Church families. This sentiment found echoes all the way back to the founding of the first Church schools by the National Society in 1811.

In the 12 years since the Dearing report, there has been the greatest expansion of Church secondary school places since the National Society was formed (Chadwick, 2012, p.11). For example, in 2007, fewer than one third of all maintained schools were faith schools. By 2012, this statistic had risen to 35% (Scott and McNeish, 2012, p.6). The first wave of academies, under the Labour Government, was conceived of as a way to tackle under-performance by taking schools away from local authority control and providing sponsors to transform the school. Typically these schools were in socially deprived areas and the Church, with its historic and ongoing commitment to the poor, was ideally suited to get involved as the preferred sponsor. The resulting first wave of 45 academies sponsored by the Church of England make it the largest provider of academies, and an estimated 54,000 more students are now receiving secondary education in a Church of England school than was the case back in 2001 (Chadwick, 2012, p.11). In terms of numbers of schools, there are now over 221 Church of England secondary schools compared with 146 at the time of the Dearing Report (ibid., p.86; DFE, 2013). This comes close, or possibly meets, Dearing's target of an expansion of Church school places by the equivalent of 100 new schools⁸ (Dearing, 2001, p.39).

If the expansion of Church school places was the key success of the Dearing Report, other recommendations have been less well addressed. The supply and development of Church school leaders is a recurring challenge for Church schools although dioceses have often responded by federating small schools. More significant still perhaps, is the lack of support from the clergy. The Dearing Report recommended training for clergy concerning Church schools. However, the national review of clergy training before and after ordination which was conducted shortly after the Dearing Review made no reference to schools (Hind, 2003). Whether strong links are made between the Church school and the local parish depends mainly on the goodwill of the local incumbent (see Chadwick, 2012, pp.10-11).

Despite these small number of problems, the Dearing Report overall is held up as a success. As one Diocesan Director of Education commented "Dearing did a lot of good work locating Church schools at the heart of the mission of the Church." (Chadwick, 2012, p.10). Perhaps the

⁸ In terms of numbers of pupils, if not actual numbers of schools.

legacy of the report from the education perspective is that Dearing introduced the concept of 'Christian Distinctiveness', or a Christian ethos, for Church schools.

The new Coalition government elected in May 2010 arrived with a radical education agenda; in some senses, even more radical than the Education Reform Act (1988). As I have mentioned in chapter 1 section II, the Government sought to erode further the influence of the local authorities. This was achieved, in part, by encouraging parents and other interested parties to set up 'Free schools' which were independent of local authority control. In addition, successful local authority schools were expected to become academies (the "second wave" of academies).

The 2011 Academies Act extended the academy programme to all schools that were deemed by Ofsted to be either outstanding or good. The incentive was greater curriculum and financial freedom. As quasi-independent schools academies were outside core education legislation and were only accountable to themselves for school organisation, curriculum development, admissions and teachers' pay and conditions.

The acceleration of the academies programme was coupled with a significant reduction in funding for local authorities. This meant that schools that did not choose to become academies were being supported by an ever shrinking local authority structure. Inevitably reduced economies of scale meant that local authorities were unable to provide services at competitive prices and the door was open to a range of companies and consultancies to enter the market and deal directly with schools. Diocesan Boards of Education saw this as a great opportunity to expand their provision, predominantly to their own Church schools. As far as the National Society was concerned, for Church schools becoming academies, the Diocesan Board of Education would be the default sponsor (Chadwick, 2012, p.13).

An implicit objective of the Government's drive to academisation is performativity. The move away from a school system run by Local Government to one run by the private sector suggested a greater degree of private accountability. As Church schools entered the fray they too would be required to obtain good results in terms of measurable outcomes. If Church school ethos contributed to improved results then it was important to find the reasons for the link between ethos and outcomes.

In 2011, the Archbishops' Council and the National Society combined to produce a report entitled 'The Church School of the Future Review'. The report was published in March 2012. The chair of the review and author of the report was Dr Priscilla Chadwick and so the report became known as the Chadwick Report. In response to Dearing (2001), the Chadwick Report makes the following observation:

"Inevitably, there are some aspects in which The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the new millennium is captive to the time in which it arose, especially in its approach to local authorities. However, its role in prompting the great expansion of secondary schools will alone ensure it a place in the next history of Church schools." (Chadwick, 2012, p.11).

The Chadwick Report was much shorter than the Dearing Review and more limited in scope. Rather than provide a blueprint for Church schools for the next 10 years, it sought to provide a picture of the current education climate and how this was impacting on the Church in general and Church schools in particular. The report concludes with 22 recommendations which are relatively technical and bureaucratic. For example, the 17th recommendation is to create a single organisation to carry out the work that is currently undertaken by both the National Society and the Church of England Board of Education.

Like the Dearing Report, the Chadwick Report places a great emphasis on the ethos of Church schools with the word 'ethos' appearing no fewer than 14 times in the report and in most of its sections. Unlike the Dearing Report, the Chadwick Report also highlights the need for Church schools to focus on 'standards'. What is surprising is that, despite this, through the whole report, there is no point at which a link is drawn between these two pivotal themes. On two occasions within the Report, the word ethos appears in the same sentence but the relationship is merely mentioned in passing and never developed. For example:

“Diocesan Boards of Education will need to be..... in the future more focused on the culture, ethos and performance of their schools.” (Chadwick, 2012, p.22 Para.6.8)

It is my view that the Chadwick Review, like the Dearing Review before it, does not grapple with this central issue of the connection between Church schools' ethos and outcomes. As a result, both major reports by the Church of England on Church schools in the new millennium fail to address this key aspect of Church schools and, arguably, the unique selling point of the Church school 'brand' (ibid., p.3).

In terms of the Chadwick report I argue that:

1. Despite over 10 years of reflection since the publication of the Dearing Review, the Report still does not offer a precise definition of ethos which school leaders can use;
2. Although the Report acknowledges the external forces on Church schools to secure high standards, there is no explanation as to how a strong Christian ethos can contribute to improved performance;
3. The Report makes no reference to published research on Church schools in the intervening years since the Dearing Review but relies mainly on a large scale questionnaire which achieved only a 17% response rate, together with a selection of interviews with a small number of Church school stakeholders;
4. Like the Dearing Review, no mention is made of learning habits and there is no use of the outcomes of inspection reports, through the SIAS process, to inform the debate about Church school ethos.

For these reasons, I conclude that the Chadwick Report, like Dearing before it, does not make a significant contribution to the central challenge facing the leaders of Church schools; how their

Church school ethos can contribute to better educational outcomes for the children of those schools.

None of this is to say that the Chadwick Report has no benefits. The strength of the Chadwick Report is that it simplifies in a logical manner what could become a very confusing education landscape. It stresses the independence of schools and the plethora of providers and types of school and points to a new world of education which is very different from the one conceived in 1944. The 1944 Act formalised the dual system of voluntary and local authority schools. The Chadwick Report points out that the future for Church schools in England looks very different:

“The changing nature of the education system means that we now have to look beyond the 1944 Education Act settlement...The Church school system will need to adapt to an environment in which there is increasing independence for schools, many different types of schools (e.g. community schools, academies, free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools, special schools and traditional independent schools) and many different providers and sponsors.”
(Chadwick, 2012, p.18)

In 2012, the National College for School Leadership produced guidance on Leadership of Faith Schools (Scott and McNeish, 2012). Although this was a useful summary of the current position of faith schools from a non-Church perspective, the main weakness of the report concerns its lack of breadth. For example, on community cohesion there is no reference made to the important work of Jesson (2009). Moreover in framing the report, no evidence was drawn from either ASCL⁹ or AASSH. To disenfranchise the two main professional bodies representing headteachers in Church schools represents a serious omission for a report on leadership of such schools. The strength of the report is its fusion of the different faith traditions and its explicit mention of ethos. However, once again, there is no attempt to link ethos to outcomes and no mention of learning habits.

c) Beyond Chadwick and towards the future

This chapter started by noting the rapid progress made by the National Society in starting Church schools following its creation in 1811. How far have Church schools come, and what is the situation today? As far as the present picture of Church schools is concerned, it is notoriously difficult to specify the exact number and type of Church schools today. Schools are continually opening, shutting, amalgamating or changing their names. However, the Church of England web-site in 2014 reveals the following statistics based on a Church of England survey in November 2013 and the 2013 School Census from the Department of Education:

1. Approximately one million pupils attend Church of England schools (primary and secondary);
2. There are 4,443 Church primary schools and 221 Church secondary schools;

⁹ See Glossary.

3. This represents approximately 25% of all primary schools and 6% of all secondary schools;
4. Approximately 15 million people alive today have experienced a Church school education in England.

The current statistics for the composition and type of Church of England secondary school are shown in the table below:

Category	Type of secondary school	Number of schools
1	Voluntary Aided	66
2	Voluntary Controlled	31
3	Foundation	6
4	Academy Converters	69
5	Sponsored Academies	34
6	Free schools	15
	Total Church of England secondary schools	221

Source: Church of England statistics, November 2013

In this research my sample of 100 Church secondary schools is drawn solely from category 1 and category 4. The reasons for this are explained in chapter 6 section II part d. Academy converters were predominantly highly successful Voluntary Aided schools that saw the advantages of the greater freedom from becoming an Academy. In reality, the running of these schools may have changed very little and, significantly for this research, all these schools have recent inspection reports from both SIAS and Ofsted.

Following the Academies Act of 2011 and the policy of Michael Gove and the Coalition Government, the existence of Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, brought into existence by the 1944 Education Act, has been severely weakened. Virtually all new schools now are either Free Schools or Academies although, technically, it is still possible to start a Voluntary Aided school. In practice this is unlikely to meet with Government approval when alternative provision in the area could be offered by Free Schools. In terms of the types of different school, the likely direction for the future is that there will be more Voluntary Aided / Controlled schools converting to become academies and a rise in the number of Free Schools which are sponsored by the Church of England.

In terms of how Church schools should be run, what is the current position of the Church of England? In July 2013, the National Society and the Archbishops' Council Education Division, produced a guide mainly, but not exclusively, for dioceses entitled 'A Diocesan Board of Education for the Future' (Archbishops' Council, 2013). The comprehensive document is designed to provide guidance and exemplars of good practice to equip dioceses to cope with a rapidly changing education landscape which puts greater emphasis on Diocesan Boards of Education as providers of education. The key to understanding the rationale for this document, produced so shortly after the Chadwick Report, can be found in appendix 3:

“The current educational landscape, in England, is one of accountability and targets which means that schools are required to meet nationally-driven

standards and face serious consequences, such as “forced academisation”, should they fail to meet those targets. Headteachers are increasingly challenged.....whilst support from local authorities has been squeezed to its limits. *It is a perceived consequence that DBEs could be held accountable for the performance of Church schools, even when the Measure¹⁰ (1991) does not provide for DBEs to lead on school improvement.*” (Archbishops’ Council, 2013, p.22 italics added for emphasis).

This thesis, in exploring the impact of Christian distinctiveness or ethos on educational outcomes is brought into sharp focus by the above statement. Indeed the statement highlights the significance of research in precisely this field of factors influencing ‘performativity’ (see glossary). Moreover, the paradigm shift for DBEs is likely to be met with great concern by Diocesan Directors of Education who are now more responsible for academic and other outcomes in their family of schools than ever before. As a result many dioceses will probably welcome any insights provided by recent research.

Like the Chadwick Report, the Archbishops’ Council (2013) Report is relatively technical and legalistic outlining suggested structures, hierarchies and administrative practices to help dioceses discharge their new role. The Archbishops’ Council Report complements and updates both the Dearing and Chadwick Reports. For example the focus on mission is not lost as the following makes clear:

“Approximately 155,000 children and young people are involved in weekly church based activities in the Church of England, whereas one million children attend a Church of England school every day; dioceses need to consider their funding priorities in the light of these statistics.” (Archbishops’ Council, 2013, p.11)

This statement finds an echo from the Dearing Report when the figure was 900,000 as opposed to 1 million (Dearing, 2001, p.9). However, as mentioned above, one of the key areas where the Diocesan Report differs from Dearing concerns the reference to standards and measurable outcomes of Church schools. Of all the recommendations made by Dearing, there is no explicit reference to standards and achievement in Church of England schools – with the exception of RE. In contrast, as already noted in chapter 1 section II of this thesis, the Archbishops’ Council Report makes the following recommendation:

“There is aspiration for all diocesan schools to be rated as Good and most rated to be Outstanding with over 90% of diocesan schools actually being rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted and SIAMS.” (Archbishops’ Council, 2013, p.3)

Despite this, I suggest that while the Archbishops’ Council Report is both timely and practical, it still avoids one of the key challenges for Church schools about how to use their ethos to provide

¹⁰ The ‘Measure 1991’ was a piece of legislation which outlined the role of DBE’s towards the Church schools within the diocese in terms of their Christian character.

an enhanced educational experience for the pupils. In this sense, all the criticisms levelled at both the Dearing Review and the Chadwick Report can be applied to the Archbishops' Council Report as well.

Published in May 2014, the Church of England wrote a further report, this time on homophobic bullying entitled, 'Valuing All God's Children'. This Report attempts to provide a clear theological position with regard to human sexuality so as to support Church schools. The words of ethos and distinctiveness are also used within the Report. Again, significantly, the language of market economics is used. For example, the Report notes that the "core purpose of any Church school is to *maximise the learning potential* of every pupil." (Archbishops' Council, 2014a, p.3 italics added). The centrality of performance is noted and, indeed, in some ways provides the *raison d'être* for the Report as the following statement implies:

"All diocesan education structures should acknowledge that a culture of bullying will have a detrimental effect on academic standards..." (ibid., p.23).

However, once again, there is no attempt at a definition of ethos nor any systematic analysis, based on SIAS inspection reports or anything else, of how a Church school ethos can contribute to these goals.

d) Distinctive Christian ethos or distinctive brand?

It is significant to note that the language surrounding Church schools has evolved over their history. The early aspiration to benefit the poor and evangelise the nation is now less frequently mentioned. The performativity agenda dominates current thinking about Church schools. Even since the publication of the Dearing Report there has been a significant switch of emphasis about the purpose of Church schools. Perhaps the Dearing Report was the last occasion where there was a confidence to talk about a distinctive ethos without mentioning standards. Indeed, as already noted, throughout the 100 page report the only standards mentioned by Dearing concerned a brief reference to RE. In contrast, the most recent report by the Church of England on RE teaching in its schools finishes with a detailed system to grade each RE lesson as either: outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate. The key determinant of each of these grades is the academic standards achieved and progress made by each of the pupils (Archbishops' Council, 2014b, pp.34-36). The objections to this Report by practitioners within Church schools stem not from this emphasis on academic standards but, rather, on the inability of small primary schools to recruit self-professing Christians to teach the content. It would appear that there is now a hegemonic acceptance of the performativity agenda within Church schools.

The use of the word 'brand', used within the Chadwick Report (Chadwick, 2012, p.3), exemplifies the move to a market based model of education based on performance which is reinforced by the subsequent reports on education from the Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division (Archbishops' Council, 2013; 2014a; 2014b).

The break-up of the dual system of State and Church following the Academies Act of 2011 has meant that Church schools will need to compete for ‘customers’ in a mixed economy of education provision. It is now more common for Diocesan Directors of Education to talk about the unique ‘brand’ that Church schools offer. It is held that the brand name of ‘Church of England’ school is associated with quality. It was these sentiments that were picked up by the then Chair of the National Society and Board of Education, The Rt Revd John Pritchard, in his foreword to the Archbishops’ Council report:

“If a school has ‘Church of England’ over the door, then the Church of England through the Diocesan Board of Education, will be increasingly responsible for the quality of provision within the school. This being the case, we must ensure that our schools are effective as well as distinctive and inclusive.” (Archbishops’ Council, 2013, p.1)

The Church of England name is put alongside the need for quality and this quality is explained in terms of Christian distinctiveness. The words ‘Christian ethos’ are still important in defining Church schools; for example in the report on homophobic bullying (Archbishops’ Council, 2014a) the word ‘ethos’ appears no fewer than 8 times and is a recurring theme on how schools should tackle bullying. The key difference now perhaps is that this distinctive ethos is being used explicitly to make Church of England schools more marketable to the consumer.

In order to fully understand this change of language, I maintain that we need to return to one of the underlying threads running through this thesis; namely the growing concern with the expansion in numbers of Church schools within society. Given this sensitivity, it is perhaps surprising that the Church of England does not appear to have a coherent plan for the newly emerging education landscape. Although the language of market economics is used, there is still no blueprint for improvement in terms of performativity which builds on Church school ethos, or distinctiveness / brand, and which directs this ethos towards improved outcomes.

It is one of the key findings of this thesis that the relentless promotion of performativity to the detriment of a Christian ethos which builds learning habits is ultimately self-defeating. I maintain that the continual promotion of market forces and performance indicators to the detriment of everything else, risks eroding those very qualities which are necessary for success in the first place. I suggest that, ironically, the sacrifice of a Christian ethos which promotes learning habits on the altar of performativity in GCSE results will make the achievement of good long-term GCSE results not easier but actually harder!

e) Summary of the History of Church schools in England

The basis of Church education in Britain in 2015 is very different from the provision made in the 19th century. The deference that the Church enjoyed at this time has been significantly eroded and so too, potentially, the support for its schools. The socio-political context within which Church schools now operate is more demanding in terms of outcomes and, as we shall see later in this chapter, there is a growing body of opposition to Church schools. The vast majority

of this opposition is from outside the Church with the leadership of the Church of England steadfastly in favour of the continuation of Church schools:

“The Church of England was at the beginning of national education in this country and continues to be crucial to its flourishing .. Bishops and Diocesan Board of Education chairs have worked together to develop a vision for the future of Church schools which will continue our mission of transforming every part of our society.” (Welby, 2013)

Despite this endorsement, Church schools must now compete in the market place by developing their own ‘brand’ which secures favourable outcomes relative to other types of school. For the Church school this ‘brand’ is held by the Church of England to be its distinctive Christian ethos (Dearing, 2001). If Church schools are to survive and continue to flourish, the Church must address the way in which its unique brand can continue to deliver the best outcomes for the children in a manner that is distinctively Christian.

The fact that the three major reports on school performativity produced by the Church of England since the turn of the millennium (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012; Archbishops’ Council, 2013) do not make explicit reference to the connection between Church school ethos and school performance suggests to me that, at the present time, the Church of England still has no clear consensus on how and why its distinctive brand or ethos is important. Despite the large volume of SIAS reports resulting from thousands of hours of inspection, very limited use is made of these reports either in identifying the possible relationship between ethos and outcomes or, indeed, what a Church ethos is in the first place. While the Church of England is keen to use the word ethos in its publications there appears to be no systematic analysis of how ethos is impacting upon its schools. In addressing this issue, section II now looks at the importance of ethos.

II. Why ethos is important

As we have noted above, recent Church of England reports on education make frequent reference to the word ethos but do not explain why it is important. In contrast, Reynolds and Reid (1985) note that:

“British studies in this field seem to indicate that variables such as pupil/teacher ratio, class size, and quantity of resources per child.....do not have major effects upon outcomes. Likewise, the formal organisational structure appears to be less important in determining effectiveness than the informal, unstructured world or ‘ethos’ that the school possesses.” (Reynolds and Reid, 1985, p.191).

There is a consensus within the literature that ethos matters. The report ‘Ten Good Schools’ concludes that: “what they all have in common is effective leadership and an ethos, that is conducive to growth.” (DES, 1977:36). In the consultative Green Paper, *Schools: building on success*, we read: “... evidence suggests that schools with a strong sense of identity or ethos

perform best.” (DfEE, 2001, Para. 4.11). This was also one of the key findings of Rutter et al. (1979). More recently, in the Government White Paper, ‘The importance of teaching’, an assumption is made that successful schools have an established ethos (DFE, 2010, pp.28-29).

McLaughlin (2005), notes that the educative importance of ethos is worthy of detailed exploration for at least three reasons. Firstly, the ethos of teaching and schooling is a significant part of the educational experience of the pupils and, some would argue, the most important part. Although McLaughlin doesn’t develop this point, the view is that the effectiveness with which pupils learn and teachers teach will be a product of the ethos found in the classroom. Further, this ethos will ‘rub off’ on the pupils not only with regard to their learning behaviours but their general character behaviours as well (see, for example Williams, 2000).

Secondly, ethos has featured prominently in recent educational policy in the UK. As I have covered in chapter 1, the Labour Government from 1997 to 2010 was keen to promote diversity within education. This was manifested in the creation of, for example, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (a development from City Technology Colleges introduced by the previous Conservative Government), Beacon schools and, of course, Faith Schools. This spirit of diversity, encouraging individual schools to develop their own ethos, was enshrined in the legislation. For example, The Green Paper of 2001 encouraged secondary schools to “...develop a distinctive mission and ethos” (DfEE, 2001, Para. 4.12). To cement this, schools had a legal requirement to produce an ‘ethos statement’. As we have already noted in chapter 2 section I part b, The Coalition Government, elected in May 2010, continued this process with the introduction of ‘Free Schools’ and the opportunity for schools to become Academies. There are plans to accelerate this process following the election of the new Conservative Government in May 2015. The significance here is that, once again, the importance of having the correct ethos is highlighted. For example, in starting an academy or free school, the business sponsors or parents will have to explain to the DFE how the school ethos will meet the local needs of the business and geographical community. This is evident from the DFE application forms necessary to start a new free school or academy (DFE, 2014).

The third reason, according to McLaughlin, that the educative importance of ethos is worthy of further exploration is to facilitate better management. If ethos is a key ingredient of school improvement, then school managers need to understand what is happening in classrooms with regard to ethos. Once ethos is recognised and assessed, it can be improved (McLaughlin, 2005, p.308).

In summary, ethos is important because it can have a positive influence on schools and the pupils and teachers within them. With regard to a specific Church school ethos, there are other socio-political factors to consider. These are addressed now.

III. The socio-political significance of a Church school ethos

In writing his foreword to a report summarising the current research on Church schools, Geoffrey Walford, Professor of Education Policy at Oxford, comments:

“...evidence supports the claim that students at Roman Catholic and Church of England maintained schools and independent schools with a Christian ethos generally report a more positive attitude towards religion and better spiritual health. Also, while the effect is small, the evidence presented supports the claim that students at maintained Church schools gain higher academic achievement beyond the differences that can be accounted for by the measurable prior academic achievement and socio-economic status of the intakes.” (Green, 2009b, p.9).

More detailed research evidence surrounding the claims made in this quote will be investigated in chapter 4 section IV. However, the sentiment expressed here that Church schools out-perform non-Church schools in England has aroused significant political interest amongst policy makers. As we have already noted, at the turn of the millennium, David Blunkett, when Secretary of State for Education, frequently made use of his ‘bottle what Church schools do and share’ speech at conferences (Shepherd, 2000, p.7; Pyke, 2000). The Department for Education is always keen to identify good practice by which education standards can rise and be used for further wealth creation in an increasingly knowledge-based and competitive global market.

Green (2009b) articulates a further broad reason why a Church school ethos is important in the present socio-political climate. With the decline in formal religion in many Western countries, some policy makers are concerned about a moral vacuum being created within society. There is therefore a growing interest in models of character formation and citizenship offered by Church schools with a Christian ethos in the UK, US and Australia (see, for example Jubilee, 2013). With the breakdown of traditional institutions, attention has been switched to schools to fill the vacuum. For some parents and educators, schools with a Christian ethos offer a moral framework which is lacking from other institutions – including the family:

“For some parents and teachers schools with a Christian ethos offer grounding in morality and ethics perceived to be missing from wider society.” (Green, 2009b, p.14).

Following the publication of the Government report by Peter Clarke into the ‘Trojan Horse’¹¹ allegation of an attempted takeover of some Birmingham schools, the newly appointed Secretary of State for Education commented:

“Those in authority of these schools have not promoted fundamental British values and have failed to challenge the extremist views of others.” (Morgan, 2014).

Whether faith schools are, or are not, a bulwark to extremism is a hotly contested topic (see, for example: Cattle, 2001; Jesson, 2009; Burgess and Harris, 2011; Oldfield et al., 2013; BHA, 2014b). In the case of the ‘Trojan Horse’ schools, none of the schools in question were faith schools but were State non-faith schools. This situation however is not, of itself, any proof that faith schools, or Church schools, are more tolerant (tolerance being one of these fundamental British values).

There is another, more economic, reason for the political significance of Church schools. As people live longer and the demands on pensions and health care rise, governments are looking to the private sector to take over the provision of some public services. As noted in chapter 1 section II, the Coalition Government championed the concept of a ‘Big Society’. The Big Society was the flagship policy idea of the 2010 UK Conservative Party general election manifesto (Conservative, 2010). It then formed part of the legislative programme of the Conservative – Liberal Democrat Coalition Government. The stated aim was to create a climate that empowered local people and communities, building a ‘Big Society’ that will take power away from politicians and give it to people. In education for example, there is more emphasis on the voluntary sector and less emphasis on local authorities. Again, there appears to be no change in direction following the election of the Conservative Government in May 2015. In practical terms this means that, for example, sponsorship of schools by the Church of England is relatively popular and the Department for Education is happy to support dioceses in setting up and running academies and free schools in lieu of local authorities. As the former Secretary of State and architect of current education policy commented:

“I want the Church to recover the spirit which infused its educational mission in Victorian times and support more new schools.” (Gove, 2013).

However, Gywnne (2012) notes that the rhetoric and actions of the Government do not always match up and there exists, instead, something of a ‘fragile harmony’. Policy makers in Government are so keen for more academies that they appear to have little concern as to who sets them up. Ministers still want unproven sponsors from outside both local authorities and the dioceses to play a major part in the new programme of school expansion (ibid., p.14).

Nonetheless, overall and in summary, Church schools are currently relatively popular with Government for a variety of reasons. They are perceived by many to secure better outcomes,

¹¹ The ‘Trojan Horse Allegation’ concerned an allegation made against Muslim hardliners who, it was believed, were planning to take over a number of Birmingham schools in 2014.

and to fill something of a moral vacuum in society. Most importantly perhaps, they provide an alternative model of education to local authorities which are considered to be overly bureaucratic. Set against this there is growing popular disquiet over any form of religious 'extremism' in schools following the rise in significance of organisations such as Islamic State, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. The movement of British teenagers to the Middle East to engage with terrorist groups, such as the 4 girls from Bethnal Green Academy¹², has sparked public dismay. The Government has responded with an anti-radicalisation agenda which has impacted on all schools including Church schools. For example, the DFE has decreed that faith schools should not teach 'creationism' as scientific fact (see, for example Butt, 2011) and that 'fundamental British values' must be promoted in all schools. This aspect of schools' provision will also be inspected by Ofsted¹³. This blunt response by the Government has been met with some concern over both efficacy and freedoms in a democratic society (Thomas and Cattle, 2014; Cooling, 2014). However, I suggest that the initial enthusiasm for all kinds of faith school, including Church schools, has been tempered in recent times.

IV. Learning Habits versus Social Privilege

In addition to the political problems mentioned above, there are further, more structural criticisms levelled against Church schools in terms of their long-term impact on society. Opponents of Church schools argue that they are socially divisive and exclusive. Allied to this, they further argue that the only reason that they are successful is because of their selective intake. Therefore, up to this point, the debate between those who advocate Church schools because they provide better educational outcomes, and those who oppose them as being divisive, has centred around the issue of social privilege. The British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society are insistent that the only reason that examination results are higher in Church schools is because the intake is from the more privileged classes (BHA, 2014a; 2014b; NSS, 2014). In defence of Church schools on this point, Pritchard mounts a robust rebuttal:

“Opponents of Church schools try to find reasons to reduce the significance of the high performance of Church schools. But, national figures show that our schools fully reflect the society in which we live. At CofE secondary schools, 15% of CofE Secondary pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. With our mission to serve the poor and excluded, maybe this figure should be higher, but it is in line with the national average for non CofE schools which is also 15%. One of the great accusations against Church schools is that they are

¹² In March 2015 the media ran a story of how 4 girls from East London who attended Bethnal Green Academy, had travelled to Syria to become jihadi brides for ISIS.

¹³ Fundamental British Values (FBV) are now an integral part of the new Common Inspection Framework for schools, published by OFSTED in June 2015 (see Ofsted, 2015).

predominantly for white, middle class pupils whereas our statistics tell a different story. Our Secondary schools serve approximately the same percentage of Black or Minority Ethnic, BME, pupils as Non-CofE Secondary schools-25%." (Pritchard, 2013, p.2)

Whether the success of Church schools is or is not the result of social privilege remains a contentious debate and is not a focus of this thesis. The arguments above imply that it is still not resolved. In this research I switch the emphasis away from social privilege towards learning habits. I look at whether the Christian ethos in Church of England secondary schools inculcates certain learning habits amongst the pupils. Further, I ask do the learning habits resulting from this Christian ethos have an impact on educational outcomes? The key stimulus in my decision to investigate this was research conducted by William Jeynes in the USA and published in 2003. While Jeynes' article clearly asserts that religious schools out-perform non-religious schools even when sociological and economic factors are factored in, it does not explain the origins of the learning habits that are thought to contribute to achieving this. Is it the school itself or something else? This thesis explores whether the work of Jeynes can bring a greater understanding to the perception of stakeholders about ethos and outcomes in English Church schools. As such it will also contribute indirectly to an understanding of the debate about ethos and social privilege in Church schools in England. The work of Jeynes underpins this whole thesis and we will return to the main findings in greater detail when reviewing the literature in chapter 4 and specifically in section VII.

Having set out the context, history and rationale within which Church of England secondary schools operate, I will now explain my own story with regard to Church schools. In carrying out research into Church schools this story will be important for the reader to position the research and understand the origins of the research and its epistemology.

3. A Tale of two Heads

“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.” (Ephesians 1:11, TNIV)

I. My Own Story

Research by an individual should acknowledge the influence of the researcher. Nowhere is this more important than in social science research and, within that, research involving ethnographic elements. Such qualitative research is not an area where objective information is simply transmitted from one person to another. Indeed ‘human embeddedness is inescapable’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.267). It is simply not possible to deny the influence of the personal nature of the researcher in the interpretation of qualitative data. According to Cheetham, “the personal history of the researcher cannot be disaggregated from the research.” (Cheetham, 2001, p.166). This is because the data will be chosen, analysed and interpreted through the lens of the researcher.

In my research I looked into the area of the relationship between the ethos of a Church of England school, inculcated learning habits and its educational outcomes. I used ethnographic techniques including auto/biographical interviews with key stakeholders at the school. In portraying their stories effectively it was necessary to think about my own story and how my own story would be portrayed. It is this story that was shared with the school participants and they, in turn, constructed a story about me - based on this. Moreover, as the research developed, I would increasingly see opportunities to input my story into theirs as part of the research findings. I will return to this methodological tension throughout the remainder of this thesis.

It would not be possible to understand this research without first being aware of the theological starting point of the researcher. Therefore, in part a, I will outline my story with a particular emphasis on my Christian understanding of education based on the journey that I have travelled to bring me to this point. In part b, I proceed to refine my educational philosophy and Christian worldview. Next, in part c, I explain how this worldview has influenced my opinion on the current performativity agenda operating in schools before, finally, in part d, applying some of these views to the specific challenges of running a Church school at the start of the 21st century.

This part of the thesis is relatively long reflecting the somewhat unusual nature of this research study in which I use myself not only as a researcher but also as a source of data and a headteacher who is being transformed by the process. This is in accordance with the overarching methodological framework that is employed in this study.

a) From Childhood to Headship

In the first 13 years of my life, my parents lived abroad and so I was sent, at the age of 9, to a boarding school in Sussex. The school had no formal Christian foundation but, like many boarding schools in the early 1970s, there was an underlying Christian ethos with a teaching Chaplain and compulsory Church attendance in the school chapel every Sunday morning. It was while at this school that I went through confirmation classes, at the request of my mother, and then was 'confirmed' into the Church of England at the age of 12.

In 1973 my parents returned to Britain – to Plymouth, Devon. Following this, I was then able to transfer to a more 'mainstream' secondary school in the city at the age of 13, in 1975. On Sundays I went to the local Church of England parish church near where we lived, which followed the 1662 communion service which my mother and father liked. Although I quite enjoyed going, I never really understood what was going on (perhaps I wasn't meant to). Outside this experience there was no fellowship with others and there was no explicit Christian basis to my secondary school either. During these years therefore, my Christian understanding and faith did not significantly develop.

At university I read economics which placed great emphasis on statistical tools of analysis within a world of 'cause and effect'. Both my dissertations at first degree and masters' degree level involved mathematical models of the economy employing large quantities of numeric data. As a very young social scientist, this was what I understood social scientific research to be. In this thesis, the correlation of an aggregated score for SIAS inspection grades and an aggregated score for Ofsted inspection grades follows this model of data analysis. The use of regression analysis to discover a line of 'best fit' and identify the relationship between ethos and outcomes, defined in this way, follows this pattern of social science research. This is covered in more detail in chapter 7 section I.

In terms of my spiritual development, it was while I was following a masters' degree in economics at the University of Kent that my spiritual life was re-awakened. I read the Bible in a year and regularly attended the Christian union meetings at Kent University in 1984. In line with most student Christian unions, the teaching at these meetings was very evangelical and fundamentalist in the sense that a literal interpretation was made of the Bible. The Bible was seen as the source of all revealed truth. For me, at this time, I found it very helpful and very liberating.

Unclear of my future career, I chose to spend one more year at university following a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, this time in the West Midlands. It was whilst on my first teaching practice at a multi-cultural community college in Coventry that I became 'hooked' into teaching and the fascinating social interaction within schools.

Shortly after taking up my first post as an economics teacher at a large community college in Devon in 1986, I started training as a local or 'lay' preacher in the Methodist church that I attended. The 2 year part-time course of training added a further layer to my fundamental evangelical understanding from my student days. Inspired by the writings of the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans about justification by faith and then Martin Luther's exegesis, the theology of Wesley¹⁴ may best be summarised in the following Methodist core doctrine:

1. All people need to be saved (Universal sin).
2. All people can be saved (Universal grace).
3. All people can know they are saved (Assurance).
4. All people can be saved to the uttermost (Christian perfection).

The first two points suggest that there are those who are saved and there are those who are not. All those who are not saved, need to be – by whatever means necessary. This thinking dominated my early teaching career and, to a lesser extent, still does today in that I believe that witness and mission are an indispensable part of the Christian life.

My second teaching post was at a Church of England secondary school in West Sussex. Before taking up this post I was naively unaware that there were such things as Church of England schools. After all, my own school experience had never been of this type. However, based on my Free Church background, I began to question whether this school could really be labelled as a Christian school. After all, the majority of the staff and pupils were not 'saved' in the exclusive sense that was part of my early understanding. Indeed, even when promoted to a senior management position within the school, I still questioned the Christian basis of the school. For me there was a demarcation between my preaching of the Gospel every Sunday around the villages of West Sussex and my largely 'secular' job with largely 'secular' people during the week.

It was precisely at this time, in 1994, that the headteacher of the school made the comment introduced at the very start of this thesis: "of course, we have an extra dimension here."

In 1997, I became a Deputy Head teacher in a multi-cultural school in Acton, West London. One of my roles within this school was to teach A level sociology. I found this an immensely enjoyable experience. Perhaps even more so than economics which I had, up to that point, been teaching solidly for 11 years. Perhaps I needed a change. A different way of undertaking social science research was reinforced in me as I began to teach about alternatives to positivism. I taught about the phenomenological approaches to social science including symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. I was persuaded by the writings of Max Weber and George Herbert Mead of the weaknesses inherent in a world which always assumes simple

¹⁴ John Wesley is held to be the founder of the Methodist Church. For a fuller account of his life and theology see Wesley (1787/1986) in the bibliography.

causal relationships based on numerical data. Most recently I have come to appreciate the value of biographical research (or story-telling) in understanding self and society:

“.....biographical research.... methods offer rich insights into the dynamic interplay of individuals and history.....We use the term ‘dynamic’ to convey the idea of human beings as active agents in making their lives rather than being simply determined by historical and social forces.” (Merrill and West, 2009, p.1).

It was this journey from modernist scientific economist to more of an interpretative sociologist that partly informed my choice of research methods in this thesis. Their justification and rationale are explained in detail in chapter 5.

In line with much qualitative research, I have chosen for ethical reasons to use pseudonyms throughout this thesis. This practice will also be extended to the former schools that I worked in. At the turn of the millennium, I became a headteacher of a secondary school in the South-West of England. I will use the pseudonym of St Ainsworth’s to denote this school when I refer to it later in this thesis. This was a joint Church of England and Roman Catholic school in which I began to understand more clearly some of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. My stance where the Bible was the source of all revealed truth began to mellow in the light of greater understanding of the authority of the Church. In terms of professional development, it was at this time that I spent 2 years training as an Ofsted inspector and carrying out inspections of both Church schools and Community schools in the North of England. It was common practice for inspectors to be sent to different parts of the country – away from schools which they know and in which they may be known.

My second headship was at a Church of England Secondary School in Surrey. I will use the pseudonym of Canon Hall to denote this school when I refer to it later. It was at this time that I became acquainted with Lord Dearing as a former Chair of Governors, grand-parent of a pupil and a friend of the school. During my second headship, my Christian understanding grew further. I began to feel that my early understanding of Church schools had been too simplistic. Church schools were communities where it was not always helpful to label people as ‘saved’ or ‘unsaved’; as ‘Christian’ or ‘non-Christian’. Rather it was more helpful to see Church schools (or indeed all schools) as more complicated spiritual communities where everyone – pupils and staff – were on a journey.

The title of the report of the Church of England in 2001 on Church Schools, ‘The Way Ahead’ (Dearing, 2001) appropriately captures this sense that individuals and Church schools are on a journey. More significantly however, at the very start of the report, the authors make reference to the 1998 General Synod of the Church of England:

“In detail, our terms of reference continue:

1. Believing that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church’s mission to the nation:”(ibid., p.1).

While not everybody goes to Church, everybody goes to school. If the Church is to reach out and serve the whole nation, a good place to start would be in schools which include children and families who would not otherwise go near a Church. This dovetailed with my continued Christian emphasis on witness, mission and evangelism.

With regard to the idea that everyone is on a journey and at different points on a continuum, the Way Ahead report quotes the words of the late Lord Runcie, when Archbishop of Canterbury:

“Engagement with children and young people in schools will enable the Church to:

Nourish those of the faith;

Encourage those of other faiths;

Challenge those who have no faith.”

(Quoted in: Dearing, 2001, p.4).

Moreover, while most people do not go to Church every week, it does not necessarily follow that they have rejected God. They may have rejected the models of Church, often built on ideas when the Church experienced its hey-day in terms of membership and influence during the 19th century (see, for example: Hervieu-Léger, 2000; King, 2009).

In terms of my motivation for this research, I was both influenced and shaped by the increased opportunities afforded to Church schools. By 2011 the Church of England had established itself as the biggest single private sponsor of maintained secondary schools; a position which it still holds. This opportunity for me to play a part in serving an increasing section of the nation’s young people, and to do this well, fuelled my initial enthusiasm to conduct research in the area of this ‘extra dimension’ (or Christian ethos) alluded to in 1994.

As a result of my own story, a number of practical challenges confronted me in carrying out the research and, in particular, for the time that I spent in the case-study school – the Bishop Pritchard School.

As a serving headteacher and a former Ofsted inspector, my natural inclination was to make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning, behaviour, leadership and achievement at the school. It was vital that I freed myself of the mind-set of headteacher and inspector, and fully immersed myself in the role of researcher and guest. My *modus operandi* as academic observer and visitor was spelled out to the headteacher and the staff before I arrived in terms of a signed written statement (see, in particular Appendix C). Further issues of reflexivity are addressed in chapter 5 section III.

Linked to this was how the staff and pupils perceived me. I sought to position myself as a fellow traveller with the staff and, to some extent, pupils. I was an 'outsider' who had become an 'insider' although these terms may be too simplistic. In this type of research it is not acceptable to operate covertly by deliberate deception and so, I was honest as to my role and purpose with all participants. Clearly, with senior staff and young pupils the language that I used to describe my role was adjusted as appropriate.

I described myself to staff and pupils as a serving teacher who currently teaches ICT and Maths but who has been 'released' for 1 day a week to carry out research. When asked I also described myself as a Christian who attends a large charismatic evangelical Church of England church.¹⁵ When asked for further detail about my role in my school and in my Church, I would say that I was a headteacher who formerly also taught Economics and Sociology and that I was also a Methodist local preacher who preached about once a month in a variety of Surrey churches. I also explained that I was carrying out research to discover if there was a link between the ethos, or character, (see chapter 1 section III), of the school and the results that the school obtained, with a particular emphasis on the way that the pupils learn. The research was about describing their experiences and listening to their voices.

When talking to teachers I drew on my experience as a classroom teacher; when talking to senior managers and governors, I drew on my experience as a headteacher; when talking to parents, I drew on my experience as a parent of 4 teenagers and when talking to older students, I drew on my experience of enrolling as a student at Canterbury Christ Church University.

In terms of opportunities, as a Christian who is relatively well versed in both the scriptures and the Church, I was able to understand the values of the ethos bearers of the school(s) that I was researching. There was something of a natural affinity between myself and my co-participants in the research since we shared a similar story, based on shared values and a similar starting point. While this can be very helpful, the challenge was, as I have noted above, how to stay impartial and not prejudge what the ethos bearers said. However, perhaps a greater concern is the fact that I was only obtaining data from a small and possibly unrepresentative sample of stakeholders. This is the ever-present temptation in carrying out field research within social science in that I was not hearing dissenting voices but merely 'talking only with the Sanhedrin'. I address this temptation in chapter 6 section III.

Nonetheless, overall, I believe that the research would have been more difficult to execute without my ability to empathise with some of these key actors at the Bishop Pritchard School, and other Church schools, due to my personal biography and shared professional understanding. Like Green (2009a), I dispute the often implied assumption that Christian researchers are less able to achieve a critical voice (*ibid.*, p.14) and would argue that this

¹⁵ Throughout this thesis, when I refer to the universal Church, I use a capital 'C'; when I am writing about a local group of Christians centred around one building, I use a small 'c'. However, I concede that this simple distinction becomes blurred and sometimes confusing.

particular background enhanced the research. For example, at the Bishop Pritchard School, the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the head of RE all shared a similar Christian worldview to me. It is to this Christian worldview that I now turn.

b) My Christian and Educational philosophy

“Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.” (Proverbs 4:23, GNB)

In the past, the local churches that I have belonged to have been conservative evangelical churches but at the moment I attend a more charismatic evangelical church. These terms are hard to define but the Church I currently attend would emphasise the belief that God speaks to all of us on a regular basis and we can discern His will for our lives by listening to what He is saying.

My own Christian philosophy, unsurprisingly, would accord in large part with this church and the emphasis on living in freedom in the (Holy) Spirit. The words of the apostle Paul in writing to the first century Church in Corinth are particularly apt:

“Whenever, though, they turn to face God as Moses did, God removes the veil and there they are - face to face! They suddenly recognize that God is a living, personal presence, not a piece of chiselled stone. And when God is personally present, a living Spirit, that old, constricting legislation is recognized as obsolete. We’re free of it! All of us! Nothing between us and God...” (2 Corinthians 2:16-17, MSG).

The significance of this to my research is that the executive headteacher at Bishop Pritchard felt that God told him to go to the school and stay at the school at a time when the school had failed its Ofsted inspection and suffered a loss of confidence in the community. The sense of calling drove the behaviour of the executive headteacher into one of hard work and hope – two of the recurring themes in this thesis. My own personal experience when taking over Canon Hall was very similar, both theologically and in more practical terms. In conducting an auto/biographical interview with the executive headteacher, this common experience (for example, both with a background in the Free Church) and shared Christian worldview enabled the conversation to move swiftly to a deeper plane of understanding and empathy. After a short while he felt comfortable to disclose his conversations with God over accepting the post and then the affirmation that he received. The use of an auto/biographical research technique was entirely appropriate in illuminating this experience. More is said about this in section II below, and also in chapter 4 section III part d.

Furthermore, the verbal and non-verbal language within the interview allowed me to both input and draw out a rich vein of data in terms of the story behind the Bishop Pritchard School. Use

of the integral inquiry approach of data collection was therefore an ideal method to employ in that it factored in non-verbal communication and input from the researcher. I maintain that the interview both flowed more easily and also into more interesting territory as a result of this shared understanding. However, a shared Christian worldview with key stakeholders was also important in understanding other aspects of school life including worship at the case-study school.

Along with many staff in Church schools, including some at Bishop Pritchard and the other Church schools surveyed, my Christian worldview may best be described as (Charismatic) Reformed Protestant Christian. This Christian worldview would be sketched out using the key Biblical narratives of creation, fall, redemption and new creation (Schaeffer, 1972; Wright, 1995; Pearcey, 2005; Carson, 2008).

Within this worldview my epistemology would affirm that no single source of evidence for knowledge is sufficient. As a basis of knowledge, I ascribe relative weights to authority, empirical evidence, reason, intuition and revelation. I believe that knowledge and faith are intertwined and that there is a truth which we can know. However I hold that people interpret the truth differently. I reject a pure model of epistemic absolutism where everyone is expected to perceive things in the same way. I subscribe to a view of epistemic relativism where people can perceive the same thing in different ways (see, for example Luper, 2004). But I also value judgemental rationality. This means that knowledge is not arbitrary and there are rational criteria for judging some theories as better and more explanatory than others (Irwin, 1997). As a result, I maintain that it is possible to have a debate about the best way to look at the issues being studied and, furthermore, this debate is healthy.

For my metaphysical beliefs, I reject philosophical naturalism (or materialism) as an explanation of the ultimate nature of reality. I would label myself as a philosophical idealist who holds that reality is ultimately spiritual in nature. I maintain that there is a supernatural 'something' outside and above nature that created it and guides it (God). I believe that there is a moral order to the universe which is good. I subscribe to the view of ontological realism as opposed to ontological anti-realism. I believe that there are objective answers to what exists as opposed to the view that there are no objective answers to what exists.

For my cosmological stance, I reject the notion that the universe was created by chance. I believe that the universe was created by a designer (God) who has a purpose and a plan for the universe. In terms of teleology, I hold that this designer has a plan and purpose for every human life, we can know this plan and our purpose is to participate in it.

In terms of my anthropological view, I see humanity (man and woman) as the pinnacle of God's creation and also created in God's image. I believe that we have the ability to think and act with freedom beyond our instincts. That is, we do have choices for which we are responsible as moral agents in the universe. Along with the basic tenets of the Reformed Protestant Christian

worldview including the theology of John Wesley, I believe that while humankind is capable of doing good, humanity and all creation is 'fallen'. This is why there is a need for redemption, forgiveness and grace. This has been achieved because God has acted to redeem creation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although I hold this view, I also acknowledge that many Christians take the view that humanity is basically good since, before the fall of man, what God created was good. I maintain that, as humanity is created in the image of God, we are of infinite intrinsic worth. This is underlined by the fact that God sent his only son to die for us in order to restore us to Him. As stewards of God's creation we have a responsibility to take care of the planet and everyone on it.

I maintain that the values expressed in the Bible, as revealed by God, are timeless and true but their interpretation will depend on the cultural context. Everything of value is defined by God and specifically His nature or character. This is, for me, the *summum bonum* and the quintessential feature of my worldview. The axiological implications of this worldview are that there are moral obligations and a set of standards to follow. This must not be confused with a lack of freedom for there can be freedom found within God's rules. Given that my *summum bonum* is God, my aim is to seek to do His will and bring about His kingdom within the sphere of influence of my life. In this way our relationship is developed.

c) My views on the current performativity agenda

One of the recurring threads running through this thesis is the underlying assumption that performativity is the *sine qua non* of Church schools in order to stave off the criticisms of an increasingly vocal Church school opposition and fulfil the Government's desire for increasing academic standards. In submitting, perhaps unwittingly, to the Government's prevailing drive for academic examination success, I am courting opposition on the dangers of performativity (see, for example: Ball, 2003; Kohn, 2015). Moreover, in terms of economic structure, some would allege that the current emphasis on academic examination success is legitimating the position of the middle class within society and perpetuating a destructive class-divide (see, for example: Althusser, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

In my study I move away from these positions towards a model of education based more on the concept of liberation. However, as already noted (chapter 2 section I part d), I do acknowledge that an over-emphasis on market forces and performativity to the detriment of a Christian ethos which promotes specific learning habits, can be self-defeating. Therefore, I hold the view that exam results can serve as a helpful barometer to success but if allowed to dominate they can divert energy away from fostering an ethos which is conducive to long-term sustained examination success in the first place.

As the headteacher of Canon Hall School, I serve an economically deprived community where a small proportion of the parents have been to university. The overwhelming majority of pupils come from one of three white working class housing estates. I see the opportunity to promote

academic performance not predominantly as a means of social control but as an opportunity for liberation. As a school we strive for every pupil in the school to achieve the maximum grades at GCSE of which they are capable. The rationale for this policy is to provide as many pupils as possible with the freedom to explore alternative lifestyles to their parents and to set them free from a world of no qualifications with its attendant association with material and cultural poverty. It is a philosophy less of control and more of emancipation. In responding to the charge that this stance is patronising, I draw on my theological position.

In theological terms this notion of liberation chimes with my belief that God wants to set us free to be the people that He intended us to be. My views in this regard are evidenced by my background in the Free Church and in my current Church with an emphasis on 'living free' (see part b above). There is however another theological layer to my educational stance on liberation.

In terms of eschatology, I believe that the earth and our physical bodies will not be discarded but will be re-created by God as heaven comes to earth: eschatological duality over ontological dualism, Wright (2007). God is constantly perfecting us until this process is made complete when Jesus returns to earth. As a consequence, everything that we do in schools and in life is with that goal in mind. The role of the school leader is to cherish all the gifts and talents of the pupils, and the staff, and to work to bring God's future state of perfection into a present reality – as far as possible. In terms of running a Church school, it is my privilege to be able to try to bring the best out of every pupil so that they fulfil their God-given potential and start the journey whereby God perfects them including, where relevant, studying an academic degree at a university irrespective of their social and economic background. I suggest that this can be entirely consistent with a performativity agenda.

In summarising this chapter so far, my personal life's journey together with my associated Christian worldview had an impact on the nature of my research. It shaped my underlying assumptions about the direction that the research took and why it was worth exploring factors contributing to examination success in the first place. For example, my acknowledgement of the performativity agenda has been influenced by my theology of freedom and the writings of Wright (op.cit.) as covered above. My biography and worldview also influenced the choice of research methods with a propensity to use both quantitative and qualitative research methods within a critical realist epistemology. I return to this in chapter 5 section II part c. My ontological realism position leads me to believe that we can find reliable answers to the relationship between ethos and outcomes.

Set against these potentially limiting boundaries, the advantage of a strong and clear worldview is that decisions were not made on emotion or impulse. There was a reduced inclination to 'follow the crowd'. Nonetheless it was important to draw on all the relevant research already undertaken in this field. A review of this literature follows in the next chapter. Before then, I outline some of the problems facing Church school headteachers at the start of the 21st century

with regard to the inherent tensions between ethos and outcomes. In addressing these tensions I make reference to my own philosophical and theological views detailed above.

d) The tensions between ethos and outcomes facing headteachers of Church schools

I subscribe to the Christian notions of serving the poor within an inclusive ethos where everyone is valued as a unique creation in the image of God – *imago dei*. As mentioned in chapter 1 section III, this may be consistent with the learning habits of diligence, in so far as this means ‘going the extra mile’; resilience, in so far as this is based on an eschatological hope, and, compliance, in so far as this means submission to a higher authority.

My anthropological view of fully serving the poor as part of God’s creation may be at variance with my realist stance which acknowledges that such a position will reduce exam results unless a fully balanced pupil intake is created. As a result of my realist stance, children with a poor school record and poor learning habits who have been excluded from other schools may be rejected in favour of children with a good school record, good academic attainment and refined learning habits who may be from families re-locating from high paid professional work overseas. While it is important for Church schools in deprived areas to continue to bias their provision in favour of the poor, the pressure for improved outcomes in attendance and exam results would create an inherent tension in fully applying this inclusive (Christian) ethos in the case of these casual admissions.

In my present school, I faced two related challenges in the last couple of years. In September 2013, the DFE announced that the only exam results that would count for the school’s league tables were for the first exam sat. At the time the school had one third of the year group sitting GCSEs in English and Maths early. Inevitably they would do better in these subjects if they sat them later and, in all probability, the school’s position in the league tables would be stronger. However there was a tension in that the pupils had already been told that they were sitting their exams early and they were prepared for them and wanted to sit them early in order to get them out of the way. The tension here was between what was in the best interest of the school and what was in the best interests of the individual children. In a competitive education market where jobs depend on league table position, this was a real tension. In the event, the school made the decision to choose what was in the best interests of the children. After all, with re-sits and ‘two bites of the cherry’ they could always improve their grades in the summer even though the school’s results would not change. The cost of this decision for the school probably was a lower position in the league tables. The benefit was that the Christian ethos of the school, focusing on the needs of the individual child, was upheld.

The second vignette was a similar dilemma between the needs of the children and the needs of the school in terms of educational outcomes. In March 2011 a report by Alison Wolf (Wolf, 2011) on vocational education was published by the DFE and outlined which vocational

qualifications offered by schools counted towards schools' league tables and which qualifications did not. In producing a curriculum for 2012/13 consideration had to be taken as to which subjects to offer the pupils as they embarked on their GCSE courses in September 2012 for accreditation in 2014. If the school continued to offer courses that 'did not count' for the league tables then, the headline statistic for the school in August 2014 would be lower than it otherwise could be in relation to competitor schools. However, once again, there was a dilemma. The BTEC Horticulture course, which was not on the Wolf approved list, had been offered by Canon Hall school for many years and was very popular with the pupils who derived a good deal of satisfaction and self-esteem from their success on this course. In addition, a good number progressed into employment in local land-based industries. Once again, the final decision was to put the interests of the children before the interests of the school by continuing with this course and accepting a lower position in the schools' league table.

At first sight it may appear from these incidents that a strong Christian ethos and favourable education outcomes are in conflict – particularly for deprived communities. However, I would argue otherwise. By faithfully and consistently following the Christian ethos of the school and putting the needs of the children first; the pupils, parents and community will work with the school and develop their commitment towards it. In the long term this may well be rewarded with improved attendance, improved habits for learning and improved educational outcomes. In this sense at least, there may be no tension between a strong Christian ethos and favourable educational outcomes.

However, in this thesis I argue that there may be more fundamental theological values at work in Church schools like Canon Hall in addition to the pragmatic benefits mentioned immediately above. In submitting to a higher authority, the character (translation of the Greek word ethos) of the school should be one where God's kingdom rises above the performativity agenda. Yes, performance is important but not as important as other more fundamental values of a Church school. Performativity is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It should not be placed above the Christian ethos of the school but equally neither, I suggest, should it be seen as being at odds with it. The case of liberation to be what God has called us to be is a case in point. In this thesis, I argue that there is evidence of a form of compliance to a higher authority. This is one of the key findings of this study and I will return to it throughout the remainder of this thesis and particularly in chapters 9 and 10. Before then I want to briefly re-visit the question of methodology.

In chapter 1 section IV part a, I outlined my use of the integral inquiry approach which sought to capture quantitative and qualitative data and allowed me, as a researcher with relevant experience, to input my views into the research process. In researching the ethos of the case-study school, the values of the headteacher of The Bishop Pritchard School, Trevor Brown, became one of the central components in building the picture. Although greater space is given to the issues of methodology in chapter 5, it is appropriate to mention at this stage the background and views of Trevor Brown and to juxtapose his story with mine.

II. Trevor Brown (a pseudonym)

“The most powerful influence on the character of the school comes from the beliefs, personality and behaviour of the headteacher.” (Hall, 1998, p.44)

Section I mapped out my views as a self-professing Christian headteacher with 15 years' experience. Were these views unique to me or were there others who felt the same way? In researching the Bishop Pritchard School and talking with the executive headteacher there, I had an opportunity to find out.

Trevor Brown was appointed to the Bishop Pritchard School in 1996 at a time when the school was on the point of closure as a result of a poor Ofsted report, poor examination results and very low pupil admission numbers. The fact that few families wished to send their children to the school was a reflection of the fact that the local community had lost confidence in the school. To compound matters, the Church of England, who sponsored the school, was thinking of 'pulling out'. Under Trevor's leadership the fortunes of the school have been transformed. Exam results have risen every year and are now above the national average, Ofsted reports have been highly praiseworthy, suggesting that the school is outstanding and, unsurprisingly, there is now fierce competition for places as the school is heavily over-subscribed. As a result of all this success, Trevor was asked to oversee other 'struggling' schools in the town and was therefore made Executive Headteacher to reflect his new status in running several schools.

As a committed, self-professing Christian, how was Trevor able to reconcile his commitment to the poor with this performativity agenda, and did it differ significantly from mine? The key, in his view, revolved around his calling to a specific role. Trevor felt God's call to the school to develop the Kingdom of God in that part of the world by keeping the school alive. Without a Church school in that deprived part of the town, there would be a reduced Christian witness. This concept of maintaining a Christian witness was one of the over-arching beliefs in his Christian calling which he shared, at our first meeting, in a characteristically open and frank manner:

“I live in constant fear that one day someone will call my bluff and find out that I wasn't fully prepared for headship – and I still wonder even now! All I know is that God called me to the school and it was really important to keep the school going in the early days and maintain an effective Christian witness in the town and so also provide the Church and the town's Christian community with a school that they could be proud of.” (Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 22/09/2011).

His Free Church background and Christian worldview led him to a position of hard work, a sense of genuine hope and a submission to a higher authority. Trevor embodied these qualities in the early years of his headship and, as a result, they slowly became ingrained in the school culture. What is significant is that when I carried out my research of the school, 16 years later, the story of success passed on by both long-serving and newer members of staff revolved around these same three characteristics: hard work or diligence; a sense of hope or resilience, and a need for compliance (submission). The origin of all these big statements is covered in the remainder of this thesis

This leads on naturally to the very important question of whether Trevor's leadership style was tailored to the specific needs of the Bishop Pritchard School at the time or whether it could be applied as a generic model to all Church schools. Did he mould his style to the needs of the school or was it a standard model of school improvement to which he gave theological clothing so that the staff, governors and parents could buy into it? In this study, I suggest that it is the latter. I shall return to my evidence for this as this thesis unfolds and, in particular, in chapters 8 and 9 before concluding on this finding in chapter 10.

What was also powerful was that the story told by Trevor was in a very large part also my story. Both of us had a similar background on churchmanship and a similar emphasis on witness, mission and evangelism. Moreover, the story of my headship over the last 10 years in a different part of the country had a striking number of similarities to his. I took over a failing school which was suffering from an unfavourable Ofsted report, very low examination results and a poor reputation in the local community. Taken together this situation caused many within the local authority to talk about closing the school. I arrived in 2005 with a strong sense of calling and a Christian worldview built on hard work and hope. By 2010 the school was recognised by the DCSF as one of the most improved schools in England and by 2012 the value added results were in the top 30 of all secondary schools in England. Today the school is also heavily over-subscribed and the talk of school closure has been replaced with discussions with the local authority about school expansion.

The auto/biographical interviews with Trevor, over a period of time, had, quite rightly, merged into a conversation of shared experiences. The dawning of this realisation was captured in my field notes following our second auto/biographical interview or conversation:

“As the interview proceeded there was a dawning realisation that in listening to his story I was framing my own story and in reflecting on my own story I was better able to frame his story. I considered how two of the Church's more challenging schools at the turn of the millennium had both been transformed from possible closure to great success and how the two headteachers talking in the room were the two people God had used in this transformation. I further reflected on how useful this conversation would be to the National Society as a fly on the wall to capture and share the lived experiences of two headteachers

with a story to tell. As a PhD student, one of the further interesting facets of this realisation was that this was not what I was intending to find out when I started. It was however one of the places where I ended up.” (Field notes, reflection on interview with Executive Headteacher TB, 22/09/2011 and 21/02/2012).

The journey to this revelation was over a long period of time and would not have occurred without a number of building blocks being put in place. By declining my request to research my own school, the ethics committee at Canterbury Christ Church University enabled me to develop this symbiotic relationship with another Church school headteacher. My first research question analysing schools with a strong relationship between SIAS and Ofsted grades brought me to The Bishop Pritchard School and the stakeholders of this school gave me the clues of diligence, resilience and compliance which became the central planks in unlocking Trevor Brown’s story and mine as well.

In the rest of this thesis therefore, I explore how I came to these findings which were not directly part of my research questions but were clearly facilitated by them. It was these research questions which provided the framework for this journey to start. The first part of this journey was to delve further into the published research (literature) in this field which provided a rationale and focus for my research on the relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. In chapter 4, I start by analysing what is meant by ethos before exploring the meaning of ‘Christian ethos’. Section IV surveys statistical studies of Church schools; section V considers research conducted in Roman Catholic schools; section VI investigates research into academies with a Christian foundation; section VII considers the unique contribution of Jeynes (2003) to an understanding of learning habits and religious schools and, finally, section VIII considers the work of Ruth Deakin-Crick. Chapter 4 finishes with a summary of all the relevant research in this field.

4. Of Making Many Books

“Of making many books there is no end, and much study wears the body.”
(Ecclesiastes 12:12, TNIV)

I. Framework for the literature review

In this study I have drawn on a diverse range of literature. It is diverse in terms of methodologies, theological understandings and also in terms of the range of schools researched. In framing the literature review I have considered evidence from both the non-Anglican and non-maintained sectors both in England and abroad. Although my research is focused on maintained Church of England secondary schools in England, research into different types of school, sometimes in different countries, has contributed to a more complete picture of the relationship between ethos and outcomes and, moreover, provided useful insights for my research.

With regard to the sources of evidence, I have used both academic and ‘grey’ literature. ‘Grey’ literature is literature which has not been subject to academic peer review by being published in an academic journal or, indeed, subjected to a university viva. It includes talks given by teachers at conferences and professional journals, such as the AASSH journal. Although it may therefore not be of academic standard, it does nonetheless constitute an important source of evidence of what practitioners may be ‘feeling’ within the teaching profession. As such it sometimes fills the gaps in what may be argued to be an under-researched field.

In order to limit the large volume of literature into a manageable size, I have focused mainly, but not exclusively, on research which may be relevant to understanding secondary schools in England which has been produced in the last 20 years. The profound change in the education landscape in the last 20 years would mean that much research before this time is either less relevant or redundant. Throughout, I keep in mind the three research questions concerning ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes of Church of England secondary schools. In this chapter I do not consider primary schools, independent Christian schools or the literature solely on spiritual and values education.

II. What is ethos?

In reviewing the literature, two considerations were made. Firstly, for reasons already mentioned, the definition of both (Christian) ethos and educational outcomes (henceforth, outcomes) was broad. Secondly, although there is relatively little literature on the relationship between ethos and outcomes of maintained Church of England secondary schools, there is a good deal of related literature. Although not focused on the same type of school, it is

nonetheless relevant and will be included. More specifically, the literature review also considered:

1. Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools;
2. The 'new' academies with a Christian ethos;
3. The work of William Jeynes in the USA on learning habits;
4. The work of Cardus on schools in North America.

In what follows, I will start by reviewing some of the terminology used to describe ethos before providing a justification for using the working definition that was outlined in chapter 1 section III. Up to this point, I will be looking at ethos in general and not a specifically Christian ethos. I will then review a number of statistical and qualitative studies on Church schools in this area of ethos. In each case, I will draw out the main lessons from the studies of Church schools and the extent to which they relate to this particular research on the relationship between ethos and educational outcomes in maintained Church of England Secondary schools.

The Greek word ethos means custom or pattern of behaviour, sometimes *proper* behaviour. Perhaps, however, a better translation of the Greek word for ethos is 'character'. If it is taken as the character of the organisation it may be best explained in common parlance as 'the way we do things round here'. When the organisation is running smoothly, nobody thinks that ethos matters. However, when the organisation starts to fall apart, people realise how important it is to have a positive ethos. An example may be an NHS trust which is running well until it loses its trust manager. Thereafter the resulting chaos makes everyone realise how vital the ethos created by that trust manager actually was.

In English usage it reflects how a group acts and feels about itself. Forster (1997) develops this into an educational setting:

"It would be easy to think that by the 'ethos' of a school we mean the teaching of morality within it. It is much more. Ethos is a slippery word; it is a matter of feelings, impressions and attitudes." (Forster, 1997, p.7).

Allder (1993) claims that ethos is a 'frontier word' by virtue of its closeness to the edges of linguistic expressibility. Ethos is rendered intelligible in her view by 'connecting words' (such as 'ambience', 'spirit', 'atmosphere', and 'climate') which have clearer meanings and enable the meaning of ethos itself to be illuminated and discerned. Allder draws out the following conclusions about the meaning of ethos: that it refers *inter alia* to human activities and behaviour, to the human environment within which these enterprises take place, to a mood or moods which are pervasive within this environment, to norms rather than to exceptions, and to something that is unique (Allder, 1993, pp.63-69).

Whereas Allder sees ethos as the central point of reference, Solvason sees ethos as the product of the culture of the school, and culture is seen as the preferred category of analysis

because of its greater 'solidity' and accessibility (Solvason, 2005, p.87). Glover and Coleman (2005) do not indicate any overall preference for any one of the terms 'climate', 'ethos' and 'culture' in their review of the research in this area although they argue that there is something to be gained from a consistent approach (Glover and Coleman, 2005, p.266). Haydon (2006) regards culture as too broad a concept to capture his interest in the climate of values in which people live and in which young people grow up, but prefers the notion of an 'ethical environment' to that of an ethos as a category of analysis. For Eisner (1994), ethos refers to the core values of an organisation and that which is deep and fundamental to its life and work.

An important development made by Eisner, and others, is that there may be a significant gap between what the organisation espouses with respect to ethos and what the ethos of the organisation actually is. This raises important methodological and epistemological questions. In her study of a City Technology College in the North East of England, Green (2009a) identified a strong 'Bible-based ethos' amongst the senior managers of the school. In interviews with staff she noted that some staff did not feel part of this ethos and recognised that they could not get promotion in that school because of this. Green also observed that the pupils at the school were aware of which staff shared this ethos and which did not. Significantly, it was clear that for many within the school, they lived by a different ethos. I will return to this later in the chapter, in section VI.

McLaughlin offers the following definition of ethos which picks up this idea that there may be more than one ethos operating in an organisation:

"The influence of an ethos is seen in the shaping of human perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, dispositions and the like in a distinctive way which is implicated in that which is established. Although ethos most commonly refers to something which is experienced, an 'intended' ethos as well as an 'experienced' ethos can be pointed to in the case of an ethos which is deliberately shaped or stipulated." (McLaughlin, 2005, pp.311-312)

In terms of a specific school ethos, Donnelly (2000) researched two schools in Northern Ireland and discovered significant differences between the intended ethos and the experienced ethos. In St Elizabeth's (a pseudonym for a Catholic Primary school) the literature and message to parents was that the school was a pure Roman Catholic school which was committed to the teaching of the mother Church. However, when interviewing staff and governors on a one to one basis, Donnelly discovered that the people within the school did not fully subscribe to all the teachings of the Catholic Church. Donnelly suggests that the emphasis on the Catholicity of the school to the outside world was to align itself to the local Nationalistic community of Northern Ireland as opposed to the Unionist community. Or, in the words of one of the teachers "*Irish (as opposed to British) culture is a big part of our school.*" That is, it was as much political as religious. (Donnelly, 2000, pp.135-152 italics in parentheses added).

Casson (2013), in writing about three Catholic secondary schools in England notes that the ethos is changing over time and between generations. The strength of this research is its ability to identify a different ethos within a school originating from a changing social climate. She notes that while there is still a crucifix in classrooms of the Catholic schools, the Catholicity amongst the pupils within the schools is evolving. Catholic pupils are constructing 'fragmentary' Catholic identities which may be different from both their parents and their teachers.

Therefore there may be several ethoses competing for attention within a given school either at the level of the whole school or sub-units (departments or pupils) within it. These competing ethoses may not, necessarily, be harmonious. Tomlinson, Hogarth and Thomas (1989) discovered competing ethoses within schools when researching multi-racial education in comprehensive schools in the 1980s. The researchers concluded that it was the departments and individual teachers which had the greatest significance on whether the distinctive needs of students from ethnic minority backgrounds were being met; the management of the school as a whole was less significant.

In my study of The Bishop Pritchard School there was further evidence of more than one ethos operating at the school. The biggest difference was not between the school leadership and the rest of the staff but rather between the staff and pupils. While the majority of the staff researched could at least see the value of the Christian ethos of the school, many of the pupils saw no value in it at all. Subscribing to a more liberal secular view of society, these pupils believed that any talk of religion should be kept separate from schooling. Religion, to them, belonged in the private sphere and not in the public realm of their education.

In response, perhaps a better question than "What is meant by the ethos of a school?" is the question "What ethos is the school trying to achieve?" Here there may be greater consensus between and within schools. Moreover this consensus may span time and space – and type of school. Teachers and schools want students to achieve and fulfil their potential as human beings. This may take a wide range of forms such as acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. It will probably also include acquiring certain dispositions, virtues, qualities of character, emotional responses, tendencies, capacities and so forth. Ethos frequently exerts educative influence in relation to matters which cannot be explicitly articulated. For example, in his essay 'Learning and Teaching', Oakeshott (1990) points to the complex and living inheritance which teachers pass onto their pupils. This includes judgement, the acquisition of intellectual virtues and 'style' (which can only be imparted unobtrusively in ways which are highly related to an ethos: tones of voice, gestures, asides, oblique utterances and by example). This sense of the ethos affecting individuals within the school is central to this thesis. The way that the ethos of a Church school forms certain learning habits amongst the pupils is pivotal in this study. I will keep returning to this topic both in this chapter and throughout the remainder of this thesis.

In summary, when reviewing the literature on ethos it must be said that arriving at a single definition is problematic due to the complexities and ambiguities associated with the term. Nonetheless, this difficulty should not, of itself, deter us from trying to understand better this important concept (Green, 2013). In conducting this research I made use of a working definition. If stakeholders asked me what I meant by ethos, I would then be able to use a specific form of words. The definition used for ethos, stated at the start of the thesis, was from McLaughlin and it is repeated here for convenience:

“An ethos can be regarded as the prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an identifiable entity.” (McLaughlin, 2005, p.311)

In this research the identifiable entity is a school. While this was a working definition, this thesis is not bound by it. I acknowledge other definitions found both within the literature and in the understanding of the stakeholders surveyed. Although the ethos statements produced by governors and management teams of schools serve as a good starting point, it is clear from what is written above that the true ethos of a school goes well beyond this.

If the term ethos is difficult to define then the term ‘Christian ethos’ may be more so. It is to a review of the literature in this field that I now turn.

III. What is Christian ethos?

a) Christian ethos and a Church of England perspective

As already noted, both Dearing (2001) and Chadwick (2012) use the term ‘distinctively Christian ethos’ or ‘distinctive brand’ (see, for example: Dearing, 2001, p.9; Chadwick, 2012, p.3). However as we have extensively covered in chapters 1 and 2, defining what this ethos (or ‘brand’) is, or should be, has proved more difficult and, I maintain, that there have been too few sustained attempts by the Church of England to do so. One attempt comes from a former Archbishop of Canterbury who points out that Church schools are “distinctive in being explicit Christian communities that unashamedly offer a Christian vision.” (Carey, 1998, p.viii). This definition, in itself, needs further clarification. Perhaps the best starting point is the legal requirement imposed on schools.

All schools that have a religious character must have an ethos statement. The law as regards the duty of the governors in this regard is found in the Instruments of Government in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 12, paragraph 1:1. The Church of England has developed the following model ethos statement which schools can adapt to suit their needs:

“Recognizing its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England in

partnership with the churches at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve the community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.” (CofE, 2013).

While providing a laudable starting point for schools, this guidance offers limited assistance to Church schools. There is, for example, no reference to teaching, behaviour, leadership or achievement. As such, it does not address any of the issues facing Church schools with regard to an Ofsted inspection. In addition, the statement is too broad to give any significant guidance for a SIAS inspection either.

The Church of England rightly acknowledges that the ethos of a Church school will “always be difficult to define” (ibid.) but , in order to provide more help to governors and headteachers, identifies thirteen aspects of a Church school ethos: the manner that the mission statement is conveyed to parents, relationships with the local church, relationships between staff and pupils, standards of behaviour, links with the local community, the effectiveness of the pastoral system, whether the building is cared for, provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs, the ambience of the school as a Church school, resources to support a Church foundation, whether PSHE (Personal, Social and Health education) programmes support Christian values, whether there are staff and governors’ prayers and eucharists, and, finally, whether there is a well-managed policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (CofE, 2013).

While this list is again a helpful starting point, there is no specific guidance for Church schools on how any of the items listed might be addressed. The lack of specific guidance is not helped by the new educational landscape facing Church schools. With the advent of academy chains, multi academy trusts (MATs) and free schools, there may be a number of partners working with the diocese in support of schools. This may present a tension with regard to the Christian ethos of the school (Scott and McNeish, 2012, p.20). Chadwick (2012, p.13) points out that where the diocese has been moved into a subordinate position in terms of governance and trusteeship, the partnership has not worked so well in the light of a weakened ethos. This would suggest that clearer guidance is more important than ever.

b) Christian ethos and a perspective from Church school headteachers

Many Church of England school headteachers firmly believe that there is a strong link between the Christian ethos of their schools and their schools’ success. On occasion some very powerful words are used and delivered with passion but seldom elaborated upon. Many of these words are used at conferences and in professional journals. As such, they represent ‘grey’ literature. Roberts (2012) summarises the success of her school with these words:

“Core Christian beliefs of love, respect, forgiveness, humility, peace, justice, reconciliation and care for others creates an ethos with a strong sense of moral purpose and direction which, in turn, drives achievement and personal development.” (Roberts, 2012, p.5)

This sentiment is also picked up by headteachers who have led schools from virtual closure to over-subscription coupled with high exam results. Peers (2012), reflects on the success of his school with the following words:

“The transformation of the school has been achieved by seeking to live an intense unapologetic Christian life now with the help and assistance of our full-time School Priest-Chaplain....we firmly believe that it is our Christian character that drives up standards for children. Taizé provides a model of Christian living that engages and energises young people and changes lives.” (Peers, 2012, pp.14-15)

Coates (2014) extols the virtues of a Sixth Form with a strong Christian ethos. Like Roberts and Peers, a strong link is suggested between the Christian ethos provided and the strong educational outcomes resulting. For example, in starting from a school with no Sixth Form provision at all, Coates makes the following comment:

“Three years on, with nearly 300 students studying over 30 A-Level subjects, we have won a Church School Distinctiveness Award for the development of spirituality in our Sixth Form.” (Coates, 2014, p.6)

Although the passion and integrity of Church school headteachers is not in doubt, there is a question about the evidence to support some of the claims mentioned above. Can the success of a large secondary school be really attributed to Taizé? Are there other reasons such as a changing intake which has made events such as a visit to Taizé now possible? In this thesis I hold that there needs to be a more systematic and wide-ranging evidence base to draw a link between Christian ethos and outcomes in Church schools. Further, I suggest that there needs to be a mechanism, or clear rationale, about the way that the two are related or linked. What does current peer reviewed research suggest about Church schools and their ethos?

c) Christian ethos and a perspective from recent empirical research on Church schools

Research by Colson (2004), Street (2007) and Jelfs (2008) provides a different perspective on the understanding of ethos and outcomes in Church schools to the one provided by the Church of England and many Church school headteachers.

Colson (2004) interviewed the headteachers of four Church schools in London. The aim of the research was to investigate the perceptions of the headteachers about their role in the transmission and formation of values. The headteachers interviewed perceived that they had a significant role in values development but they were unable to articulate this in ways other than through their schools' collective worship. There was no considered and coherent view about how headteachers influence pedagogy and the curriculum from the perspective of Christian values. Indeed the study finds that the headteachers were unclear about how their schools' ethos was distinctively different. Rather, the headteachers were keen to be seen as tolerant of everything and serving the whole community – like a community school. Needless to say the notion of a clear and distinct Christian ethos impacting on educational outcomes did not emerge from the research.

A similar conclusion was made by Street (2007) who focused, in particular, on the impact of the Dearing (2001) review. Ten head teachers of Church schools were interviewed in two dioceses and covering a range of demographics – inner city, urban and suburban. All headteachers interviewed were aware of the Dearing review but rejected the idea that it had a formative influence on the development of their policy and practice.

Street identified three main themes from his research. Firstly, all headteachers saw the importance of developing a distinctive Christian ethos within their schools. However the precise nature of this ethos as one distinct from the local authority schools was unclear. That is, while there was a common language about (Christian) ethos, there was not a common understanding about what it meant. Next, the headteachers were keen to develop the nurturing of the Christian faith within their schools. This is the 'domestic' as opposed to 'general' function of Church schools. However, once again, there was no consensus on how this nurturing would take place apart from a series of Christian activities such as Christian Unions running within the school. In particular, there was no shared understanding of what spiritual development meant among the headteachers. Finally, there was a general frustration that the local parish churches were not engaging with the schools in the way that they could and, indeed, in the way recommended in the Dearing review.

Street concludes his study with the following words:

“Whilst recognising the limited nature of this research and the undesirability of indulging in inappropriate generalisations, the evidence suggests that *The Way*

Ahead appears to have had a minimal impact upon the thinking and practice of Church school headteachers.” (Street, 2007, p.146).

Street then continues to outline four possible reasons for this lack of engagement. Firstly, the Dearing report has nothing substantially new to offer, apart from the recommendation that an extra 100 Church schools be created. Second, perhaps linked to this, the report has not been the subject of the strategic education direction adopted by the dioceses. Dioceses have been focusing on practical issues of expansion without considering the less pressing issues of the ethos of these new Church schools. Third, despite ostensibly representing the Church's agenda for mission, the report has been ignored by other branches of the Church and, fourth, and finally, there has been no consideration of what it means to be a headteacher of a Church school as distinct from any other school. Although the *The Way Ahead* recognises the role of the Church school headteacher as a form of ecclesiastical ministry (Dearing, 2001, pp.60-61), there is no development of this concept – either within the report itself or within the dioceses.

While recognising that the studies of both Street and Colson are small-scale and therefore not generalisable, the available evidence points to the fact that there may be a lack of clarity in the way that headteachers perceive the Christian ethos of their schools. This presents a problem for the Church of England and the headteachers of Church schools. If the Church maintains that the success of Church schools results from their distinctive ethos or 'brand', this assertion is significantly weakened by the fact that many Church school leaders do not know what this distinctive ethos or 'brand' actually is (Street, 2007, pp.327-329).

A further recent empirical study of Church schools was carried out by Jelfs (2008) within a diocese in the South-West of England. It must be noted that only one of the schools in the sample was a secondary school and it was a joint Anglican / Catholic school. As such this study involved a different sample of schools from the previous two studies quoted above. Nonetheless, the findings are not dissimilar. Jelfs mounted a robust critique of the management and operation of the Church schools that made up her sample:

“..there has been no attempt to critique the dominant educational discourse or develop a significantly distinctive approach. Consequently their (the schools) distinctive Christian character is jeopardized by an unwitting compliance with values and principles that may compromise those they seek to promote, as well as exposing a failure to engage with Christian faith....” (Jelfs, 2008, p.2 parentheses added).

Like Colson and Street before her, Jelfs contends that there is little evidence that Church schools have a distinctive Christian ethos which can be defined, let alone applied to improving their educational outcomes.

All three studies are implicitly critical of both the Church and its headteachers for failing to articulate a distinctive Christian ethos. This criticism may be more poignant given the fact that these studies were conducted relatively soon after the publication of the Dearing (2001) Report which highlighted the need for distinctiveness.

However, in some senses these criticisms are unfair for at least two reasons. Firstly, all three pieces of research fail to give adequate space to the pressures on schools to secure good exam results – the performativity agenda (see, for example chapter 3 section I part c). The pressures of league tables, Ofsted and parental choice begin to dominate the agendas of headteachers and their schools to the detriment of everything else; including the latest report on ethos from the Church of England. It is particularly surprising that Street (2007), himself a former headteacher, does not write more about this. The second broad criticism of these qualitative research studies concerns their lack of understanding of how the Church of England functions. Models of leadership and accountability within the Church are highly delegated. The notion that the Chairman of the Board of Education or the General Secretary of the National Society have strong influence over dioceses is far from reality. Indeed both these offices are very small with few paid employees and, as such, rely heavily on Diocesan Boards of Education to implement policy. In turn, Diocesan Boards have limited resources and limited control over individual schools within their diocese. The model of leadership permeating the whole of the Church of England may be seen more as one of shared discernment rather than autocratic top-down management. Nonetheless, whatever the reasons, research evidence suggests that the situation within which Church schools operate is one where Church school leaders are often unable to articulate how their Christian ethos can influence learning habits and outcomes.

In summary, while the Church claims that the ethos of its schools is important for success, there is evidence to suggest that there is no clear articulation of why this might be so. Indeed, there is also some evidence to suggest that the Church doesn't even know what this ethos actually is. To counter these suggestions, there have been a number of thoughtful ideas proposed by advocates of Church schools which offer reasons why a Christian ethos, however obtained, can have an impact on success in terms of educational outcomes. It is to these broader perspectives of Church schools that I now come.

d) Christian ethos and a broader perspective from the Church of England of how it makes a difference

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9, TNIV)

Williams (2003) suggests reasons why Church schools may be different from other schools and capable of developing their own ethos. Quoting from Winkley (2002), he notes that schools tend to be more successful when they have strong internal bonding. This bonding may be with

regard to structure, organisation or culture. The teachers (and pupils) in such schools tend to work better together in teams and are more civil. Williams (op.cit.) develops this idea to stress the importance of learning habits which emerge as a result of living in a group. There may be unstated similarities between members of this group. Here Church schools have a clear advantage. This theme is also made explicit by Pritchard (2009).

According to Pritchard, ethos is the ghost in the machine of education.

“Everyone recognises it when they see it; parents want it; politicians regard it with awe, but how do you produce it?” (ibid., p.5)

Pritchard goes on to say that this is precisely where faith schools can fit in. The reason is that faith schools have a narrative to fall back on. For the executive headteacher of Bishop Pritchard School, this narrative was extremely important to him when he started at the school in the Christmas period of 1996 as headteacher. In the lead up to applying for the job, being appointed and then in the first few months, he spoke movingly about his experiences and this became the narrative that kept him there during some very bleak times. It is significant that he was able to recount this narrative of God’s provision to me in February 2012 – over 16 years later:

“the school advertised for a head and interestingly for me they advertised for a Christian. When I say it looked quite interesting, it was my wife who spotted it, she spotted the advert and she said, ‘I think you should look at this’. And she saw it and they were very honest. When I looked at it, looked at the school and thought no thank you. I said ‘I’m not sure we should go for this darling’ and she said ‘Perhaps we should pray about it’. So we did pray about it; I agreed to get the pack, the pack looked awful, they put all the stuff in, the governors were very honest. Still wasn’t sure but we prayed about it and I agreed to apply and made an agreement with God that if I was offered the job, I’d take it, which is something you should never do really. And came down here and was offered the job and took it. And it was very interesting because there had been a prayer group, a number of prayer groups praying for this school for years and they really ... they had been given a picture of this school being a beacon but they couldn’t believe it. But they had been praying for the head, they prayed for me which was really good and this is part of the story... It was quite difficult and my first three weeks I really thought, ‘Why am I here and have you brought me to close the school?’ And we had all sorts – we’d had knife attacks, we’d have people driving through the front of the school, we had all sorts of bizarre things going on. Very interestingly I got two letters in my first three months, two letters from two different prayer groups, both prayer groups independently said we think God has given us a word for you and it was the same verse from each of them and it was Joshua 1.9, which was really quite exciting. So that really

encouraged me and I thought: actually I know I am here for a purpose.
(Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 21/2/2012).

Faith schools and those who work in them benefit from a relatively well-known religious narrative in which there is still a degree of consensus. In the 2011 census, 59.3% of people in Britain described themselves as Christians (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Although this figure is significantly down on the figure of 71.7% for 2001, it is still over half the population. As such, it remains the single biggest belief system in Britain today. Therefore, for a Christian (faith) school, the values emanating from this common narrative are likely to be relatively familiar to everyone and also relatively easy to explain. However, research by the Bible Society, published in February 2014, suggested that Bible stories were not well known by either children today or their parents (The Independent, 2014). Nonetheless, Church schools have the opportunity to draw on a relatively common, albeit diminishing, narrative and, as a result, there is the possibility of a distinct ethos. It is important to note that it is possible for secular schools to also achieve a distinct ethos (BHA, 2006, p.4). However, crucially, Pritchard (2009) makes a vital point about the rootedness of the ethos in Church schools when compared with secular schools:

“Secular schools have many ethical attributes which are very laudable but they lack the familiarity, the symbols, the narratives and histories that bring the abstract to emotional life.” (Pritchard, 2009, p.5)

On a practical level, a Christian ethos emanates from a Christian headteacher and a predominantly Christian teaching staff. According to Hall the most powerful influence on the character of the school comes from the beliefs, personality and behaviour of the headteacher (Hall, 1998, p.44). Hall goes on to write that when one considers the staff as a whole, the school’s ethos will be fundamentally shaped by the attitudes of the staff. This is a highly significant point in that it implies that the values, habits and behaviours of the staff could ‘rub off’ onto those of the children. Hope (1998) suggests something similar. Hope reflects on his own school days and how his teachers influenced his spiritual growth and development. He points out that the Christian faith is often ‘caught not taught’ and concludes by saying “there were many unspoken qualities which I believe I caught at an early age from my teachers and for which I remain thankful.” (ibid., p.26)

However, in response to Hall, Eade (1999) points out that although the appointment of Christian headteachers is central to realizing the distinctive character of Church schools, there was a professional adherence to the Christian distinctiveness of Church schools on the part of those headteachers appointed to Church schools who have no Church allegiance. The key point is that, whether there is a Christian allegiance on the part of the headteacher or not, the values espoused are Christian values and if these values are, in turn, inculcated in the children, there is the potential for them to influence educational outcomes.

e) Summary of the meaning of Christian ethos together with outcomes including a revisit to the three research questions

In summary, the literature on the Christian ethos of Church schools is varied and somewhat contradictory. There is a general consensus that ethos matters (chapter 2 section II). Furthermore, the Church acknowledges the importance of its schools developing their own distinctive Christian ethos or 'brand' (chapter 2 section I part d). This position has been reiterated in all publications by the Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division and the National Society ever since 2001. Despite this, there is relatively little explicit guidance from the Church as to how its schools should go about creating such an ethos. Indeed, although Church headteachers consider ethos to be significant, there is evidence that there may be little understanding amongst them as to what a Christian ethos actually is. In particular there is a lack of research evidence about the relationship between ethos and outcomes and no references in the literature to the use of SIAS and Ofsted grades to compare ethos with outcomes. Finally, although there are some good *a priori* reasons why the ethos of a Christian community can influence the values and habits of that community, this is under-developed and there is scope for exploring the effect of a Christian ethos on the learning habits of the school community.

In the rest of this chapter I will review other literature which focuses on the three research questions posed at the start of this thesis. First of all, I will look at the literature providing statistical analyses on the achievement of Church schools compared with non-Church schools. This will serve as a backdrop to my first research question. Next, I will review the literature on Catholic schools and how this contributes to the debate. Thirdly, I will review the literature on the non-denominational academies. Fourthly, I will address the distinctive contribution to learning habits made by Jeynes (2003) in the United States and Cardus in North America. Finally I will examine the work of Ruth Deakin-Crick, predominantly in one Bristol school. Taken together, all these studies will provide a strong theoretical background for both my second and third research questions involving ethos, outcomes and learning habits.

IV. Ethos, learning habits and outcomes of Church schools – a brief survey of some recent statistical analyses

a) Value Domains

Francis and Penny (2013) carried out an important study on pupil voice within State-maintained Anglican secondary schools. Like Casson (2013), the significance of this research lies in the fact that it defines ethos from the pupils' perspective (see chapter 4 section II above).

The sample used by Francis and Penny comprised 15 Church¹⁶ schools and 25 State-maintained schools with no religious character. Questionnaires using a Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932) were used with all the pupils in years 9 and 10 in order to reflect a number of specific value domains. The 10 key value domains selected were: Christian beliefs, Church and society, non-traditional beliefs, personal aims in life, personal well-being, attitudes towards school, attitudes towards sexual morality, attitudes towards substance abuse, attitudes towards right and wrong, and, finally, attitudes towards the environment. The collective worldview of the pupils attending the Anglican schools was then set alongside the collective worldview of their peers attending comparable schools with no religious character.

Francis and Penny drew two main conclusions from the findings. Firstly, that the collective worldview of pupils attending Church schools is not greatly different from the collective worldview of pupils attending comparable schools with no religious character (ibid., p.147). The two value domains in which the differences are most marked are Christian belief and Church and society. There were a further four domains where there was a slight difference between the two sets of pupils: sexual morality, attitudes towards substance abuse, attitudes towards right and wrong and attitudes towards the environment. In all the other domains selected there was no significant difference. As a result of this, Francis and Penny conclude that it may not be possible to support the view that Church schools provide a distinctly different ethos from schools with no religious character. The second conclusion, linked to this, is that the collective worldview of pupils attending Church schools generates an ethos which is consistent with a predominantly secular host culture.

Both these conclusions are compelling, especially the second conclusion. Unfortunately Francis and Penny don't elaborate on what is meant by a secular host culture and precisely how they reached this conclusion. A number of other, more methodological, criticisms can be made of this research. Firstly, the sample chosen of year 9 and year 10 pupils may not give the complete picture. Freathy (2006), notes that 13-14 year olds are least supportive of Christian values. It is possible that the inclusion of year 7 and sixth formers in the sample would have

¹⁶ As is the case throughout this thesis, 'Church schools' are taken to be State-maintained Church of England (or Anglican) Secondary schools. See glossary. This group is precisely the focus of Francis and Penny (2013) here.

provided different results. In the same vein, when analysing the effect of a Church school on values, a cross-sectional study is likely to be less meaningful than a longitudinal study. The research by Francis and Penny does not record what the children went on to believe, value and become when they left school.

Nevertheless the study on value domains by Francis and Penny is one of the few recent pieces of research on character formation in Church secondary schools. As such it has the potential to give valuable insights into the field of how the ethos of a Church school might influence learning habits and educational outcomes in those schools. I will return to some of the results of this study in chapter 9.

b) Academic Performance

Arthur and Godfrey (2005) analysed the attainment and progress of Church secondary schools compared with community schools in 2004. To do this they used the government (DfES) measure of value added based on the national pupil database (NPD) and with reference to the school returns for PLASC (pupil level annual school census). When measuring a school's performance, a better measure than attainment is the school's value added scores. The reason for this is that the latter measures results in the light of starting points. For this reason, Arthur and Godfrey put more emphasis on achievement (or progress) than attainment¹⁷. This also chimes with the latest Government thinking (Ofsted, 2015). To overcome the problem of some schools entering pupils for a large number of exams to boost scores, Arthur and Godfrey used the best 8 GCSE results or the 'capped' GCSE points score. This was in line with the government published statistics at the time.¹⁸ Finally, the mean was chosen as the best measure of the 'average' points score in making comparisons.

The main results of the survey were:

1. Value added scores based on all qualifications comparing Church schools with non-faith schools show a difference in favour of the Church school sector roughly equivalent to just under half the pupils achieving an extra grade in one GCSE or equivalent subject;
2. Pupils attending Church schools make, on average, greater progress in KS3 (Key Stage 3, or years 7 to 9) than those attending non-faith schools;
3. During KS4 (Key Stage 4, or years 10 and 11), pupils in Voluntary Aided Church schools achieve higher value added scores, on average, than their Voluntary Controlled counterparts.

¹⁷ See also the Glossary.

¹⁸ At the time of writing, the Government has produced a more prescriptive list of what counts in the 8 subjects as a measure of school performance. In 2014, 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' were introduced and will be used after 2015. This measure is relatively similar to the 'Best 8' at the time when Arthur and Godfrey (2005) were carrying out their research.

In evaluating this research, great care must be exercised in accounting for the different intake into Church of England schools compared with Community schools. It could be argued that the sort of families who choose Church schools may be better equipped to take advantage of the education system. Arthur and Godfrey acknowledge that there is a smaller proportion of ethnic minority pupils and pupils on free school meals (FSM) within Church schools, on average, as compared with Community schools. This fact could influence both attainment and progress and was the crux of the argument made by the BHA against Church schools (chapter 2 section IV). For this, the BHA (2006; 2014a; 2014b) refer to work at the National Foundation for Education and Research by Schagen et al. (2002) and also Schagen and Schagen (2005a):

“Because faith schools have good results and good reputations, informed parents may be keen to obtain places for their children, even if they are not adherents of the religion concerned. This could further improve the results of faith schools, and thus contribute to an increasing polarisation between faith schools and other schools.” (Schagen and Schagen, 2005a, p.205).

To counter this criticism, Arthur and Godfrey calculated the value added scores of faith schools when area differences, school differences, individual pupil differences and social mobility were ‘factored in’. Their conclusion was that faith schools still out-performed non faith schools although the gap was significantly narrowed (Arthur and Godfrey, 2005, p.16). With regard to the proportion of ethnic minority pupils, while Arthur and Godfrey note that there is a smaller percentage in Church schools, they also point out that the results for Black Caribbean pupils were better in Church schools than they were elsewhere. Their overall conclusion was that, even after considering prior attainment, the residual difference between Church schools and non-faith schools was still noticeable (Arthur and Godfrey, 2005, p.41). It should also be noted, as reported in chapter 2 section IV, that more recent statistics from the Church of England suggest that there is no difference in terms of social class and ethnic groupings between Church schools, and non-Church schools (Pritchard, 2013, p.2).

The second broad criticism of the argument that Church schools achieve better results, concerns the number of exam entries. Critics of Church schools assert that the higher points score achieved by pupils in Church schools results from the fact that pupils in Church schools are entered for more examinations (Schagen and Schagen, 2005a; 2005b). Using regression analysis and a large data set, Godfrey and Morris (2008) investigated this criticism. They discovered that Church schools did enter pupils for more GCSE exams. The reason was that most Church schools had a policy of making RE compulsory at the end of Key Stage 4 (age 16). Godfrey and Morris (ibid.) found that entering pupils for an extra GCSE in RE did not raise the average capped points score per pupil (the preferred measure of GCSE performance adopted by Ofsted and the DFE at the time). Moreover, what was particularly striking was the fact that in terms of mean achievement, pupils in faith schools scored more highly without the contribution of points gained in Religious Education exams than pupils in non-faith schools scored *with* their Religious Education points. Godfrey and Morris summarise their findings with:

“Whatever the effects of following courses in Religious Education may have in influencing the overall attainment of pupils attending faith schools at the end of their compulsory schooling, their GCSE Religious Education examination results do not totally account for their generally higher points scores. Further investigation is required....” (Godfrey and Morris, 2008, p.221).

Arthur and Godfrey (2005) provide a tentative list of features that might help explain the greater academic performance of faith schools generally:

1. A religious stance that is shared, celebrated and motivates the school community to respect and honour the innate abilities of self and others;
2. A greater sense of vocational commitment on the part of teachers to sustain a faith ethos;
3. Greater parental involvement in and parental commitment to the school;
4. An emphasis on the pastoral activities of the school with a marked focus on building a community with high expectations of behaviour and attendance;
5. An emphasis on a wide range of pedagogical methods and less emphasis on wholesale ‘child centred’ approaches and a stronger atmosphere of order (see also chapter 9 section IV part c);
6. Greater emphasis on academic as opposed to vocational courses, particularly a strong focus on religious education and the humanities (see also the work of Jeynes (2003) recorded in section VII);
7. An atmosphere of success and belonging with strong parental support – on average, providing a more homogeneous school system of norms and values. (Arthur and Godfrey, op.cit., p.5).

These features rehearse some of the arguments already made about the reasons Church schools are effective, as reported in section III part d above. In my view these features are logical, persuasive and merit further investigation using the perceptions of the stakeholders in Church schools. In fairness to Arthur and Godfrey, they do not make the claim that any of the seven features are substantiated. Indeed the statistical techniques employed by the authors are not designed to address them. This lends further weight to a more integral inquiry approach. Significantly, there is no explicit mention of learning habits although these are implied. For example, number six finds an echo in the work of Jeynes (2003) in the United States. We shall come to this later in section VII. Before then, it is important to examine the research on ethos and attainment within Catholic schools in England. Catholic schools were set up shortly after Church of England schools in the 19th century. Although like Church of England schools they continue to thrive, they share many of the same problems and challenges facing Church of England schools. Therefore, the significant amount of research into Roman Catholic schools in England can prove helpful in forging a better understanding of Church of England schools as well.

V. Ethos, learning habits and outcomes in Catholic schools

“At the heart of this understanding of life lies God, its creator. Indeed without acknowledgement of God as the source and destiny of all human life, efforts at education will always fail to reach beyond the pragmatic.” (Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, quoted in Stock, 2012, p.5)

At the outset, it is important to note that the aims of Catholic education are fundamentally different from Anglican education. Whereas in England, Church of England schools were originally set up with a ‘general’ function – to educate the poor of the parish irrespective of Church background, Roman Catholic schools both sought and still seek to nurture faith in the Roman Catholic community. This situation stems, in part, from the circumstances surrounding the history of the two traditions in school provision. In the early 19th century, the Church of England was the ‘established’ Church with a duty to meet the spiritual needs of the nation. The Roman Catholic Church could not claim such a privileged position and so the remit of the Catholic Poor School Committee in 1849 was to meet the needs of Catholic families only. To do otherwise would have been considered highly inappropriate. Significantly, the situation in Ireland was the reverse with the Roman Catholic Church being the established Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland (part of the Anglican Communion) addressing the spiritual needs of the protestant community in that country. True, Church of England schools in England also have this ‘domestic’ function but the ‘general’ function is meant to dominate (Pritchard, 2013). Although written a long time ago, the ‘Durham’ Report (1970) is still relevant in this regard:

“The Church (of England) should for the present see its continued involvement in the Dual System principally as a way of expressing its concern for the general education of all children and young people rather than as a means for giving ‘denominational instruction’.” (National Society, 1970, p.281).

Indeed the situation above with regard to Catholic schooling is not only limited to England and Ireland. Casson points out: “many Catholic dioceses throughout the world have struggled with the challenge of admission of non-Catholic students into Catholic schools.” (Casson, 2013, p.142)

Stock (2012) provides an authoritative overview of Catholic education and it is, in many senses, as significant to the Roman Catholic Church in England as the Dearing review is to the Church of England. At the beginning of his short book Stock outlines four broad reasons why the Catholic Church provides schools:

1. To assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people;

2. To assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children;
3. To be at the service of the local Church – the diocese, the parish and the Christian home;
4. To be “a service to society” (ibid., pp.7-9).

Recent research in Catholic secondary education is largely quantitative and is mainly grouped around two foci: firstly, research into attitudes and, secondly research into attainment. With regard to attitudes, Francis and Robbins (2005) support the conclusion that pupils attending Catholic secondary schools display a distinctive values profile. This values profile is, in turn, influenced by attendance at Mass and general Church involvement. The extent to which this values profile is linked to learning habits is not addressed in the research.

With regard to the relationship between a Catholic school and educational outcomes, Morris and Godfrey (2006) found that secondary school pupils in the Catholic maintained sector were performing, on average, better than those attending non-Catholic secondary schools, at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Critically, this remained the case when adjustments were made for prior attainment and the socio-economic status (SES) of the pupils. These findings mirror the work carried out on Church of England Secondary schools by Arthur and Godfrey (2005), covered in section IV above. These findings are contested by the British Humanist Association (see: Oldfield et al., 2013; BHA, 2014b). According to the BHA, the higher average points score in Catholic schools (and Anglican schools) at GCSE was accounted for by entry into an extra GCSE in religious education (BHA, 2014a, p.9). As we have already noted in the previous section, Godfrey and Morris (2008) have provided statistical evidence to refute this. Since then there has been no further research findings from the BHA to suggest otherwise.

The findings recorded immediately above are very important and represent a significant response to those people who assert that the higher attainment in faith schools results from the higher SES of the intake. As we have already noted, the removal of the debate away from social privilege weakens the case against faith schools in general made by the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society. It opens up the debate about other factors accounting for the success of both Roman Catholic and Church of England schools such as, potentially, learning habits derived from a ‘religious school effect’.

Although Morris and Godfrey (2006) acknowledge that their findings do not definitely demonstrate the existence of a ‘Catholic school effect’, Morris (1998; 2005) challenges the judgments made by Ofsted with regard to the success of Catholic schools. Ofsted asserted that the success of Catholic schools stemmed simply from strong leadership and better quality teaching. Morris found that overall Catholic schools’ effectiveness is more to do with their functioning as a community rather than the quality of teaching and leadership.

Morris (2005) then outlines the possible reasons for this modest 'Catholic school effect'. He concludes that as the majority of State-supported Catholic schools serve, predominantly, communities with a particular religious history and identity, they are likely to have higher levels of congruity with parental values and attitudes than schools serving more diverse and pluralistic communities. Social cohesion between school and home is likely to produce a high degree of social harmony and education purpose resulting in high levels of academic success. Morris goes on to say that the supportive environment created is of particular benefit to those pupils who are socially disadvantaged. This idea of a strong community identity based on shared values is echoed by the work on Church of England schools by Williams (2003), Arthur and Godfrey (2005) and Pritchard (2009).

Grace (2002) has carried out research into the impact of Catholicity on the Catholic school effect. Catholicity refers to the spiritual and religious sense of the pupils in terms of their Catholic tradition. This would be measured by attendance at Mass and understanding of Catholic doctrine. Grace concluded his qualitative study by noting that Catholic school leaders were able to draw upon spiritual capital as a result of their Catholic identity and history which was a buffer to the challenges of secularisation. Although Grace does not draw a connection between this and measurable outcomes, it is possible to identify some degree of resilience within the Catholic school effect which may contribute to learning habits.

“Catholic schools have an advantage arising from the social capital of being embedded in strong functional communities represented by Church and parish agencies.” (Grace, 2002, p.92)

It is significant that this was precisely the point about resilience made by the Chaplain and the deputy headteacher at the case-study school, Bishop Pritchard School (chapter 9 section III part c).

In summary, many of the factors reported to influence the success of Roman Catholic schools find resonance with the research on Church of England schools. Within the literature there is evidence that both Roman Catholic and Church of England schools out-perform non-religious schools even when socio-economic factors are taken into account. The research suggests that, in the case of Catholic schools at least, this is due to different values. These values may well be linked to learning habits although this latter term is not mentioned in the literature.

Roman Catholic schools provide an important benchmark for Church of England schools. As noted at the start of this section, Roman Catholic schools have a predominantly 'domestic' function to serve only the Roman Catholic community. It is therefore reasonable to assume that there will be, in general, a greater proportion of religious adherents making up the school community. In this sense, at least, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Christian ethos is potentially very strong and may account for the success of Roman Catholic schools as suggested above. An alternative approach to a distinctive Christian ethos can be found within

some of the 'newer' academies that have been set up by non-denominational Christian foundations. Often the intended ethos of these schools, like Roman Catholic schools, is very strong. In the next section, I shall look at two such academies: Emmanuel College and Trinity Academy, both in the North of England.

VI. Ethos, learning habits and outcomes in non-denominational academies

As already noted, in the last few years there has been a new development within education. This is the creation of academies, or schools independent of the local authority. As schools seek to work collaboratively and re-create the support networks formerly provided by the local authority, this has led to the establishing of Multi Academy Trusts (or MATs).

Although not conceived as a MAT, the Emmanuel Schools Foundation (ESF) which was started by Sir Peter Vardy, a highly successful Christian businessman, had many features of a MAT. There were four schools in this foundation. Trinity Academy, one of the schools, boasted at one stage the title of 'the most improved academy in England', but perhaps the most famous, due to media reports on 'creationism', is Emmanuel College. Both these schools have been the subject of highly significant research. Green (2009a) carried out ethnographic research on Emmanuel College and Pike (2010) carried out a survey of the views of staff and year 9 pupils at Trinity Academy. We shall look at both these studies in turn.

Green (2009a) researched the impact of the Bible-based ethos at Emmanuel College on the school as a whole. The view of Sir Peter Vardy was that the ethos of the College would be permeated with the seven core values which were held to be at the heart of what the College stood for. These values were: honourable purpose, humility, compassion, integrity, accountability, courage and determination. To reinforce these values each of the pupils were required to carry cards in their blazer pockets which had the seven core values printed on (see Green, 2009a, p.165).

In total, Green interviewed 18 members of staff together with groups of pupils from year 10. Her conclusion was that, while all the senior members of staff shared the faith habitus, along with Sir Peter Vardy, this was not being transmitted to the remainder of the school community and, most crucially, it was not being applied by the pupils. While the pupils generally liked their school and were supportive of it, they only saw the relevance of the Bible-based ethos during timetabled Bible lessons (RE lessons and tutor time) and assemblies. This was in sharp contrast to the vision of the school management which sought to make the Bible relevant to every aspect of life.

"It is a major finding of this thesis... that the Bible was taught and experienced by the students in tightly prescribed cultural spaces. The thesis contends that this re-enforces, however unintentionally, the perception consistently found in the student data that the Bible was only relevant to these contexts.

Furthermore, it is suggested that this reflects the view commonly found in western liberal democracies that matters of religion and faith are only relevant to the private, rather than public, sphere.” (Green, 2009a, p.275)

Moreover, as we have already noted in section II of this chapter, many staff came to realise that they would not be able to get promotion to senior management positions within the school as a result of the fact that they did not share the same Bible-based ethos.

In defence of Emmanuel College, and other schools within the ESF, the educational outcomes are very good. Academic results are very high, attendance is high and behaviour is very good. Pike (2010) picks up this theme of results and standards during his research of Trinity Academy in South Yorkshire. The school was recognised as ‘England’s Most Improved Academy’; a fact to which Pike makes frequent reference in his article. In March 2011 Trinity Academy was graded by Ofsted as an outstanding school. However, as we shall see below, the fortunes of Trinity Academy have recently changed with the latest Ofsted inspection in December 2013 giving a different picture.

Writing at a time when the second wave of academies was relatively new, Pike is sensitive to the criticisms of academies in general and ‘faith based’ academies in particular. Pike did not discover any form of indoctrination. Indeed he quotes Sir Peter Vardy in July 2008 as saying that a school ‘is not an indoctrination centre’. Of greater concern to Pike is the extent to which private sponsors should be involved in education. However, in the case of the ESF, Pike believes that this is exactly the right sort of sponsor which can genuinely transform opportunities.

“Providing rigorous research establishes that the values of sponsors are in the best interests of the students, increasing the freedom of privately managed and publically funded groups of schools to enhance the state system, may have the potential to satisfy both economic and moral concerns. Further transactions of the right sort between sponsors such as the Emmanuel Schools Foundation,..... would be likely to transform the opportunities and life chances of other children and families in other communities.” (Pike, 2010, p.763)

Pike is keen to suggest that the successful transformation at Trinity Academy stems from its Christian ethos. The Principal of the Academy at the time, Ian Brew, considered character (Greek translation of ethos) was the most important priority at the academy (Pike, 2010, p.755). Pike concludes his research by observing that all four ESF academies have been highly successful:

“Although generalisations from a single case study are limited it is significant that all the schools sponsored by Sir Peter Vardy’s Emmanuel Schools Foundation are highly successful.” (ibid., p.762)

The measure of success used by Pike is exam results and whether or not the school is oversubscribed. Although this may be regarded by some as too narrow a measure, this is not the main criticism of Pike's work. Allington et al. (2011) question the underpinnings of Pike's conclusions. The main cause for concern revolved around the methodology used. For example, just because Sir Peter Vardy says that there is 'no indoctrination' does not, of itself, lead to such a conclusion. Nonetheless, at least until recently, the success of Trinity Academy remains a powerful argument in favour of a Christian based ethos. A further strength of the study is the way that it divorces exam success from social privilege. Pike is swift to point out that many academies in the ESF serve areas of social deprivation. Trinity Academy itself, located in the heart of a former mining community in South Yorkshire, serves a social priority area with a history of educational underachievement. This too is an important finding.

The biggest cause for concern in drawing a simple link between a strong Christian ethos and favourable educational outcomes concerns sustainability. Although many schools within the ESF continue to thrive, Trinity Academy itself has experienced a significant fall in achievement in recent times which has triggered an unfavourable Ofsted inspection result. In December 2013 the school was inspected and found to be inadequate on every measure. Indeed the Principal, Ian Brew, 'took retirement' immediately afterwards (Trinity Academy, 2014). This was less than three years after his leadership was judged to be outstanding as a consequence of strong exam results. This once again underlines the power of the performativity agenda impacting upon schools in general and school leadership in particular.

In conclusion, both the case studies mentioned above provide an important reference point for this study, if only for a period of time. From the perspective of the founder and senior staff of these schools, there is the clear assumption that the academic success of the schools is linked to their Christian foundation. That is, it is held that there is a strong link between Christian ethos and educational outcomes. However, according to Green (2009a), upon further investigation, the intended ethos portrayed by the managers of Emmanuel College is different from the experienced ethos which is lived by many members of the school community (see: McLaughlin, 2005; Donnelly, 2000). This, of itself, doesn't deny that there is a strong ethos at Emmanuel College. Although the work of Green suggests that the experienced ethos is not the 'Bible based ethos' transmitted through apologetics that the founders had envisioned, it may still best be described as an explicitly Christian ethos.

VII. Ethos, learning habits and outcomes in schools in North America – the work of William Jeynes and others

a) The significance of Jeynes' work

Up to this point, the literature surveyed on the relationship between a school's Christian ethos and its educational outcomes points to the possibility of a link between the two. Both quantitative (Arthur and Godfrey, 2005; Godfrey and Morris, 2008) and qualitative research (Grace, 2002; Green, 2009a; Pike, 2010) suggest that a school with a Christian ethos may be more likely to benefit from favourable educational outcomes. However, although there have been broad reasons advanced for this, such as a sense of community or even strict discipline, there has not yet been a clear and precise explanation of why this might be so. In addition, the reasons put forward are not backed up with research and the creation or use of empirical data. For example, the seven reasons identified by Arthur and Godfrey (2005) in section IV above are not backed up by any evidence. To be fair, the authors never claim that these reasons are anything more than possibilities or, in their words, a 'tentative list' (ibid., p.5).

The work of William Jeynes on learning habits in the United States is different. Jeynes addresses the reasons why Christian ethos may exert a positive impact on educational outcomes and he does this by suggesting that religious schools create better learning habits in the students. There is no similar research on learning habits in the United Kingdom, with the possible exception of Deakin Crick – covered later. Therefore to carry out similar research in this country would be to address a gap in the field.

The other reason that Jeynes' work is ideally suited to this study lies in its suggestion that differential performance between religious and non-religious schools is to do with something other than social privilege (chapter 2 section IV). By focusing on learning habits, the debate is moved away from the sterile and inconclusive arguments concerning the topic of social privilege between those in favour of Church schools and those opposed to them (Pritchard, 2013; BHA, 2006; 2014a; 2014b).

The work of Jeynes addresses the first two research questions of my study and is integral to the third. It is therefore for all these reasons that the concept of learning habits represents a key part of this whole thesis. In my study I ask the question of whether the research findings of Jeynes can inform the debate about ethos and outcomes for Church schools in this country.

b) What did Jeynes do and what did he find?

Jeynes (2003) builds on his previous research (2000; 2002), and starts by noting the following:

“A large body of research has accrued indicating that children from religious and/or private schools outperform their counterparts in public schools in academic achievement.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.145).

Writing in the context of the United States, Jeynes asserts that this situation cannot be fully explained by looking at the atmosphere of the schools and their internal organisation in terms of, for example, the amount of homework set. Jeynes suggests that there may be elements of the school's effectiveness and family effectiveness which are internalized in the student in the form of productive learning habits. A number of theorists have asserted that it is vital to develop strong student learning habits in order to secure strong academic outcomes (Bruns, 1992; Rau and Durand, 2000). Further, social scientists have frequently indicated that religious schools and religious parents may inculcate the values of academic and moral self-discipline more than other schools and parents (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; Jeynes, 2002).

Jeynes (2003) notes that while it is sometimes difficult to imitate religious schools, many social scientists believe that religious schools could serve as a helpful model for public schools as well (Bryk, Lee and Holland, 1993; LePore and Warren, 1997). In this regard Jeynes confidently asserts that his research may help improve the American system of education overall.

Therefore, based on this, Jeynes (2003) addresses two fundamental questions in his study: firstly, to what degree do students attending religious schools have better learning habits and, secondly, to what degree do better learning habits contribute to student academic success (ibid., p.146). Jeynes used the National Education Longitudinal survey (NELS) for 1992. The NELS research project was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Statistics. Of the students sampled 69% were White, 13% were Hispanic, 11% were African American, 6% were Asian and 1% were Native American.

With regard to the choice of the specific learning habits he researched, Jeynes is surprisingly brief. He points out that there is a long list of possible learning habits (ibid., p.147) but does not elaborate on how he ended up with his choice of nine learning habits. The assumption is that these nine habits are the ones most commonly used in the literature. The nine learning habits identified by Jeynes in his study are:

1. Handing work in on time more regularly;
2. Less absenteeism;
3. Taking harder courses;
4. Maintaining a higher level of diligence;

5. Demonstrating better work habits;
6. Paying more attention in school;
7. Doing more work than expected;
8. Participating in class;
9. Being prepared for class.

Two sets of analyses were undertaken. The first set tested whether students from religious schools did, in fact, have learning habits that were stronger in these nine areas. Each of the nine variables were quantified by using between 2 and 5 questions that assessed the students' work habits drawn from school records and self-reports. The second analysis then used these variables to test whether some or all of them actually did contribute to higher academic achievement. Using regression analysis, Jeynes discovered that students from religious schools demonstrated statistically significant better learning habits in 5 out of the 9 categories listed above. These 5 categories were: numbers 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. In the remaining categories of 2, 7, 8 and 9 there was no significant difference between pupils from religious schools and pupils from non-religious schools.

Crucially, in the second analysis, the two variables which correlated most with high academic achievement were number 3 and number 4 from the list above. In both these areas, students from religious schools were found to be dominant. That is, students from religious schools took harder courses and maintained a higher level of diligence and both these traits were the ones which correlated most strongly with higher academic achievement (see also Arthur and Godfrey, 2005, p.5).

c) Criticisms of using the work of Jeynes within the English context

There are three main criticisms of using the work of Jeynes within the context of the English education system. Firstly, the nature of religious schools in the two countries is different. In accordance with the American Constitution, the state does not fund religious schools in the United States. This means that all the religious schools in Jeynes' research are private schools. The extent to which the pupils and their families in private schools in the United States can be compared with pupils in State funded, non-selective English Church schools is open to question. It could be argued that there are other factors involved in the success of religious schools in the USA, such as social privilege. Once again we return to the affluence debate and a critic may argue that it is social privilege under the guise of religious learning habits. To counter this, Jeynes makes use of statistical models to account for the differing socio-economic status of the respondents. After employing these models, the results still suggested that the dominant reason for the difference in academic achievement between religious and non-religious schools were the learning habits of the pupils.

The second broad criticism of Jeynes' work in explaining the success of religious schools concerns the nature of the 'school versus family effect'. In fairness, Jeynes acknowledges this possibility.

“...it is difficult to determine how much of the religious school student advantage is due to learning habits learned at school and how much may be due to a greater likelihood of these students having learned a religiously founded work ethic at home.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.161).

To answer this criticism Jeynes argues that it is difficult to believe that the school has no impact on student values and learning habits given the amount of time spent at school. For pupils in England and the United States this probably equates to about 6 hours a day for about 190 days of the year for about 12 years. To suggest that the school has had no effect is unrealistic (chapter 7 section II part e).

The final broad criticism of the work of Jeynes concerns the criteria used to select the nine learning habits chosen. There seems to be no justification for their selection. In my research of the Bishop Pritchard School, the respondents, when asked, believed that learning habits contributed to the successful educational outcomes of their school but, some of the key traits or habits put forward were not part of the list of nine. Are there other learning habits which are relevant to the success of religious schools in the United States and, by inference, this country as well? To answer this criticism, Jeynes would probably point to the bulk of research in this field which suggests precisely those habits listed above:

“In fact, the list of learning habits that educators list as keys to success is actually quite long, if one chooses to peruse the literature. Researchers generally propound variables that range from paying attention in class, to doing more work than is expected, to participating in class.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.147).

Therefore, on closer inspection, the criticisms of Jeynes' work are not decisive and the study represents a significant piece of research in the field of ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. For this reason, I will return to the work of Jeynes throughout the remainder of this thesis and specifically in chapters 7, 9 and 10.

This study differs from the work of Jeynes not only in its choice of sample but also in its methodology. Amongst my sample of stakeholders of Church schools in this country, I did not prescribe which learning habits may or may not be relevant. Indeed, I only mentioned learning habits as a possible factor for consideration. I was keen to listen to what my sample of stakeholders said and did and to allow specific learning habits to emerge from the data. Following a lengthy coding exercise of all the transcripts and other evidence, three learning habits emerged. Although my sample was significantly smaller and less generalizable than the data with which Jeynes worked, I argue that it is more valid because it is what the respondents

themselves identified as opposed to “those habits that social scientists typically believe are important.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.1). I elaborate upon this in chapter 5.

d) The work of Cardus in North America

In some senses the research methods used in the Cardus Education Survey, Cardus (2011; 2012; 2014) replicate the work of Jeynes. Cardus uses regression analysis and a longitudinal study of student responses to explore the different outcomes of private (mainly religious) and public (non-religious) schooling in the United States of America and Canada. Like Jeynes, there is an attempt to control for social factors in order to identify a ‘school effect’. The key difference between the two studies is that while Jeynes focuses on learning habits, Cardus looks at character formation in general, and the extent to which private schools in North America contribute to the public good. In the latest Cardus survey there is also an attempt to investigate the impact of private schools on outcomes in STEM subjects.

Three main conclusions are drawn by Cardus from their research (Cardus, 2014). Firstly, private school (mainly religious) graduates are more positive about their high school experience than their public school (non- religious) counterparts. The extent to which schools can create functional and meaningful communities which engage students can have a significant impact on civic engagement beyond school. Private school graduates, mainly from Protestant schools, are more actively engaged with their community through their churches where they donate a higher proportion of their incomes to charitable causes (Cardus, 2011, p.18). Secondly, private schools tend to increase the interest in STEM subjects with a consequent impact on higher academic outcomes in these subjects. Finally, graduates from private schools are equally adept as their public school counterparts at building social bridges across racial and ethnic divides. Again, Cardus hypothesise that this quality may be due to the close-knit nature of private school communities and the strength of the relationships between teachers and students in fostering social capital (Cardus, 2014, p.30).

Like the work of Jeynes, a number of criticisms can be levelled against these findings – especially when using the research in the context of understanding State-funded Church schools in England. The fact that the Cardus schools are fee paying schools may account for the positive attitude afforded to these schools by their graduates given that their families have made a financial sacrifice and therefore have a greater vested interest in their schooling. Next, although certain factors are controlled for, it is not clear that class size is one of them. The potentially smaller class sizes and better facilities may account for the stronger relationships between students and their teachers with the resulting academic outcomes and enhanced social capital. In this sense, the value of the study is more in terms of comparisons between Catholic, Protestant and independent private schools as opposed to comparisons between private and ‘public’ schools. In fairness, many of these limitations are acknowledged by the authors. As the only study of its kind, the Cardus Education Survey is an important study which attempts to control for many factors in graduate development including parental education,

religion and income, in order to isolate a 'school effect'. In particular the surveys challenge the view that private religious schools foster isolationism and religious fundamentalism amongst their graduates. I will return to some of the implications of the Cardus Education Surveys in chapter 9.

VIII. Ethos, learning habits and outcomes in a Church school in the West Country – the work of Ruth Deakin-Crick

Along with the work of William Jeynes, another researcher who addresses my third research question is Ruth Deakin-Crick.

Deakin-Crick et al. (2004) develop a measure of learning power entitled the 'Effective Life Long Learning Inventory', or ELLI. This technique was also employed, in part, by Jelfs (2008) in her study of a group of primary and secondary schools within a diocese in the South West of England. 'Learning power' is a mix of factors which enable learners to be more effective in their learning. Specifically, Deakin Crick and Jelfs (2011) define it in the following way:

"Learning power' is a complex mix of dispositions, lived experiences, social relations, values and attitudes that combine to influence how an individual engages with particular learning opportunities. The seven empirically derived dimensions of learning power are: changing and learning; meaning-making; curiosity; creativity; learning relationships; resilience and strategic awareness."
(*ibid.*, p.200)

The seven dimensions of learning power identified by Deakin Crick are similar, or at least capable of being linked to, the nine learning habits used by Jeynes (2003). However, the seven dimensions place a greater emphasis on underlying values as opposed to the practices in learning. For example, while Jeynes' (*ibid.*) work considers the practice of handing work in on time; the work of Deakin Crick (*op.cit.*) may explore the value of justice. The extent to which certain values underpin certain learning habits is not directly addressed in the work of Deakin Crick.

There is another aspect to the broad dimensions used by Deakin Crick. The nature of the data lends itself to a more qualitative analysis than the research carried out by Jeynes which made extensive use of regression analysis on a large data set involving over 18,000 students. A small scale qualitative study was employed in Deakin Crick's earlier research on faith and learning which followed a case-study approach in a secondary school in the West Country.

Deakin Crick (2002a) is a significant piece of research for this thesis because it makes the bridge between ethos, values (and habits), teaching and learning and educational outcomes.

Deakin Crick (ibid.) explored the ideas and practice of 'values' in education and schooling by drawing on a particular case-study of a Voluntary Aided Church of England school in Bristol. In the research study, a team of 4-8 teachers developed policy and practice with regard to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education and citizenship education over a period of 4 years. As with any case-study, it is not possible to generalise these results for all schools, but there are many ideas which emerge to throw light on the role of ethos in Church of England Voluntary Aided secondary schools. For example, prior to the study, there was a reluctance from teachers of all subjects apart from RE and PSHCE for any (Christian) values to permeate the curriculum within their subject area. Following the values audit and the values intervention in subject delivery, the teachers felt that a new dimension had been added to their teaching. The teachers felt that the pupils were more engaged with their learning and some of the pupils reported that it was 'some of the best work they had done'. The teachers said this was because the pupils were engaged on a more emotional level.

The great strength of this study is that it tells a story of one school's attempt to bring the concept of ethos into the foreground of school development planning. Beginning with a community-wide consultation, the study explains the precise impact of the school's values on teaching and learning in the classroom which, in turn, impacts on educational outcomes. As a piece of research it is interesting in that it moves between quantitative and qualitative research methodology and also between school policy and classroom practice.

The significance for Church schools is that they are well placed to benefit from these seven dimensions mentioned above if there is a strong spiritual dimension to their ethos. This is not to deny that other schools might also benefit and, indeed, may also be spiritual places. Indeed the research by Deakin Crick et al. (2004) is not specifically focused on Church schools. However it is, nonetheless significant that much of the research (Deakin Crick 2002a; 2002b; Deakin Crick and Jelfs, 2011) in this field is focused on a Church of England secondary school and one where the headteacher and governors were very keen to promote a spiritual aspect to the education at the school. I briefly revisit this research in chapter 9 section III part b.

IX. Summary of the literature on schools with a Christian ethos

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes of maintained Church of England secondary schools. While there is a good deal of literature on a wide range of schools available, care must be exercised when making comparisons. For example Catholic schools have a different purpose to Anglican schools and the newly formed academies are not managed or resourced in the same way as an Anglican Voluntary Aided secondary school. Moreover, when analysing schools overseas it is

important to note the sometimes very different framework in which they operate. For example all religious schools in the United States (but not Canada) are private schools. There are no State funded or public schools in the US which have a religious character since this would be in contravention of the American Constitution. Nonetheless, the survey of all the literature above gives valuable insights into this whole field of the Christian ethos effect, or the 'extra dimension' of Church of England secondary schools and their ilk.

This study addresses the specific questions of how the purported link between ethos, as judged by SIAS inspectors and educational outcomes as judged by Ofsted inspectors is perceived by stakeholders in Church of England secondary schools. This study also seeks to explore what light is brought to this topic by the work of William Jeynes on learning habits.

The main conclusions from this review of the current research which are relevant to this study are summarised below (see also Green, 2009b, pp.77-8):

1. Arriving at a single definition of ethos is problematic due to the complexities and ambiguities associated with the term;
2. With regard to a specifically 'Christian ethos', the guidance offered by the Church of England for its schools is too broad to be of use to most headteachers. Partly as a result of this, there is a lack of common understanding about what a distinct Christian ethos actually is and how it can be achieved amongst Church school leaders;
3. Despite this, headteachers do consider a Christian ethos, however defined and achieved, to be significant. However, the bold claims made by some headteachers about ethos impacting on educational outcomes need to be substantiated with recourse to empirical evidence;
4. There are, nonetheless, some persuasive *a priori* reasons why the ethos of a Christian community, like a school, can influence the values, habits and outcomes of that community;
5. However, some recent research on values suggests that the values held by pupils in Anglican secondary schools are fundamentally no different to the values held by their peers in non-religious schools;
6. The statistical data on the academic achievement of Church schools relative to non-Church schools is inconclusive. While the data would suggest that Church schools outperform non-Church schools, the gap is significantly narrowed when the differing socio-economic status of the pupils is factored in;
7. The research on Roman Catholic schools echoes most of the findings from Church of England schools. It might be the case that, because of the greater emphasis on the 'domestic' function of Catholic schools there is a slightly stronger Christian ethos in these schools. However, the impact of this potentially stronger ethos on outcomes is not fully addressed in the literature;
8. Some research on non-denominational Christian academies finds a strong Christian ethos commensurate with high academic achievement. This includes such schools serving communities with high economic and social deprivation; thus addressing the

debate about social privilege. However, some research suggests that the intended ethos, in some of these schools does not correspond with the experienced ethos, amongst the pupils and some staff. In addition, there may be issues of sustainability with some of these schools;

9. The work of William Jeynes in the United States provides empirical evidence of why religious schools out-perform non-religious schools, based on the notion of learning habits;
10. The research does not appear to be able to disentangle the impact of home, school and Church on pupils' attainment. Although the concept of a 'school effect' is critical, it is not clear how this can be measured;
11. The work of Cardus in North America is important in understanding how the ethos of private religious schools might differ from public schools in terms of values formation. The studies give useful insights into possible learning habits inculcated into the graduates;
12. Research by Ruth Deakin Crick and others makes an important bridge between Christian ethos, school values, teaching, learning and educational outcomes based on a case-study of a Church school in the West Country;
13. Apart from Deakin Crick, there is nothing within the literature about learning habits within the context of Church Schools in England. As such, there is a gap in the literature here;
14. There appears to be no quantitative study which draws a connection between Christian ethos as measured by SIAS inspection grades and educational outcomes as measured by Ofsted grades.

The fourteen points listed above remind us that the field of Christian education research is far from homogeneous. As a result, any generalisations are difficult to make. In this sense empirical research is often best carried out within a specifically defined field or even at an institutional level. This situation has coloured my research which focuses on a specific area and uses one case-study school and a selected sample of Church school stakeholders.

What is slightly surprising with all the research into the Christian ethos of schools, is that relatively little has been of a qualitative nature. The term, 'Christian ethos', is a complex one which doesn't readily lend itself to quantitative analysis. It would appear that a variety of research methods may need to be employed to understand the concept of Christian ethos more fully. It is this whole area of methodology that I now address.

5. Not Everything that Counts

“Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.” William Bruce Cameron attrib.

I. Introduction and overview of methodology

This chapter outlines the reasons for the choice of methodology to address the 3 research questions posed in chapter 1 section 1:

1. To what extent does the correlation between SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades support the view that ethos contributes to educational outcomes in Church schools?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders in one Church school and the headteachers of a sample of Church schools as to the connection between the ethos and the outcomes in their respective schools?
3. What contribution does the research on learning habits by Jeynes (op.cit.) in the United States make to explaining, understanding and interpreting the perception of these stakeholders about ethos and outcomes in Church schools within England?

The first research question is relatively routine and involves a statistical exercise with inspection grades. This is covered in the next chapter – chapter 6. Although this statistical exercise is both important and significant in terms of providing an entrée for the remaining research questions, it is less problematic.

Research questions 2 and 3 are more complex and require a more refined methodological approach together with a clear and coherent justification for both the choice of research methods and research instruments. To this end, I have divided this chapter into 9 sections:

- I. Introduction and overview;
- II. Positioning the research;
- III. Reflexivity;
- IV. Methodological framework – The Integral Inquiry Approach;
- V. Ethnography – including auto/biographical methods;
- VI. Triangulation, validity and reliability;
- VII. Ethical issues;
- VIII. Coding the data;
- IX. Summary and a re-visiting of the original structured plan.

At the end of the chapter, in section IX, I draw together all these sections in order to arrive at a structured sequence of events, or plan, which I then followed in order to collect, analyse and present the data. Data collection is outlined in chapter 6; data analysis in chapter 7 and the results are presented in chapter 8.

II. Positioning the research

In chapter 1, I outlined some of the under-pinning philosophical assumptions for my research. I rejected ontological anti-realism and epistemic absolutism. In chapter 3, I propounded my own Christian worldview as the lens through which the research was conducted. I revisited my philosophical assumptions and described myself as an epistemic relativist, philosophical idealist, ontological realist and Trinitarian monotheist. I stated that I rejected a model which saw value as subjective and, instead, subscribed to a Christian worldview which might best be described as a 'reformed Protestant Christian' worldview. In this section, I build upon these statements by explaining the implications of them for my choice of methodology within social science research.

Although my research includes quantitative aspects, it is, in the main, a qualitative study. Qualitative research is now a well-established method of social science research and allows the researcher to see the world from different perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Silverman, 2004). In social science research it is possible to identify three broad paradigms. Each paradigm accords in large part with a sociological worldview with its attendant epistemological assumptions. I explore each of these in turn below:

a) The Positivist paradigm (naïve realism)

Positivism characterised the work of the founding fathers of social science such as Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx. The world was believed to be based on cause and effect which could be measured. In some senses this reflected the world of the 19th century where science was becoming the 'new religion'. This research paradigm most closely accords with the sociological worldview of modernism with an emphasis on reason and rationality and the concept of 'faith' or 'supernatural activity' is either ignored or rejected. Indeed the BHA found many of its roots in this era with the word 'humanism' originating in this time. There is an underlying assumption of epistemic absolutism and many modern day humanists, such as Richard Dawkins, could be described as naïve realists (see, for example: Southgate, 2005; Chopra, 2014).

In my research there is an underlying assumption that I am dealing, in part, with phenomena that can be measured. For example, there is something called a school 'ethos' and there is something called 'educational outcomes'. Learning habits may be harder to define and measure. Within social science the natural primary research method for positivism would be a highly structured questionnaire with closed questions being asked of a sample which was as large as possible, or a series of randomized controlled trials. Alternatively, previously produced secondary data would be analysed using statistical tools of analysis. Again, it is common to use a large data set before reaching any conclusions.

However, this positivist approach has been subjected to extensive critique on the grounds that it depersonalises the social world (Sapsford and Abbott, 1996, p.336) and ignores the element of construction within social knowledge (Pring, 2000, p.95; Neuman, 2003, p.83). Although

positivists may be criticised for being overly restrictive in their research methods, a commitment to an objective reality was helpful to my approach to the first research question and also to my exercise of triangulating the outcomes from my case-study research, as a counterbalance to the relativity of post-modernism.

b) The Interpretive paradigm (constructivist approach)

The second broad paradigm used in social science research is interpretism, or an interpretist approach. Such an approach regards the social world, including education, as essentially our interpretation of it. Reality is therefore considered to be a social construction reflecting the subjective interpretations of people – or actors. (Pring, 2000, p.98). This research paradigm most closely accords with the sociological worldview of post-modernism where value is perceived to be subjective and there are no objective answers to social phenomena.

Research should seek to make this world visible by studying people in their natural settings and exploring the different meanings that individuals bring to phenomena (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.5). What is firmly embedded in this constructivist approach is the rejection of a notion that there is an objective reality to be apprehended; a position of ontological anti-realism. The Christian who believes that the Bible is the revealed word of God for humanity will find this approach challenging. The Ten Commandments recorded in Exodus and referred to by Jesus, outline certain absolute (or universal) values such as: do not steal and do not murder. The interpretist approach would reject such absolutes as unhelpful.

For the interpretive paradigm, the extensive use of statistics to prove universal facts is rejected. Instead, the most suitable research methods are observation and unstructured, in-depth interviews, including auto/biographical narrative. These are methods that I used extensively in my research of The Bishop Pritchard School, my case-study school for research, in addressing my second and third research questions. These research methods are critiqued as being unscientific, subjective, soft, unreliable and purveying fiction as opposed to fact (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.16). I will address these criticisms in section V.

c) The Critical paradigm (Critical Social Science / Critical Realism)

Critical Realism goes beyond both methodological research methods and, indeed, social science. Although critical realism as a philosophy started within social science through Bhaskar (1997; 1998), in theology, the term critical realism has come to be employed by a community of scientists turned theologians. They are influenced by the scientist turned philosopher, Michael Polanyi. This community includes John Polkinghorne and Alister McGrath. The aim is to show that the language of science and Christian theology are complementary, forming a starting point for a dialogue between the two. The theologian N.T.Wright (1992) also writes on this topic in a way that positions the approach, in social science terms, as a rejection of both pure constructivism and also naïve realism / positivism.

“... I propose a form of critical realism. This is a way of describing the process of ‘knowing’ that acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower (*hence ‘realism’*), while fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (*hence ‘critical’*). (Wright, 1992, p.35 italics in brackets added)

These sentiments closely match what Bhaskar referred to as transcendental realism. This is the notion that God is not only within us – imminent, but also beyond us – transcendent (see: Bhaskar 1975, 1998). Although this thesis is written within a framework of social science, it does include theological aspects. For this reason the language used for critical realism will merge both the social science and theological understandings.

Therefore, in terms of social science research, the critical paradigm lies between the positivist and interpretist approaches and draws on insights from both. In addition, this approach to social enquiry is optimistic about its social usefulness and asserts that there is an explanation which can be found to improve people’s lives. Neuman defines critical social science as:

“a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves.” (Neuman, 2003, p.81)

In terms of this thesis, the proponents of the critical paradigm would assert that it is worth trying to draw a link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. In addition, if such a link exists this could be used to improve the education service of both Church schools and, potentially, all schools. This was also one of the aspirations expressed by Jeynes in his work (Jeynes, 2003, p.147).

d) Summary of methodological position

Therefore, in terms of epistemology, ontology and Trinitarian theology, I subscribe to a critical methodological approach and critical realist Christian worldview position. I reject the epistemic absolutism of strict positivism / modernism and the ontological anti-realism of a pure interpretist / post-modernist approach. However, a critical realist approach to social science research straddles both positivism and interpretism and avoids a dogmatic position which rejects either. In subscribing to a critical social research approach I can include elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. The ongoing debate between those researchers who use a positivist approach such as Francis (1986; 2005a) and those researchers who use an interpretist approach (such as Green, 2009a) is well known (see, for example Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). However, as Pring points out, “it is a false dualism and the differences between the two traditions of research should not be overemphasised.” (Pring, 2000, pp.43-56)

Therefore in my research I use research methods and research instruments which are drawn from both the positivist and interpretist paradigms. I use a wide variety of methods to address

the three diverse research questions which were re-visited at the start of this chapter. In addition, I input my own understanding into the research for reasons that I will cover in section IV. All this is best covered by a broad approach to social science research. For this I used the integral inquiry approach as an overarching methodological framework. The integral inquiry approach was borrowed from social psychology and the work of Braud and Anderson (1998; 2011). This framework is covered in more detail in section IV below. Before then, I will address the important issue of reflexivity in research.

III. Reflexivity

At the outset I acknowledged that, as a researcher, I started with my own views and prejudices which I brought to the research process. These were influenced by my own story and philosophy, outlined in chapter 3, and covered by the term 'reflexivity'. Hammersley and Atkinson explain reflexivity in the following way:

“Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching.” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.14).

The definition of reflexivity is somewhat contingent on the particular academic discipline. Hammersley and Atkinson are writing from a sociological perspective. From an educational perspective, Cohen, Manion and Morrison offer this definition:

“Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research.” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.171).

My own personal biography, educational philosophy and reasons for conducting this research have already been articulated earlier in this thesis. At every stage of the research I acknowledged how my story and my Christian worldview have influenced how the research was carried out and how the results were analysed and interpreted.

One of the challenges of being an 'insider' in the world of education is that, as a researcher, you may become blinkered. Having spent over 30 years of my professional life in schools, I may not 'see' all that goes on within the case-study school, in the same way as an 'outsider' might. Denscombe (2007) makes the following observation:

“The outsider might be better placed to see the kind of things which, to the insider, is too mundane, too obvious.” (ibid., p.129).

Three further, and related, challenges confronted me in carrying out this research as a former Ofsted inspector and also a serving headteacher (chapter 3 section I part a). Firstly, I had a strong inclination to benchmark my judgements against national standards and with a view to providing a service for the children, parents and staff about how their school was performing.

This was the training that I received from Her Majesty's Inspectorate and which I had to acknowledge so that I could make the journey from inspector to researcher. Next, and linked to this, I would be tempted to discuss with the staff possible strategies for school improvement. The final challenge of being a headteacher was the power relationships which could exist in all interactions with the staff – including lesson observations. Indeed it was precisely this latter factor which precluded research on my own school. Therefore, careful thought and consideration was given to these three factors in terms of planning and conducting my research.

To address these possible shortcomings, I adapted my methodological approach. At the start of my research, I planned to conduct auto/biographical interviews with a small number of participants in the case-study school and to use semi-structured interviews with the remaining stakeholders. In framing the questions I realised that I was constructing them based on my own 'insider' understanding and, no doubt, prejudices. Accordingly, I expanded my auto/biographical approach to a wider number of stakeholders and used more of a conversation style wherever I could. I set about letting the stakeholders tell their story without researcher pre-conception, and then analysed the narratives that emerged. However, where the respondents were less forthcoming – for example the pupils and the parent – I used a series of prompts or broad questions. The biographical framework, together with the prompts and broad questions used can be seen in the appendix.

Finally, within the area of reflexivity in research, one of the guards against obtaining biased data is triangulation. Although my research included auto/biographical narrative followed by the coding of responses, other techniques were also used to both collect and analyse data. These included correlating quantitative data using a simple computer model, semi-structured interviews, observations and an on-line internet survey (see also section VI below). This range of instruments for data collection was also consistent with the integral inquiry methodological framework for social science research.

IV. Methodological framework – the integral inquiry approach

a) More than a mixed methods approach

The choice of the integral inquiry approach as an overarching methodological framework for my research was made for two reasons. Firstly it was in accordance with my critical realist epistemology and, secondly, it was capable of addressing each of the three research questions in a direct and effective manner. The first reason has already been addressed in section II above. Therefore, in this part, I focus on the second reason by explaining how the IIA approach was particularly suitable for my three research questions.

The first research question was an exploration of the possible link between the ethos of Church schools, as measured by inspection grades awarded by their dioceses, and the outcomes of those schools, as measured by inspection grades awarded by Ofsted. This entailed a statistical

exercise using a large amount of numeric data generated over a period of approximately 10 years covering 100 schools and 200 inspection reports. Such an exercise lends itself to quantitative 'desk' research methods and tools of analysis. This was the methodology applied by Jaynes (2003) in his research on no fewer than 18,726 pupils in the United States.

My second and third research questions required a different methodological approach. In seeking to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders of the case-study school concerning the Christian ethos of their school, I needed to employ a more nuanced and bespoke approach to research. As I have noted in chapter 4, there is no single definition of what ethos is within the current literature. In addition, the identification of learning habits is also subjective.

Therefore, researching into perceptions about learning habits and Christian ethos required careful planning, and plenty of time to collect and interpret the data obtained. It would also take time to develop professional relationships with the stakeholders at the case-study school, to gain their trust and enable them to speak freely. In order to do all of this a more qualitative methodological approach was required.

Based on the divergent needs of my research including an inter-disciplinary approach to the three research questions, I was therefore drawn to a mixed methods approach which incorporated both quantitative and qualitative research methods and research instruments.

However, following my preliminary research I became increasingly frustrated and dissatisfied with a simple mixed methods approach which required the researcher to remain neutral and passive so as to arrive at objective data. In passively receiving whatever was said without comment, I found much of my initial data to be too shallow and bland. I saw the need to engage with the participants as a fellow parent, teacher and headteacher so that the conversations could move to a deeper plane of shared experience and understanding. I found this to be more rewarding to both myself, as the researcher, and the person being research who was, as a result, more willing to 'open up'. As a fellow traveller who was a Christian and who had worked in Church schools for over 20 years, I realised that I was a source of data as well.

In this regard I felt a feeling of liberation when I could share my stories and anecdotes both within the interviews and also the emerging written narrative. Chapter 3 section 1 part d is one of the many important examples of this, as are the vignettes of my personal experiences offered in chapter 9.

Allied to this, on reflecting on my interview with the executive headteacher of the Bishop Pritchard School, I sensed that this was about much more than a 50 minute listening experience. At the time of the interview in February 2012, Trevor Brown had been a headteacher of a relatively challenging Church school for 16 years and I had been the headteacher of similar schools for 12 years (see also chapter 3 section II). Together there was a shared narrative of 28 years of running Church schools in working class communities in the South of England. This was potentially a very rich vein of data which needed to be tapped. In order to extract this data it was necessary for each of us to engage with each other on a more

emotional plane by entering into a conversation and acknowledging both linguistic and non-linguistic cues. I soon became aware within my research that it was not only necessary for me to work to bring the story out of him but also to allow him to bring the story out of me.

The strength of the integral inquiry approach to research is that it allows the researcher to be part of the research process and for there to be an engagement on a more emotional level. Finally the integral inquiry approach allows all the research to be integrated to create a more holistic outcome. Although researching into character formation and not perceptions about ethos, learning habits and outcomes, the words of Arthur et al. (2006) summed up my position:

“One of the key findings has been the interactivity of aspects of character. This study was methodologically plural and inter-disciplinary. It is clear that no single model of research, whether theoretical or empirical, qualitative or quantitative, is adequate on its own. There is a need to have a strategy for research into character education that illuminates the issues from many different points of view. Linked to this is a need for a more integrated model of the person to inform pedagogy.” (ibid., p.14).

Given this choice of over-arching methodological framework, I now look in more detail at the theoretical rationale behind the integral inquiry approach

b) Theoretical rationale for the Integral Inquiry Approach

The integral inquiry approach is a term which emanates from social psychology and was coined by Braud and Anderson (1998; 2011). It provides the opportunity of gaining rich descriptions and insights into experiences and events, whilst acknowledging the complexity present in people’s lives. Braud and Anderson (1998) summarise it as:

“a complete an answer as possible using all relevant methods, approaches, information and means of knowing, understanding and expressing what has been learned.” (Braud and Anderson, 1998, p.58).

In her study of Church schools within a diocese in the South West of England, Jelfs (2008) used an integral inquiry approach fusing both quantitative and qualitative research techniques as she investigated the extent to which Church schools embrace their confessional vision in terms of teaching, learning and curriculum.

Braud and Anderson (1998) distinguish between two types of science. There is a ‘separateness science’ and a ‘wholeness science’. They argue that the latter is better suited when researching the complex phenomena associated with human experience. They advocate an expanded role of research which seeks to integrate both the research and the researcher. In my role of researcher, and headteacher of a Church of England secondary school, I acknowledge that I will observe human activity through the lens of my experience and understanding. This has already been documented, in part, in chapter 3. The integral inquiry approach seeks to build this into the research process:

“Characteristics such as the researcher’s background, training, skills sensitivities, biases, expectations, judgements and temperament can affect, and potentially distort, any and all phases of a research project.” (ibid., p.16).

The value of the integral inquiry approach is that it uses and balances a variety of lenses through which to view the subject matter. Therefore, it will combine both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to understand the data and be able to make recommendations. Braud and Anderson hold the view that human experience is multileveled and complex and therefore the way that research is carried out must be correspondingly multifaceted and pluralistic. As I have noted above, the integral inquiry approach also invites the researcher to participate in the experience. This is a “bold step: knowing through becoming – to know what is being studied as subject rather than object.” (Braud and Anderson,1998, p.51).

In the integral inquiry, the researcher plays an extremely important role as the chief ‘instrument’ of the investigation. This departs from the narrow view of positivism which treats the researcher as neutral. In selecting, interpreting and presenting data under the integral inquiry approach, the researcher is guided not only by formally published theories and findings but also by relevant anecdotal evidence and by his or her own personal experiences related to the topic in question. This is a very liberating and potentially powerful approach to research of a topic about which the researcher is highly experienced. The advantage is that it draws on a whole wealth of experience and critical reflection. Every return journey from Bishop Pritchard School to my own school took approximately 2 hours. During this time, I was able to reflect on the research of that day and add my own layers of understanding to it. In addition, when reading the transcribed notes from the biographical interviews and conversations I was able to not only understand the position of Bishop Pritchard School more clearly but also my own school. The following transcript from one of the interviews with the deputy headteacher, Michael Thatcher (a pseudonym), highlights this symbiotic and transformational dimension to the interaction:

- MT: We are trying to move teaching from good to outstanding
- SG: Like all schools
- MT: I guess so. For us it is about training the teachers not to always play it safe. When Ofsted arrive the default position is to play it safe and teaching can never be judged as outstanding when that happens
- SG: Yeah, I like that. I remember been shown around one school where every other classroom seemed to have the children at the front of the room as opposed to the teacher. The children were giving presentations using their powerpoint™ presentation homeworks and leading discussions. Needless to say teaching at this school was judged as outstanding
- MT: Great. I think that it also important for teachers to relax. I remember when I used to run for my old school and then got through to the county semis. The harder I tried to run quickly the slower I would become. My coach said to me: just relax! I relaxed my running style and ended up running quicker. I would

like the teachers in this school to do the same. To realise they don't have to strive to fit in three worksheets every lesson but rather to take risks and trust that we have systems in place to support them if it goes wrong. That, for me, is the vehicle to outstanding teaching

SG: I really like what you have said. I've never really thought about it in that way. I will share that running story with my senior leadership team.

(Interview transcript, Deputy Head MT, 31/1/2012)

c) Summary of the characteristics of the integral inquiry approach

In chapter 1 section IV part a, I provided a short overview of the integral inquiry approach and the reasons for its choice in this thesis. Here, I briefly revisit that and then develop the characteristics of the approach in the light of the explanation provided in parts a and b above. The integral inquiry approach is therefore characterised by the following 7 points:

1. A whole and inclusive design, focussing on a question of interest. For example, is there a link between ethos and educational outcomes and, if so, what is it and what contribution do learning habits make?
2. All aspects of the work 'home in' on this fundamental research question. Is there a relationship or not between ethos and outcomes in a Church school? If so, why?
3. Observations, insights and ideas, including the researcher's own life are used with a feeling that there is an answer which can be known;
4. It draws on a pluralistic epistemology that acknowledges all facets of the self;
5. The possibility of using a variety of ways to express research findings is considered. Validity is tested not only with formal methods such as triangulation but in other ways such as noting bodily, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive and pragmatic indicators;
6. There is the optimistic assumption that all who participate in the research inquiry will be changed in some way – the professional discipline, research participants, readers and society. This also accords with my critical realist epistemology and my Christian worldview;
7. Ways of showing and interpreting findings can be expanded to include statistical summaries, figures and graphs, tabulated results, participant narratives, web-site information, researcher stories and indications of the impacts of the study on the researcher. In my research, I will present my findings by using all these elements including my own reflections of how I have changed as a result of the research in my understanding as a headteacher of a Church school.

In chapter 1 section IV part a, I made the analogy of being able to see the problem better as a result of illuminating different aspects. The wide range of methodologies with their attendant research instruments, facilitated by the integral inquiry approach may be likened to different lights, located in different positions, being switched on, one at a time. Eventually, the whole

picture is illuminated and the relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes can be seen more easily and in sharper detail.

Hoult (2012, pp.190-191) develops this metaphor of light still further. She observes that methodology can be likened to a crystal and crystallisation. If you look at phenomena from a slightly different distance or angle, what you see is also different, in terms of colour, quality of light and nuance. In my research the intimately personal nature of the auto/biographical interviews provide a particular form of illumination while the analysis of numeric data gives a glimpse of the overall light. Just as light passes through crystal in irregular ways: what may be crystal clear does not mean a simple truth revealed by one method. What we observe is the way colour changes as light hits the crystal; we can compare the angles, and enjoy and experience its kaleidoscopic effects, as we look towards the middle. Significantly, this also provides a rationale for validity emanating from this integral inquiry approach alongside the more conventional explanation in terms of triangulation which is covered in section VI.

It is important to note that any over-arching research methodology is not without limitations. This situation applies equally to the integral inquiry approach and so these must be addressed now.

d) Tensions with Objectivity (or ‘treading a fine line’)

Perhaps the biggest problem with a methodological approach which allows the researcher to input themselves into the research process concerns objectivity. The great danger is that the research will end up producing results that the researcher wants to see.

As I have noted in section III above, the challenges of reflexivity were addressed by honest awareness, making explicit my background and also triangulation. Within the integral inquiry approach, triangulation was possible on at least two levels. It was possible to triangulate the results by using different contexts in terms of audience and time, as well as by using different research methods and instruments. I explain how triangulation was used in my research in section VI below.

It is also significant to note that in those parts of the research where I input myself into the production of data, the purpose was not to generalise but rather illuminate. The rationale of inputting my own understanding and self into the research process was solely for the purpose of unearthing a richness of data which could not be accessed by more positivist methods. So far in this thesis I have alluded to two significant examples. In sharing my Christian worldview, the executive headteacher was able to articulate why he felt ‘called’ to Bishop Pritchard School and, secondly, what factors ‘carried him through’ the bleak times (chapter 3 section I part b; chapter 4 section III part d). A further way of addressing the problems of reflexivity concerns the extent to which the researcher is transformed by the research process. At each stage of data collection and analysis I viewed the experience as a possible transformational encounter. An example of this is given in the conversation with the deputy headteacher recorded above (chapter 5 section IV part b).

I now address some specific research methods that were used in my research. Given the multi-faceted nature of the integral inquiry approach, ethnographic research is a good starting point.

V. The place of ethnographic research

a) Rationale for use of ethnography

Within the plurality of research methods afforded under the umbrella of the integral inquiry approach, ethnographic research methods were key in obtaining data to address the second and third research questions concerning ethos. Casson also notes the suitability of ethnographic research within a school setting because of its “flexibility and ability to reflect the ‘messiness of life’.” (Casson, 2013, p.35)

The origins of the term lie in 19th century Western anthropology where ‘fieldwork’ required living with a group of people for extended periods in order to document and interpret their distinctive way of life, and the beliefs and values integral to it. Perhaps the most classic study in this regard was carried out by Bronislaw Malinowski in 1922 who spent no fewer than seven years immersed in the lives of the Trobriand islanders (Malinowski, 1961). Although much more limited in scope, it is the aim of this research to understand the values and beliefs integral to the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School. That is, to try to understand the ethos in the school and establish if, and how, this is linked to learning habits and the outcomes of the school.

In this study I adopt this broad definition of ethnography to include a range of qualitative research techniques including un-structured interviews, auto/biographical interviews, group interviews, participant observation, non-participant observation and the scrutiny of documents. Together these made up the bulk of the research methods within the case-study school.

Ethnography cannot control variables so as to reveal associations that are likely to indicate causal relations. In relation to drawing generalizable conclusions from a sample of one school to an extant population, it is not designed to employ statistical sampling theory which would allow researchers to produce findings which have a high and specifiable probability of being representative of the population at large. This limitation is acknowledged in this thesis and, as a result, ethnography was not employed in addressing my first research question.

However, in defence of ethnography, other forms of research which have been designed to provide generality of results, have also been subjected to criticism. For example, with the experimental method, there is the problem that what the subjects do is shaped by both the experimental situation and the experimenter. With regard to survey research, there is the problem that very often the data is based on highly structured questions which are ‘constructed’ from the experience of the researcher.

Within ethnography, this emphasis on the processes involved in human social life gives priority to detailed narratives. In my research, I built up the story of the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School. I looked at the descriptions of the roles that various people in the school played. I investigated the local contexts in which patterns of action occurred and listened to the accounts of all the 'actors' within the social setting of the school. This necessitated a period of time in the 'field' – i.e. the school environment. I spent 12 days at the case-study school observing behaviour and interviewing participants. I also analysed a wide range of other data on the school. My research was time limited to only 12 days in the school and therefore may be better described as a case-study as opposed to an ethnography. Following Cannell's (2006) contention that Christianity is at risk of being marginalised within ethnography because of its perceived lack of rigour and relevance, I was keen to employ some ethnographic elements in my study. Perhaps, my research could therefore be described as a case-study with ethnographic elements.

As I have discussed under issues of reflexivity in section III and IV above, one of the main challenges for me in carrying out research in the case-study school was the discipline of not imposing my views and pre-conceptions on the research process whilst, at the same time, being able to input into it so as to make it more meaningful. This inevitably involved 'treading a fine line' (section IV part d). One of the research techniques that I frequently adopted was the auto/biographical interview or conversation. This is a technique which is entirely consistent with an ethnographic approach as it also seeks to illuminate the true meaning 'behind the scenes'. I explain more about this below.

b) The use of auto/biographical methods

Biographical research methods attempt to uncover the truth of social phenomena by allowing the interviewee to tell a story, a biography or, indeed, their own personal story, an autobiography. This genre of story-telling is prevalent in our modern culture. There exists a plethora of biographies and autobiographies in every bookshop as celebrities recount their life stories. The ancient world is also filled with stories and legends which have shaped societies and cultures. The Bible itself may be regarded as the story of God's people and, in particular, the people who God appointed to lead the Israelites. The story of Abraham, Moses, Samson, Elijah, David, and Daniel are just some of the stories that have influenced people of the Abrahamic faith traditions for many centuries. Jesus himself relied on story-telling, or parables, to convey deep and timeless truths.

Merrill and West point out that this turn towards biography and autobiography came as a response to the omission or marginalisation of the human subject in research (Merrill and West, 2009, p.3). They note that the dominant story that science has propounded in terms of objectivity and measurable data came to be questioned to the core (Roberts, 2002). Biographical narrative allows the interviewee the opportunity to interpret and tell the story in the way that they want without having to comply with the parameters imposed by the interviewer.

The power of the auto/biographical conversation is that the interviewer can become part of the process without imposing their views on the interviewee and so skewing the results. As we have noted above, this point was vital for my research. Its essence is captured by Denzin (1989):

“The biographical method rests on subjective and intersubjectively gained knowledge and understandings of the life experiences of individuals, including one’s own life. Such understandings rest on an interpretive process that leads one to enter into the emotional life of another.....Its goal is to build sharable understandings of the life experiences of the other.” (ibid., p.28).

This theme was underlined eight years earlier by Oakley (1981) who argued that a biographical interview should be a two-way process – a conversation – in which the interviewer also answers questions asked by the interviewee about the self. The interview should not exploit the interviewee but, rather, seek to empower them (see, for example: chapter 3 section I part b; chapter 4 section III part d and chapter 5 section IV part b).

Biographical research techniques have not gone without criticism. Some critics point out that biographical research ends up with ‘fine, meaningless detail’. This frequently obscures the bigger picture including questions of social policy (Fieldhouse, 1996, p.119). The danger of focusing too much on biographies is that it misses the point about power structures including how power permeates knowledge and knowing at every level.

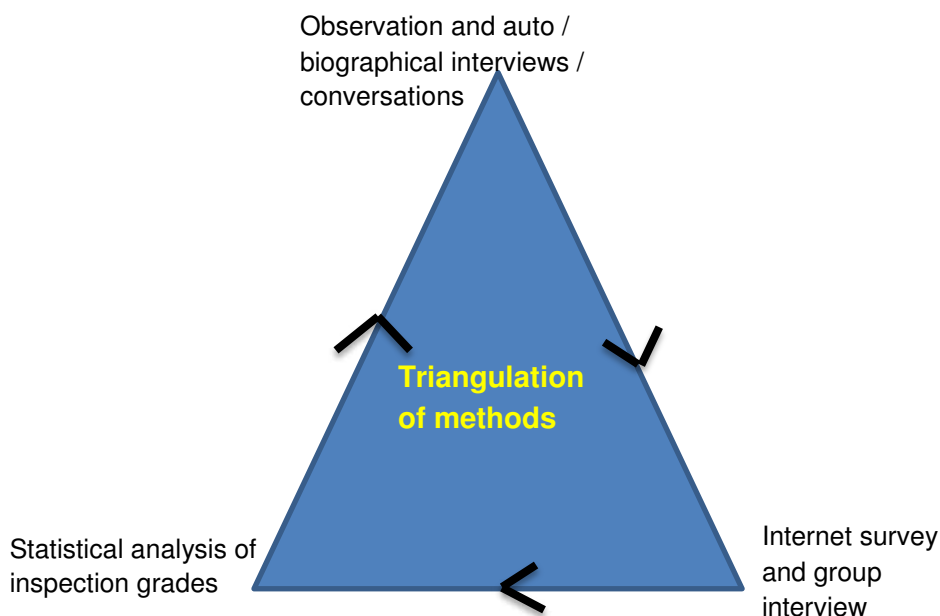
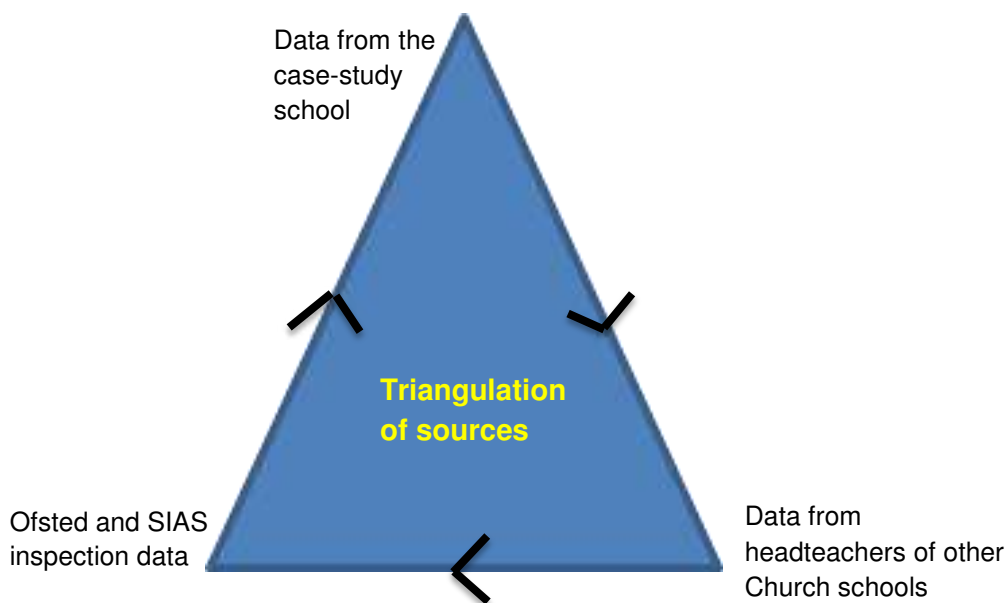
Auto/biographical research techniques are perhaps most suited to research into those marginalised individuals within society as opposed to the ethos of an organisation. This is because of the practical advantages of dealing with a very small number of individuals in great depth over a longer period of time. Nonetheless, as a research technique, it has a great deal to offer in terms of uncovering the true story behind the success or otherwise of a school without the researcher having written the script beforehand.

VI. Triangulation, validity and reliability

In chapter 6 I explain the wide range of data collection methods used in this study. In this section I explain how this diverse range of methods and sources contributed to stronger results and why, in part, it was necessary in the first place.

As noted, one of the frequent criticisms made against all the qualitative research methods mentioned above concerns their lack of objectivity and reliability. That is, they are critiqued as being only one person’s interpretation of social phenomena which cannot be tested by other people at other times. At the other end of the research method continuum, a criticism of my

statistical analysis of inspection grades concerns its lack of validity¹⁹ in that it is held to provide only a superficial explanation of the relationship between ethos and outcomes without depth and meaning. I addressed both these major criticisms of my research methodology through a process of triangulation. This was achieved by testing the results both with different sources of data and also by using different research methods and techniques. Accordingly, I used two layers of triangulation as the diagrams below illustrate:



¹⁹ The term 'validity' is a technical term in social science. It is the degree to which a measurement instrument, here a statistical correlation of two variables, measures what we in fact think it measures.

In terms of reliability, ethnographic research makes no claims for producing outcomes which can be replicated elsewhere in a generalized fashion. Indeed, ethnographers would query whether it is possible to generalize social behaviour in the first place. However my research followed an integral inquiry approach incorporating both ethnographic and quantitative research methods within a critical realist epistemology. As such, it is bolder in its assertions with regard to reliability. Although the bulk of the research was grounded in one case-study school, the school was carefully selected following a statistical exercise using data from all Church schools as well as for other practical reasons already outlined in chapter 1. Moreover, the initial findings from the case-study school are supported by a follow up survey of all the schools in the larger statistical population of 100 schools. Finally, a group interview was arranged with a sample of headteachers from this group.

With regard to validity, this is more difficult to establish. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) trace the development of different notions of validity from the positivist concept of validity as accuracy, to the concern of qualitative researchers for confidence, authenticity, cogency, soundness in research design and the presentation of convincing results to a public audience.

In this study, the need for validity and objectivity in the research was addressed in the following 5 ways:

1. A blend of research methods (the integral inquiry approach) while maintaining a consistent epistemological position. This position reflects a basic critical realist philosophy. This would argue that there is a link between ethos, learning habits and outcomes that can be found but that this link will not be simple, not exact and will be contingent on other factors and subject to the need for careful interpretation;
2. An integrity about the impact of the researcher on the research process. As already mentioned in section III with regard to reflexivity, I acknowledged how my story and Christian worldview have influenced the research (chapter 3);
3. Validation with other data and the operation of a process of triangulation. For example, data emerging from the interviews of the case-study school was tested against the views of the headteachers in all the schools within the population (sample of all schools). In addition, the words of the ethos bearers at interview were tested with the pupils in the classroom;
4. The use of, where possible, auto/biographical and semi-structured interview techniques added validity to the research results. The adoption of auto/biographical and semi-structured interview techniques provided participants with a greater opportunity to express their feelings, emotions and beliefs;
5. Finally, validity was supported by the procedural integrity that was planned with this research. Research methods and procedures were followed in a rigorous manner.

VII. Ethical Issues

I was presented with a number of ethical issues in carrying out my research. These issues can be grouped into four main categories: safeguarding the school's reputation; safeguarding the reputation of professionals within the school; safeguarding the emotional interests of the adult participants and, finally, safeguarding the well-being of the children.

Questions, and rumours, may arise in the local community when they discovered that the local school was the focus of research. Parents may have been curious about what was special about their school and whether there were any hidden agendas not disclosed to them. Next, in observing lessons, teachers may feel that their professional ability was under scrutiny. For a young RE teacher to have a former Ofsted inspector and serving headteacher in their room researching the ethos of the school and the learning habits of the children may be a source of considerable anxiety and stress. Thirdly, the nature of the auto/biographical research in terms of adults telling their stories to a stranger may cause unease. Questions about who would read the final document and how the interviewee would be perceived by their colleagues would be a concern. Finally, there was the impact on the children or pupils. In participating in the group interview, the children were absent from their peers at both lesson time and break time. In being asked questions about their school and their response to its Christian ethos, the children may be taken away from the security of the familiar and safe. Again, the respondents may question why they were the focus of the research, what would happen to the findings of the research and what judgements might be made about them by those people who read the published document.

Ethical issues were addressed in a number of ways. As already noted, in my research of the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School, I continually reminded myself that I was a guest in the school, and, as such, showed due respect and courtesy to all participants and 'actors' who contributed to the research process. I had no 'right' to be there and no 'right' to make judgements about the quality of education provided by the school to its parents and their children. I supplied the headteacher with a letter covering the protocols for my research (Appendices A and C) and I also invited key participants to sign a consent form to allow me to conduct the research (Appendices D and E). I acknowledged that they had the right to ask for the sound recorder to be switched off at any time and they had the right to see whatever was written about them. For the group interviews with the pupils, I considered the wishes of the parents by ensuring that the pupils did not miss too much learning time nor too much of their break and lunchtimes. In this way, I ensured that the key principle of informed consent was observed at every stage. Lastly, with the pupils, I was courteous, polite, respectful and affirming. I also made it clear that neither they nor their school was being criticised or scrutinised as needing improvement.

I attempted to ensure complete confidentiality by anonymising both the individual and the school in my final project by the use of pseudonyms. I also managed all personal data according to the principles established in the 1998 Data Protection Act.

I submitted all letters, consent forms, protocols and plans regarding ethics to the Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University in May 2011 and was successful in getting approval for my research at the first attempt.

VIII. Analysing and Coding the data

Coding is an interpretive technique that both organizes the data and provides a means to interpret it using more quantitative techniques – for example, counting the frequency of certain responses. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.96) define coding as “a process by which data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways.”

In qualitative research, coding is a fundamental part of data analysis. Barbara Merrill (Merrill and West, 2009) provides a helpful list of stages for data analysis of taped interviews. These include: listening to the tapes several times, reading through the transcripts of the stories and highlighting key paragraphs, sentences or words; thinking about the questions the data is generating; reading through the transcripts a second time and assigning codes; identifying the transcripts that need to be used; re-reading and coding the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and, finally, reflecting whether the data supports existing theory or suggests a new theory. (Merrill and West, 2009, pp.134-5)

Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson recommend three helpful stages in qualitative coding:

“noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures.” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.29).

One of the most frequently used research theories associated with coding that is found within the literature is grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Strauss and Corbin postulated that the researcher should approach the field with a blank canvas and no pre-suppositions. The phenomenon affects the research as opposed to the researcher affecting the phenomenon. As part of grounded theory, everything is coded in order to find out what the problem is. The grounded theory researcher goes back and forth continually modifying the outcomes of the data and sharpening the growing theory which emerges. In this thesis, I do not adopt a complete grounded theory approach to coding and data analysis. Instead I employ an approach to coding and data analysis used by West (Merrill and West, 2009).

In contrast to grounded theorists, Linden West encourages subjects to think of themselves as active participants in producing the narratives. The epistemological question of how we can make sense of narrative material, obtained from auto/biographical interviews and other sources, can be answered in two ways. Firstly, the data can be broken down into its constituent parts in order to both manage its complexity and build insights. This is the view held by grounded theorists. The second way of making sense of the narrative material, not held by grounded

theorists, is to try to understand the overall form, or 'gestalt'²⁰, in order to appreciate the detail more fully. Gestalt derives from the premise that there is a sort of order, form or patterning, or hidden agenda in lives, which can be found in our data (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). If grounded theory moves from the bits to the whole, gestalt moves from the whole to the bits. In reality, understanding the narrative requires both (Merrill and West, 2009, p.135-6).

West rejects grounded theory as a complete solution to social research for two main reasons. Firstly he highlights the impracticalities of such a research method:

"I used grounded theory in earlier work, as I sought to manage the material gathered, over a period of years (West, 1996). Grounded theory seemed the solution, offering, in its very terminology, a way of rooting conceptual insight...Observations, sentences, paragraphs are coded, each element is given a name or coding and every coded item is then placed into a series of categories. My study, at home was overwhelmed with piles of paper, by codings and classifications to be endlessly worked and re-worked, constructed and re-constructed, in what seemed an endless play of possibilities. I felt lost." (Merrill and West, 2009, p.136).

The second reason to reject grounded theory concerns an absence of gestalt in the process. Prematurely coding and disaggregating individual narratives, and aggregating these with material from other sources, carried a danger of losing some of the contextual meaning or wholeness (Gestalt) of the data. Rather each fragment was rendered more meaningful by reference to the 'whole'. (ibid.)

In my interview with a parent about the success of Bishop Pritchard School, the Christian ethos of the school was never mentioned. As such it would not have been coded as a factor. However, I later discovered that this was very important to the parent and one of the reasons that she would attribute to the success of the school. Why had it not been mentioned? Like many people, she felt that religion was very personal and something that you don't talk about to strangers in an interview. She felt that it was a 'given' and as it was a Church of England school, it was so obvious that it needn't be said. It was a kind of hidden agenda. This information could not have been obtained with copying and pasting text or bits of paper in a process of continually disaggregating and aggregating pieces of data following a grounded theory approach. A big picture view, or gestalt, needed to be taken and further clarification sought from the interviewee.

West developed a proforma as 'an analytic space in which to understand more of the whole' (Merrill and West, 2009, p.137). It was divided into four main aspects or parts: themes, process, ethnographics and gestalt (see chapter 8 section I). Themes referred to the key moments in a biography or key events in the life of the organisation. Process referred to the nature of the

²⁰ The German word Gestalt may best be translated as 'shape'. Originating from the Berlin School of Experimental psychology, Gestalt theory emphasises that the 'whole' of anything is greater than its parts

interaction between the interviewee and the researcher. The term ethnographics refers to the circumstances surrounding the interaction or interview. Finally, gestalt is concerned with the overall form and patterning in the material (Merrill and West, 2009, p.138).

In my research I used this template for all the auto/biographical interviews and conversations. I also applied the same technique to documentation (paper and electronic) about the school. The consistent application of this approach made comparison and interpretation easier. It was also more manageable than continually copying and pasting text into endless combinations and permutations. The results of this exercise are covered in Chapter 8. There are also two exemplars of the coding exercise in appendices J and K.

To supplement coding, I also used dialogical approaches to analyse the data with the interviewees. Barbara Merrill and Linden West give this definition:

“Dialogical approaches... actively seek to engage participants as explicit collaborators in processes of analysis, attempting to break down the power relationship between researchers and researched.” (Merrill and West, 2009, p.141).

It would certainly seem logical in my conversations with the headteachers, Chaplain, head of RE and long serving members of staff, to involve them in some process of analysis about what they are saying. To a large extent this would be subsumed in the auto/biographical interviews and would not be a discrete action. As ever, it would be wrong to view qualitative research as a series of separate packages which don't link to each other. Rather, it is more helpful to see this sort of research as overlapping.

IX. Summary of Methodological Considerations and a re-visiting of the research plan

In this chapter I have sought to both outline and justify the research methodology adopted in this thesis. Given a critical realist epistemology, the integral inquiry approach was chosen as an over-arching methodological framework in order to address the diverse nature of the three research questions posed at the start. A critical part of this framework is the use of ethnography and, in particular, the use of auto/biographical conversations in order to obtain meaningful data. I have suggested that I myself am a valid source of data and by participating within the research it is possible to extract deeper and richer narratives. Throughout the chapter there has been an acknowledgement of the limitations and weaknesses of some aspects of this methodology and, in particular, surrounding the areas of reflexivity in research. These have been addressed by allowing the research to be 'transformational' for the researcher and also through triangulation. Triangulation has been created through both the different sources of data and also the different research methods facilitated by the integral inquiry approach. This triangulation was achieved

through the careful planning of structured stages in the research process. Although these have already been covered in chapter 1, I revisit them here in a condensed form to clarify the issues of methodology currently being addressed:

Stage 1 involved the correlation of statistics on Christian ethos with statistics on educational outcomes for a representative sample of 100 Church of England secondary schools. For this purpose, inspection reports from the diocesan 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools' (SIAS) were set against inspection reports from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). A 'line of best fit' was drawn through the data and the correlation coefficient, R^2 , was calculated. Next, one school was chosen from this sample for a number of practical reasons but, crucially, because it enjoyed a perfect match between its score for ethos and its score for outcomes as measured by this process. The school chosen for this purpose was the Bishop Pritchard Church of England School (a pseudonym), in the South of England.

Stage 2 took the form of a case-study involving ethnographic elements (auto/biographical conversations, observations and semi-structured interviews) in this school. This was over a period of 6 months from January to July 2012 although there were a small number of preliminary and follow-up conversations. Approval was obtained from the headteacher in December 2011. In line with the third research question, there was a focus on the contribution of learning habits to the question of the perceived link between Christian ethos and outcomes at this school. Following a detailed analysis of all the data collected from this school including a lengthy process of coding the responses of the key stakeholders recorded on proformas, three main outcomes or themes emerged from the data:

1. The stakeholders perceived that learning habits did have a part to play in shaping the outcomes of their school;
2. The stakeholders perceived that the Christian ethos of the school contributed to these learning habits;
3. The learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance were felt to be of particular significance in this regard.

Stage 3 involved an internet survey which was sent to all 100 schools that made up the original sample. Questions were framed around the three areas suggested by the case-study school – the Bishop Pritchard School. Following this, a group interview was set up at the annual AASSH conference in September 2013. This probed more deeply into the understanding by the sample of 6 headteachers who took part into ethos, learning habits and outcomes together with the themes of diligence, resilience and compliance.

Having provided a theoretical rationale for the methodology used in this study, together with the research plan, chapter 6 now looks at the more applied topic of how the data was collected by using a range of research instruments.

6. Data Collection

I. Introduction to Data Collection

Chapter 6 explains the processes involved in collecting the data. Specifically it addresses three questions: firstly, what sort of data was collected; next, why this data was chosen and, finally, how the data was obtained. Chapter 7 then analyses the data generated.

The chapter is divided into 6 sections:

- I. Introduction to data collection;
- II. Collection of Ofsted and SIAS grades;
- III. Collection of data from the case-study school – the Bishop Pritchard School;
- IV. Collection of data from all Church schools through an internet survey;
- V. Collection of data from a small group of Church school headteachers;
- VI. Summary and further reflection.

II. Collection of Ofsted and SIAS grades

Stage 1 of the research plan outlined in the previous chapter was designed to address the first research question concerning the extent to which SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades supported the view that ethos contributed to educational outcomes in Church schools. The purpose of this question was to explore whether there was any statistical basis to the assertions made by the Church of England and others that the ethos of their schools had an impact on the outcomes of those schools. To obtain the data on each school the respective school's web site was visited. If the inspection reports were not posted on the school web-site then the Ofsted or National Society web-sites were used instead.

After 2013 a change was made to the SIAS framework. One key aspect of this change was that the small number of Methodist schools now became part of the fold and were included in the same school inspection framework. SIAS was then renamed 'SIAMS' to reflect the new Methodist component of the inspection system. There were other significant changes to this new framework which I will briefly cover later. However, in my study, inspection reports were drawn almost exclusively from a period before the SIAMS framework took effect. Therefore, in this thesis, I continue to use the term SIAS as opposed to SIAMS as a more precise reflection of the diocesan inspection²¹ data for each Church school.

²¹ Diocesan inspection and diocesan inspection report are used synonymously with SIAS inspection and SIAS report. Technically, although the dioceses manage the process of these inspections, they are part of a national requirement initiated by the national society and carried out by trained inspectors who are registered with the National Society.

a) The Choice of SIAS criteria as a measure of ethos

As I have outlined in the literature review in chapter 4 sections II and III, the words ethos and Christian ethos are difficult to define and even more difficult to quantify. The same can be said about educational outcomes. For (Christian) ethos, the measurement I have taken is the grades awarded by the last diocesan inspection of the school (see section c below). The Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) framework evolved from Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The framework judges schools on four main criteria: Christian distinctiveness, Worship, Religious Education and Christian leadership. For each of these criteria the school is awarded a score of 1-4. 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate. This mirrors the Ofsted framework which evolved from Section 5 of the same Act.

From these four main criteria, I omitted the grade for RE and measured the remaining three. The reasons for the choice of the three variables for Christian ethos were two-fold. Firstly, the grade awarded for Religious education will invariably reflect the examination results in RE which are not necessarily a reflection of ethos but rather of academic ability and literacy standards. It is conceivable to have an RE department in a secondary school which does not espouse the Christian ethos of the school but does succeed in obtaining excellent exam results. In this case the grade awarded for RE would overstate the overall ethos of the school. Secondly, the RE exam results, and hence the judgement on RE, would contribute directly to the judgement on pupils' achievement (which is an outcome). That is, you would be measuring the same item twice – once for ethos and once for outcomes. This would complicate the attempt to identify if there was a causal link between the two.

b) The Choice of Ofsted criteria as a measure of outcomes

With regard to outcomes, I have used data from the school's latest Ofsted report. Ofsted inspect schools every 3-5 years unless they were deemed to have been 'outstanding' at their previous inspection. In this case they are not formally re-inspected. According to the Ofsted framework, schools are judged on a variety of criteria but the three criteria that I have used are achievement, behaviour and attendance. From September 2012, the measure of attendance as a separate judgement was discontinued and subsumed into the behaviour judgement. As noted in chapter 1, the term 'behaviour' as defined by Ofsted meant more than an absence of disruption to learning and included, *inter alia*, relationships, respect and attitudes to learning / school (Ofsted, 2013; 2015). Also, from September 2012, following the recommendation from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), grade 3, 'satisfactory', was re-named 'requires improvement'.

The reasons for the choice of these three Ofsted judgements are again both pragmatic and logical. In all the years covered by my research, information on achievement has been available and easy to locate in the Ofsted reports. This is also true of behaviour and, until very recently, of attendance as well. Although the framework for inspection has changed

considerably over time, it was always possible to get this information from the Ofsted reports of each school. This is not necessarily the case for other information such as the quality of care, guidance and support. Achievement, which takes into consideration pupils' academic starting points, was chosen in preference to attainment. This is because attainment tends to reflect the catchment area rather than the effect of the ethos of the school. For example, in a Church school serving an area of high unemployment and economic deprivation, the likelihood is that attainment will be lower than a Church school serving a very economically affluent community. Behaviour is one of the best measures of the character of the pupils and attendance was used as a measure of how much the pupils enjoyed school. A school in which the pastoral care is weak and the pupils do not feel safe is likely to experience significantly lower attendance, irrespective of the socio-economic status of the school community.

It might be argued that, in a school where the love of Jesus Christ is manifest to all members of the school community, the pupils will want to come to school (attendance), will want to treat others with respect (behaviour) and will want to make the most of their talents (achievement).

c) The Scoring System

In the chart shown in chapter 7 section I part b, the value of 10 is an arbitrary value and of no significance in itself but only in comparison. The purpose of the exercise was simply to see if there was a correlation between the two sets of variables of ethos and outcomes according to the parameters established. It was therefore necessary to create a simple and consistent system where the resulting chart could be easily interpreted. For this reason a value of 10 was chosen for a school which, according to SIAS, was outstanding in all the three chosen measures and, according to Ofsted, was also outstanding in all the three chosen measures.

In the same way, a school which was good in all three measures would receive an 8 for SIAS outcomes and 8 for Ofsted outcomes. A school which was considered satisfactory would receive a 6 for SIAS outcomes and 6 for Ofsted outcomes. Finally, a school which was considered inadequate in all three areas for each inspection would receive a 4 for SIAS outcomes and a 4 for Ofsted outcomes. For the purposes of the calculation of the points score for each school, the simple formula $12 - (2 \times \text{Average value})$ was used on the spreadsheet and then replicated for all schools. The axes on the graph shown were then adjusted to run from 4 to 10 for each measure. If there was a mix of values for each of the three SIAS and Ofsted measures then the average would be taken and a decimal point used to show that the points plotted fell between the integers mentioned above.

The term 'correlation' is a precise term within social science research. It refers to the strength of the relationship between two sets of variables – for example changes in GDP and changes in employment over a period of time, say 10 years. In this study the two sets of variables are an aggregated score for ethos (the independent variable) and an aggregated score for educational outcomes (the dependent variable). Technically, the word 'correlation' should not be used to refer to a single item, such as a school, within the data sample. Therefore, in this thesis, where

there is a perfect relationship between the ethos and outcomes score for one school, I use the term 'match'.

All of this can be shown by reference to the table below. Here it is easy to see that both schools 1 and 2 enjoy a perfect match between ethos and outcomes as defined by this process. Of the five schools, the school with the least match is school number 3.

Name of School	SIAS grades (independent variable)				Ofsted grades (dependent variable)					Points
	Christian distinctiveness	Collective Worship	Christian leadership	Average SIAS grade (ethos)	Points	Pupils' Attendance	Pupils' Behaviour	Pupils' Achievement	Average Ofsted grade (outcomes)	
School 1	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 2	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 3	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	3	3	3	3.00	6.00
School 4	3	2	3	2.67	6.67	1	2	1	1.33	9.33
School 5	1	2	3	2.00	8.00	3	2	3	2.67	6.67

d) The selection of the sample of Church Schools

The sample comprised 100 maintained Voluntary Aided Church of England Secondary Schools, or Voluntary Aided Church of England Secondary Schools that had converted to become academies in recent months. During the latter period of the research there was a steady flow of Church of England schools becoming academies, known as academy converters. It is likely that most (Church) schools will end up being academies as local authorities' role in school standards diminishes. Catholic schools and those of other world faith schools were not part of the sample. Schools were also chosen where the information required was available on the internet. That is, it was possible to obtain a SIAS report and also an Ofsted report for that school. If a school had experienced great turmoil including a change of headteacher, change of name and the old school was closed then it would not be possible to obtain inspection reports about the old school. Moreover, the new school may not have been in existence long enough to receive both a SIAS report and an Ofsted report.

Voluntary Controlled schools were not part of the sample. The reason was that the structures by which they were set up and operated required less of a Christian ethos. It was the view of Dearing (2001) and Chadwick (2012) that the Christian ethos was likely to be less strong in these schools when compared with Voluntary Aided schools. For example there are fewer

governors appointed by the Church, different arrangements for teaching RE²² and, as a consequence, the SIAS inspection is reduced in scope. Therefore to include such schools would mean that the comparison with regard to Christian ethos would be using two slightly different types of SIAS report. This would make comparison less meaningful.

Independent Christian schools or Independent schools with a Christian foundation were not part of the sample because there is no requirement for them to be inspected under either the Ofsted framework or the SIAS framework. Therefore, the data simply does not exist to be used. Grammar schools were not included because of the attendant issues with regard to socio-economic status as a result of academic selection. As the result of a selective intake, attendance, achievement and behaviour tend to be highly graded in maintained grammar schools which would skew the statistics and make variations in the numeric data between ethos and outcomes less likely. Finally, grammar schools tend to be located in specific parts of the country. There may be political and social reasons for this which would, again, make meaningful comparison harder.

Therefore, overall, I judged that the most meaningful comparison would come from a relatively homogeneous group of schools and therefore I chose maintained (non-selective), mixed, Church of England Voluntary Aided secondary schools and academy converters. These type of school serve all parts of England, north and south, rural and urban. They also draw pupils from all walks of life – economic, social and cultural. There were 100 such schools (see chapter 7 section I part a).

e) The method of calculation for the correlation coefficient, R^2

To calculate this statistic, I standardized both the x (SIAS) values and the y (Ofsted) values.

$$z_{xi} = (x_i - \bar{x}) / SD_x \quad z_{yi} = (y_i - \bar{y}) / SD_y$$

What value of correlation coefficient, R^2 , would be deemed to be significant? The answer to this depends on the field of research. In the physical sciences R^2 values are commonly between 0.7 and 0.9 however, in the social sciences a much lower value would be acceptable, for example below 0.5 (Frost, 2013). This is because, in dealing with humans, the 'laboratory' is significantly less predictable and subject to innumerable complex and changing factors. Artois (2011), notes that many social science journals quote R^2 values between 0.3 and 0.4. In this thesis, and in line with this, I maintain that any value greater 0.35 is significant (DePaul University, 2010).

The purpose of R^2 is briefly covered in the glossary and its calculation for this study's data is outlined in chapter 7 section I part c.

²² A Voluntary Aided school would be free to teach its own RE syllabus whereas a Voluntary Controlled school would usually teach the locally agreed RE syllabus.

III. Collection of data from the case-study school

The purpose of collecting data from the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School, was to address the second and third research questions. I collected data from a range of diverse sources which are covered in a) to g) below:

a) Existing documentary evidence

The collection and analysis of documents is a key part of ethnographic research (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.140). Before, during and after visiting the school, I was able to acquire a range of secondary data including:

1. Report on the school carried out by the Grubb institute (Reed et al., p.2002)²³;
2. A prospectus for the academic year 2011-2012;
3. An Investors in People report from June 2012;
4. The new behaviour policy guidelines with a new policy due to be launched in September 2012;
5. The last Ofsted reports on the school in May 2010 and then November 2012;
6. The last SIAS inspection report on the school in June 2010;
7. 2, weekly bulletins for the staff – called ‘The Pink’ for the week commencing 25th June 2012 and the week commencing 2nd July 2012;
8. 20 copies of a weekly newsletters to parents called ‘INTOUCH’ (a pseudonym) from December 2011 through until May 2012.

b) Primary evidence from the school

Between January and July 2012, I spent 11 days at the Bishop Pritchard School. I then returned in December 2012 to share my findings. This gave a total of 12 days in the school. During that time, I obtained primary evidence from the following sources:

1. Two auto/biographical interviews / conversations with the Deputy Head (Pastoral);
2. An auto/biographical interview / conversation with the Chaplain;
3. An informal discussion with two sixth formers during a tour of the school;
4. An auto/biographical interview with the Head of RE;
5. A semi-structured interview with a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT);
6. An auto/biographical interview with the Head Teacher;
7. Three auto/biographical interviews with the Executive Head Teacher²⁴;

²³ The Grubb institute carried out research on 3 successfully transformed Church schools. The Bishop Pritchard School was one of them and was, once again, anonymised in the report.

²⁴ Although there was only one interview with the executive headteacher at the school during this period, there was both a preliminary and follow-up auto/biographical conversations outside the school setting. See Appendix M.

8. Observations of 5 RE lessons. Two year 11 lessons, one year 8 lesson and two year 9 lessons. One of the year 11 classes was a high ability set and the other year 11 class was a low ability set. Similarly for the year 9 classes; with one being a high ability set and the other a low ability set;
9. Observation of 1 IT lesson with a year 9 mixed ability class;
10. Observation of behaviour in the playground at break time;
11. A range of informal 'chats' with different pupils of different ages. These tended to be short and took place during lesson time and around the school;
12. An auto/biographical interview with a long serving member of staff who held no (senior) management responsibility;
13. An auto/biographical interview with the Head of Year 7;
14. A group interview with 6 pupils from years 7 and 8;
15. A semi-structured interview with a member of the support staff;
16. A semi-structured interview with a parent;
17. An auto/biographical interview with the staff governor;
18. Observation of the staff briefing session on a Monday;
19. Observation of 2 tutor sessions – two different year 7 tutor groups with their respective tutors;
20. Observation of a lower school assembly;
21. Brief informal conversations with various members of staff at break and lunchtimes in both the canteen and also the staff room.

The methodological implication of my position as a serving headteacher of a Church school, a Christian and a former Ofsted inspector has been one of the recurring topics throughout this thesis. I have already addressed the tension between objectivity and validity (see, for example chapter V section IV part d). However, in terms of collecting data, I contend that there were at least three significant advantages in researching a field in which I had significant prior knowledge:

1. I was able to formulate initial hypotheses and possible lines of enquiry early on in the research without wasting too much time (there is never enough time in the field of research and time has to be used to the full);
2. As a result of 1, I was therefore able to obtain a lot of rich data within a short space of time. Within 12 days of researching an area of expertise, I was able to acquire as much relevant data as would have been the case if I had a longer period of time researching a field about which I knew nothing previously;
3. I was able to empathise and gain credibility with those that I interviewed and so establish a professional rapport quickly in order to obtain deeper and more valid data.

However, as I have already written, there was an ever-present danger that the whole of this research study would merely end up discovering what I already knew (chapter 5 section IV part d). I wanted to divest myself of creating an ethos in my own image. To address this, I used auto/biographical interviews.

c) Auto/biographical interviews or conversations

I chose the auto/biographical method (Merrill and West, 2009) to let the major voices on school ethos speak more freely without myself, as researcher, constructing a set of questions based on my own prejudiced understanding of what the school ethos at the Bishop Pritchard School might be like. To code this data I used West's proforma (ibid., p.138). This has been explained in chapter 5 section VIII.

Although biographical methods have been widely used in researching feminism and adult education (for example, Oakley, 1981) there has been relatively limited biographical research in the field of secondary education and the understanding of school ethos (Merrill and West, 2009, p.34). There is currently no research on Church of England Secondary Schools where auto/biographical interviews are used as one of the main forms of gathering data on the school's Christian ethos. I am keen to employ this research methodology with 8 potential 'gatekeepers' of the case-study school's ethos:

1. The executive headteacher of the federation of schools;
2. The headteacher of Bishop Pritchard School;
3. The deputy headteacher, in charge of well-being (pastoral deputy);
4. The school chaplain;
5. The head of RE;
6. The head of year;
7. A staff governor;
8. A long serving member of staff with no management responsibility. In the case of Bishop Pritchard School, this was a geography teacher.

Having 8 actors at the school with whom I sought to work biographically was the limit of the capacity of this research. To have more would have made data collection overly time consuming and unmanageable. Some would argue that 8 is too many. Again, I would defend this on the grounds of a shared common understanding which meant that time was able to be used efficiently. Also, although there were 8 roles it was only 7 people as one person was both a Head of Year and also the Staff Governor. In total 11 auto/biographical conversations were recorded. More details about this can be found in Appendix M.

Although RE as a subject was discounted from my analysis of ethos scores based on the SIAS reports, it was still a significant contributor to whole school ethos. The head of RE would be a figure head for staff and pupils alike when considering the Christian ethos of the school. For this reason, I chose to conduct an auto/biographical interview with the head of RE.

Inevitably, the style of each interview varied. Some interviewees were very open and loquacious with the result that I said virtually nothing. Other interviewees were happier for me to engage in a conversation. As I have already noted in chapter 5 section IV part b, in researching feminism, Oakley saw biographical interviews as a two-way symbiotic conversation (Oakley, 1981; Reinharz, 1992, p.127). The interviews with the executive headteacher, deputy

headteacher, chaplain, head of RE and head of year 7 followed more of this conversational style.

The extent to which the respondents related to me and 'opened up' with their thoughts and feelings was recorded under the 'process' section of West's proforma that I was using to code the data (Merrill and West, 2009, p.138). For example, the auto/biographical interview with the head of year was very frank, open, direct and rich. As is common within auto/biographical research, the question I asked about this particular 'process' was: why was the head of year like this with me? As noted above, the auto/biographical interview technique was used successfully in researching feminism and adult education. The women interviewed wanted to tell their story with someone they felt comfortable with and someone who could empathise with their plight. In interviewing the head of year 7 (Catherine Pratt, a pseudonym), a similar synergy was established. I also later discovered that her line manager had not been a head of year and she was only able to discuss her job for 20 minutes each year as part of the formal performance management system which operated at the school. In contrast, I had been a head of year, was not part of the performance management process and could spend an hour listening to her story. As a result, once again, a rich seam of data, about ethos, values, habits and outcomes at the school was able to be tapped, as the following extract suggests:

CP: I sometimes phone parents on a Saturday morning.

SG: When I was a head of year it was an all-consuming job.

CP: It is. I also give the children a hug sometimes when they are down or going through a bad patch. Even though they are in secondary school, they are only year 7 and that is what they need sometimes.

SG: We take our year 7 s on an overseas residential at the end of the year and every year there are a small number who bring their teddies – boys and girls – and it helps them cope.

CP: Sometimes if a child is down in school, I let them bring their teddy in and sit in my office with me, and they don't get teased. It's about going the extra mile to meet their needs and yes, sometimes, it is being diligent in following things up and working hard but I love my job and they will probably carry me out of here in my coffin. (Interview transcript, Head of year CP, 07/03/12)

In writing and sharing my own 'story' with Catherine and others, I was able to understand the emotions involved in theirs as well. The sense of gestalt²⁵ was able to be uncovered through a period of time spent in the case-study school and using ethnographic research methods like auto/biographical conversations.

I refined my skills as an interviewer over time with different participants so as to put the respondents at ease. For this, the emphasis was, as in the example above, always upon seeking a formative narrative, or conversation, rather than a psychoanalysis of the answers.

²⁵ Gestalt refers to overall form and patterning in the research material. This is explained more fully in chapter 8 section I.

Discussion times typically ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. A safe and quiet space was chosen which was, as far as possible, free from interruption. In one discussion with the deputy headteacher, the school secretary came into the room to pass on a safety notice which needed to be dealt with immediately. Understandably the deputy headteacher had to leave and return to talk with me later. In terms of West's proforma that I was using, this was recorded as part of the 'ethnographics' section. To get round the business of secondary school life, I chose times of the day when there was less pressure. Typically this was after school, break times or, on one occasion, during an in-service training (INSET) day.

At the front of the school by reception there is a small conference room. This was used for the occasional meeting with parents and was able to be booked in advance. This was an ideal space which was quiet and safe for the staff – particularly after school when there should be no distraction, interruption or need to rush off. I conducted most of the auto/biographical interviews and conversations in this room. Finally, in conducting the interviews, it was important for me to be fully relaxed and not anxious. The respondent may pick up this anxiousness and become anxious themselves. My long experience of working in Church of England secondary schools, dealing with a wide range of crises meant that nothing that was said or happened within the 12 days shocked me. This was a help in this regard.

d) Semi-structured / unstructured interviews

In my research I was keen to hear the voices of those who do not always create the 'intended' ethos but are affected by it (Donnelly, 2000; McLaughlin, 2005). This was important so that a balanced picture of the school's ethos could emerge. I conducted 30 minute interviews with a newly qualified teacher (NQT), a member of the support staff and a parent at the case-study school to triangulate the views of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the school chaplain and the head of RE. For reasons of time, it was often necessary to give a focus to the interview by a series of open-ended questions which served as prompts. Once again, the method and style of interview varied and the distinction between an auto/biographical conversation and a semi-structured interview was often blurred. There was, in effect, a good deal of overlapping. Appendices F and G outline how the different interviews were planned although this plan was not rigidly enforced. Indeed, if the respondent wished to divulge some equally interesting or rich insight, such a divergence was positively encouraged.

e) Group interviews with pupils

A small sample of six pupils was chosen for me to conduct a group interview with. The pupils chosen were close in age so that inhibitions of speaking out in front of older peers were reduced. In this way I sought to elicit more open and frank responses. As a result, the chosen pupils were drawn only from years 7 and 8. The group situation creates an interesting dynamic for at least two reasons. Firstly, pupils feel empowered and more confident because they outnumber the researcher. Secondly, the voice of the pupils in a school is often within the context of a group. To understand pupils' views and opinions, it is necessary to understand the

group. This was precisely the way that Paul Willis (1977) justified his research on the 'lads' and the 'lobes' in his classic study 'Learning to Labour'. The danger is peer conformity. To address this, I used individual names and targeted questions for each individual within the group. The idea was to give the pupils both the space and the dignity to be themselves.

A more significant problem was the lack of a 'voice' for the older pupils in years 10 and 11 – in the age range 14 to 16. Understandably, Bishop Pritchard School, like most schools, was reluctant to release these pupils from their GCSE exam classes to talk with me. To get round this problem, and to operate within the realms of informed consent, I spoke with certain pupils of this age range at break and lunchtimes and tried to capture their views in the lesson observations.

While the school chose the pupils for the focus group, there was a request for a diverse range of pupils in terms of background and ability. Although, in my research, there were a number of one to one discussions with pupils, these were short and not set up as an interview. To ask deep questions from one child for a considerable period of time would be practically difficult within the context of a highly organised structure to the school day typically found in secondary schools (Green, 2009a). It is also ethically questionable. Children are socialised into not 'opening up' to unknown adults. To probe into the deeper parts of a child's life at school may make the pupil feel uncomfortable.

When working with children, matters of child protection need to be considered. This made it difficult for me to be left alone with a pupil. Schools are held accountable for all their safeguarding arrangements. In this regard Bishop Pritchard School was no exception and requested to see proof of my CRB²⁶ clearance early on in the research process. Also, schools are formal organisations where every moment of the day is accounted for with lessons taking place and supervised break and lunch-times. Unlike some organisations, it is not possible to wander off and chat to a few pupils for an hour over a cup of coffee. There is not time in the day to do this. It was the deliberate policy of Bishop Pritchard School, along with most other schools, to create a 'quiet, business-like atmosphere' where pupils and staff are engaged all the time. This was also the finding of Green in her research of Emmanuel City Technology College (Green, 2009a, p.82).

While the group was chosen by the school and specifically the head of year, there was a request that, within the group there was, as far as possible, at least one pupil who had a statement of special needs, at least one looked-after pupil and at least one pupil who had English as an additional language. This request was honoured by the school. It was important to hear how these pupils also interpreted the school ethos and how they perceived that it affected their attendance, behaviour and exam results.

²⁶ The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check has been subsequently replaced by the Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks on all people working alone in schools.

f) Lesson observations (observer as participant)

The purpose of lesson observations was to throw light on the ethos of the school from the perspective of the pupils and their classroom experience. Within this, a prime purpose was to correlate the rhetoric with the practice. That is, is what the head of department and the headteacher said in their auto/biographical interviews the same as what is actually experienced in the classroom? Is the school ethos talked about in the office (the 'intended' ethos) the same as the ethos that is lived out within the classroom (the 'experienced' ethos)?

In an ideal world, I wanted to be a 'fly on the wall' of the classroom who did not affect the lesson interaction. However, realistically, this was not possible at the Bishop Pritchard School. Pupils invariably asked me a question if I was within earshot. Although I had to remind myself that I was not a teacher but a professional researcher, the teacher in me, would always want to help out. The advantage of this was that it enabled the pupils and teachers to respond more warmly to me as opposed to someone who they saw as a mute and distant judge. Therefore I fulfilled the role of a very passive teaching assistant who walked around the room during the group activities answering and asking questions. I worked hard to ensure that I had minimum impact on what went on during the lesson. For example, when a pupil asked me for an answer, I would tell them what the teacher had said in terms of where to find it without answering it and conferring on them an unfair advantage relative to their peers. My training with HMI as an Ofsted inspector prepared me to avoid any significant intervention at all in the lesson – unless there was a major health and safety risk. In my 12 days this did not occur. In summary, I fulfilled the role of observer as participant (May, 2001, p.156; Foster, 1996, pp.73-77).

Street (2007) highlighted the problem of teacher reactivity during his lesson observations of RE classes in 15 Church schools within the dioceses of London and Southwark:

“One of the immeasurable problems associated with observations is the degree to which teachers change their behaviour because of the presence of the researcher. Lesson observations are fraught with the risk of reactivity and I hoped that my low-key reactive involvement in the lesson would help alleviate such hazards.” (Street, 2007, p.43).

Indeed, it is a moot point as to whether it is actually possible to be a fully non-participant observer anyway (Ball, 1990, p.159).

The next challenge was what to record in the lesson – the epistemological question of how I made sense of the lesson observation data. One of the key aspects of the integral inquiry approach is that the final outcome is kept in mind; all aspects of the work 'home in' on the fundamental research question: Is there a relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes in a school?

In subscribing to a critical realist epistemology and rejecting a pure constructivist approach, I maintain that although the path to understanding the relationship between ethos, learning habits

and educational outcomes requires interpretation, it is nonetheless possible to find a way through. I accept that the researcher is an interpreter and therefore is constructing understandings but that these are not purely subjective and can be scrutinised for their correspondence to what is actually happening in discerning the relationship between ethos, outcomes and learning habits.

Quintessentially, any intended ethos must be transmitted into the classroom on a daily basis if it is to have an impact on the lives of the pupils, their learning habits and their examination results. My role as researcher was to try and capture and then make sense of this ethos within the classroom setting. The critical realist paradigm would not only suggest that this can be done but also that the outcomes of this process can have beneficial outcomes for a wider audience (Neuman, 2003, p.81).

g) Other observations and field notes

These comprised:

1. Field notes of pupil assemblies, tutor times, break and lunch times – written up at the end of the day or during the lunch break and, as a result, slightly more analytical than 2;
2. Daily journal of general events around the schools during the day – jotted down in the log book almost as they happen – more factual of “What” as opposed to “Why”.

These notes and documents were read and re-read and then coded in the same way as the interviews using West’s proforma. The consistency in approach by always using this proforma meant that comparisons between the different sources of data could easily be made. Throughout the process of coding and comparing, the research questions concerning ethos, learning habits and outcomes were kept in mind.

h) Summary of collection of data from the case-study school including the practical aspects

The survey of the literature on Christian ethos covered in Chapter 4 highlighted the complexities inherent in defining and measuring Christian ethos and the attendant implications for both learning habits and educational outcomes. In researching the case-study school, it was important to listen to a range of voices in a range of ways. This included formal comments in a prospectus through to informal comments made by pupils in the classroom. This data was collected using a range of research instruments including the scrutiny of documentary evidence, auto/biographical interviews, unstructured interviews, lesson observations and the recording of field notes from other observations.

To help in this regard, data was often recorded onto a sound recorder and then transcribed. This comprised:

1. Auto/biographical interviews;

2. Unstructured interviews;
3. Group interviews with the group of pupils.

A small unobtrusive digital sound recorder was used to collect the evidence. This enabled me, as researcher, to continually engage in eye contact and to focus on the interview as opposed to the writing up of it. It also enabled me to quote accurately. Due to problems of transcribing the interviews, this was later replaced with a larger cassette machine. Although slightly more obtrusive, and sitting on a desk, it still did not appear to intrude on the conversations or storytelling. The respondents were at ease and spoke freely at all times. In all interviews conducted at the school, there was no reticence from the respondents to engage with the technology when they were asked. Indeed this was also the case when this process was repeated with the group of 6 headteachers at the AASSH conference (see section V below).

The recorded data was typed up by myself or my PA as soon as possible after the event. It was typed word for word including pauses and “Erm s” and “yeah s.” The comments can be seen in chapters 7-9 and the coded versions can also be seen in appendices J and K.

With regard to the field notes, these were written in pencil into a notebook as soon as possible after the event and kept in my breast pocket. For example, notes on what happened in an assembly were written down, from memory, immediately after the assembly as the hall emptied and before lesson one started. That night, on returning home, these notes from the notebook were typed up and saved securely on my home computer in line with the university’s guidance for ethical practice.

IV. Collection of data from all schools through an internet survey

In the last few years, a number of software packages have emerged which allow researchers to carry out an internet survey quickly and conveniently. The packages also provide detailed quantitative results within seconds. I used one such statistical survey tool, survey monkey™ as my school has a license for this and it is a commonly used tool by, and for, my audience – secondary school headteachers.

The research findings from the case-study school, Bishop Pritchard School, were then tested with all the other schools in the original sample. In this way the sample size rose from one school to one hundred such schools. The headteacher of each school in the sample was invited to answer a small number of questions which directly related to the findings from the case-study on Bishop Pritchard School.

In terms of the mechanics of administering the survey, the database of 100 schools mentioned in section II part d of this chapter was expanded to include the email address of each school so that each headteacher received the same questionnaire at the same time. The questions sought to explore in more detail the second and third research questions concerning the purported link between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. In the case-study of

Bishop Pritchard School, I had started to uncover some of the perceptions about these links with the stakeholders of that school. It was now time to widen the net of the research questions to include the perceptions of the headteachers of other Church schools.

I am more conscious than most researchers about the email demands made on headteachers of Church of England Secondary Schools. I wanted to obtain a response rate of at least 20% in order to claim some degree of statistical significance with regard to the survey. Therefore, the survey was carefully constructed to capture the salient information in as simple a way as possible. It was felt that if there were too many or too complicated questions, then there was a high risk that no response would be made. For this reason, the email sent to each headteacher explained that there were only 8 questions which required a 'click' of the mouse and the survey would take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. In terms of the annual calendar, I wanted to send the survey early on in the summer term before the pressures on headteachers mounted with time needed for staff appointments, calendars, handbooks, timetables and leavers' events. Such occurrences would render any period from mid-May until the end of term particularly busy and unsuitable for such a survey. Somewhat unfortunately, it just so happened that the National Society emailed a similar, albeit more complex, survey to all Church school headteachers at the same time. It is likely that we both cost each other a few percentage points in our response rates.

In the event, over 70% of head teachers made no reply and some of those who did reply simply apologised for being too busy to complete the 8 questions asked. Examples of these latter types of response are shown in appendix H. On reflection, a better time for me to have sent the survey would have been at the start of the year when there is both no competition and fewer pressures on Church school headteachers. On the positive side, there was a response rate of over 20% which meant that the results were statistically significant, although only just.

As stated at the outset, the main thrust of this research in addressing the second and third research questions was the case-study, using elements of different ethnographic methods. I make limited claims for generalizability based on this short case-study. However, by broadening the sample using the internet survey, a greater degree of reliability can be claimed for this small scale research project. The results of this internet survey are presented in chapter 8 section III and part a.

V. Group interview with a small sample of Church school headteachers

The last piece of data collected was a group interview with six Church of England Secondary School headteachers. This took place at the annual AASSH conference at York in September 2013. As a delegate at the conference I approached six headteachers using an opportunistic or purposive sampling technique. I did not approach committee members as I knew that they would be busy throughout the conference and unlikely to be able to commit to being available for a 40 minute interview.

The purpose of the group interview was to talk informally about the purported links between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes in Church of England secondary schools. The interview was not structured with formal questions but did seek to draw out the views of the group with regard to an article I had published in the AASSH magazine in January 2013 (Green, 2013). This article outlined the broad themes that had emerged from my case-study at the Bishop Pritchard School. Each of the conference delegates had a copy of this journal in their conference packs and were therefore aware of the field of research that I was working in. The form of the interview can be found in Appendix I.

In addition to the publication of my initial findings from Bishop Pritchard in the AASSH journal, each of the six headteachers also had, along with all the headteachers, received a survey questionnaire in early May of 2013. Some, but not all, of the six headteachers in the group interview had responded to this survey.

With regard to the manner in which this data was collected, I used the same small cassette recorder which was used with the stakeholders at the case-study school. With the group of headteachers, it was placed on a table in the lounge area of the conference centre. The group sat on lounge chairs and talked freely, and at length, about their schools and their understanding of the possible link between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. The conversation was transcribed and then coded using the same proforma style that was used for all the interviews at the Bishop Pritchard School. The findings of this last piece of research are presented in chapter 8 section III part b.

VI. Summary and further reflection

The purpose of this chapter has been to describe the data that was collected in order to address the three research questions of this study. Furthermore it was to shed light on why this data was chosen and how it was obtained.

In addressing the first research question concerning the relationship between SIAS and Ofsted grades, I spent several weeks visiting web-sites, reading inspection reports on the 100 Church schools and transcribing number grades. Although this process was time consuming, it was both straightforward and interesting.

For the second and third questions, my research skills in collecting the data were tested more fully. On arriving at the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School, I took on the role of fellow traveller with the staff at the school as opposed to an inspector or judge. This approach was welcomed by the deputy headteacher on the first day that I met him and he commented on how helpful the term 'fellow traveller' was for his understanding of the research project. I sought to develop an informal, friendly and positive relationship with all staff over the 12 days at the school within an environment where we could learn together and from each other. This role and style was also welcomed by the other staff at the school and as a result the data collection exercise proceeded without hindrance and was fruitful.

Once the email addresses for each of the 100 Church schools were checked and input into the software package, the internet survey was both easy to administer and generated its own results. The group interview with a small sample of headteachers was, once again, relatively easy to set up and, once the headteachers started talking, flowed effortlessly in generating plenty of dialogue and useful data.

Throughout each stage of data collection my own reflections based on Canon Hall (pseudonym for my second headship school) and St Ainsworth's (pseudonym for my first headship school) were woven into the analysis. When reflecting on the large quantities of data that were transcribed, I asked myself whether this situation would be replicated in my experience. I kept a notebook on me at all times in the case-study school and enjoyed copious amounts of time for reflection on the many hours of travelling between my school, Canon Hall, and Bishop Pritchard. The next time that I was at Bishop Pritchard, I would dig further into areas which had thrown up something new or completely changed the way that I had looked at things before. In this way an iterative form of research evolved where I would record and transcribe data from Bishop Pritchard then listen, read, reflect and evaluate in the light of my own experience before returning to Bishop Pritchard School to find out more.

However a deeper problem of a more philosophical nature was beginning to emerge in my mind. In chapter 3 section I part a, I used the phrase 'talking only with the Sanhedrin'. On reflecting over the data that I had gathered, I was conscious that the suppliers of that data were governors, heads of department, other middle managers, deputy headteachers and a large sample of headteachers. All these roles have a (strong) managerial dimension. Inevitably there would be performance targets assigned to all these posts and to headteacher posts particularly. As already mentioned in chapter 1 section III, the pressure on headteachers to deliver good results is enormous and this pressure will be passed down the chain of command to the English or Mathematics teacher in the classroom with the examination class in year 11. Was I therefore only hearing the managerial view? Was I only seeking out statistics about exams or attendance or exclusions and ignoring the stories of people and the lives behind them? Was I submitting, unconsciously, to the performativity agenda? The words of McBeath began to haunt me, was I: "only valuing what could be measured rather than attempting to measure what was of real value?" (McBeath, 2005, p.1).

In response, I make four points. Firstly, the nature of the research questions posed at the start of the thesis necessitate some degree of quantification and measurement through reference to numbers, statistics and trends. This is somewhat inevitable. Secondly, I have been open and transparent about my background, my research philosophy and my theological understanding, none of which are inconsistent with measurements of performance and performativity. Thirdly, in terms of methodology, I have used diverse research methods and triangulated the results. Fourth, and finally, I have acknowledged throughout the dangers of an over emphasis on performativity to the detriment of the school's (Christian) ethos which could erode and undermine the very values necessary for high performance in the first place.

If the data from this study indicates that the managerial stakeholders did not put performance and performativity above the needs of the 'whole child' then this would weaken the allegation of an over-emphasis on performativity in this thesis. I briefly re-visit this question in chapter 8 with a short analysis of the stakeholder responses. Before that, it is time to outline what the data obtained showed.

7. Data Analysis

I. What the Quantitative Data shows from Ofsted and SIAS grades of Church schools

The quantitative data from inspection reports was entered on a Microsoft Spread sheet package Excel 2010™. The software was used to calculate averages and plot a line of best fit between all the schools in the study. The software package was also used to calculate the R^2 statistic.

With the internet survey of all the schools, the data was analysed, using the software application Survey Monkey™ and percentages and averages were calculated together with measures of dispersion or spread. Charts and graphs, created by the software package, were also used to gain a fuller understanding of the data.

a) The table of values

Although both the new SIAS and revised Ofsted inspection guidelines were originally articulated in the 2005 Education Act, the freedom for the National Society to produce its own inspection framework meant that there was little or no connection between the two types of inspection. It was quite possible for a school to be judged as outstanding, grade 1, by the diocese but inadequate, grade 4, by Ofsted. For example, in the table on the next page, school number 27 was awarded a '1' for Christian distinctiveness from SIAS but a '4' for achievement from Ofsted. The new SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) which replaced SIAS in 2013, from the 2011 Education Act, will mean that the two inspection judgements are now more in line. That is, under the new SIAMS framework a school with outstanding achievement in all subjects will be judged by both the SIAMS inspector and the Ofsted team to have an outstanding judgement for achievement overall and, in all probability, other categories as well. However, for the purpose of my research from 2003 to 2013, there was no required or implied link between the two inspection judgements of each school. As a result, this particular time frame for my research makes the findings richer as future studies of this type will not be possible in the same way due to the fact that the judgements from the two types of inspection are now automatically connected.

Establishment Name	Christian Distinctiveness	Collective Worship	Christian Leadership	Average for Ethos	SIAS Score	Pupils' achievement	Pupils' Behaviour	Pupils' Attendance	Average for outcomes	Ofsted Score
School 1	1	1	2	1.33	9.33	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 2	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	2	1	2	1.67	8.67
School 3	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 4	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 5	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 6	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 7	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	3	3	2	2.67	6.67
School 8	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	1	1	2	1.33	9.33
School 9	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	2	1	1.33	9.33
School 10	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 11	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 12	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 13	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 14	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 15	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 16	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 17	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 18	2	2	3	2.33	7.33	3	3	2	2.67	6.67
School 19	3	3	2	2.67	6.67	3	3	3	3.00	6.00
School 20	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	4	3	3	3.33	5.33
School 21	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 22	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 23	1	1	2	1.33	9.33	1	2	2	1.67	8.67
School 24	2	2	3	2.33	7.33	2	2	3	2.33	7.33
School 25	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	1	1	2	1.33	9.33
School 26	2	2	1	1.67	8.67	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 27	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	4	3	3	3.33	5.33
School 28	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 29	2	3	2	2.33	7.33	4	3	3	3.33	5.33
School 30	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	3	2	2	2.33	7.33
School 31	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	3	2	2	2.33	7.33
School 32	1	1	2	1.33	9.33	3	2	2	2.33	7.33
School 33	3	3	3	3.00	6.00	1	2	2	1.67	8.67
School 34	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	2	1	2	1.67	8.67
School 35	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 36	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 37	2	3	3	2.67	6.67	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 38	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 39	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 40	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 41	2	1	2	1.67	8.67	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 42	2	2	3	2.33	7.33	3	2	1	2.00	8.00
School 43	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 44	1	3	2	2.00	8.00	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 45	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 46	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 47	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 48	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	3	3	4	3.33	5.33
School 49	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 50	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 51	3	3	3	3.00	6.00	3	3	2	2.67	6.67
School 52	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 53	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 54	3	2	3	2.67	6.67	3	2	3	2.67	6.67
School 55	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 56	2	2	3	2.33	7.33	3	3	3	3.00	6.00
School 57	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 58	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 59	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	2	2	3	2.33	7.33
School 60	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	2	1	1.33	9.33
School 61	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 62	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	4	3	2	3.00	6.00
School 63	2	2	1	1.67	8.67	3	2	3	2.67	6.67

Establishment Name	Christian Distinctiveness	Collective Worship	Christian Leadership	Average for Ethos	SIAS Score	Pupils' achievement	Pupils' Behaviour	Pupils' Attendance	Average for outcomes	Ofsted Score
School 64	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 65	2	2	3	2.33	7.33	2	2	3	2.33	7.33
School 66	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	2	1	2	1.67	8.67
School 67	2	4	3	3.00	6.00	3	3	4	3.33	5.33
School 68	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 69	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 70	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 71	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 72	4	3	3	3.33	5.33	4	3	3	3.33	5.33
School 73	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 74	1	2	1	1.33	9.33	2	1	1	1.33	9.33
School 75	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 76	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 77	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 78	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	2	1	1.33	9.33
School 79	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 80	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 81	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 82	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	3	2	2	2.33	7.33
School 83	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 84	2	3	1	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 85	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 86	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 87	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 88	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	1	3	2.00	8.00
School 89	2	3	3	2.67	6.67	3	3	3	3.00	6.00
School 90	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 91	1	2	2	1.67	8.67	3	2	1	2.00	8.00
School 92	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 93	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 94	2	3	2	2.33	7.33	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 95	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	1	1.67	8.67
School 96	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 97	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00
School 98	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	2	1.33	9.33
School 99	1	1	1	1.00	10.00	1	1	1	1.00	10.00
School 100	2	2	2	2.00	8.00	2	2	2	2.00	8.00

R-Squared 0.4102301

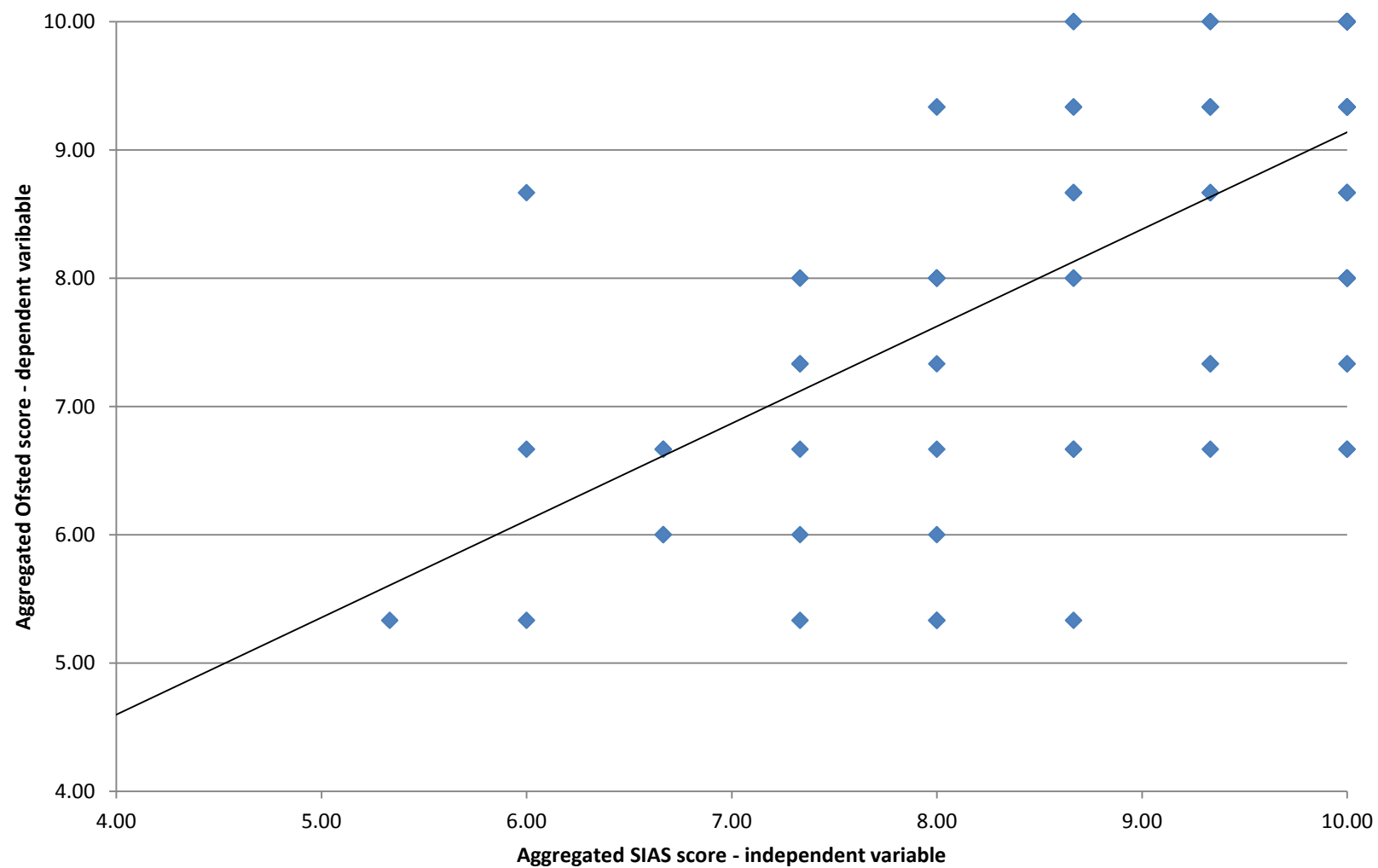
b) The line of best fit

The line of best fit was calculated using the Microsoft Excel™ Spreadsheet package on which the data was entered. The axes were re-aligned to run from 4 to 10. The equation of the line of best fit was

$$y = 0.7567x + 1.5717$$

Chart showing aggregated SIAS and Ofsted scores 2003-2013

$y = 0.7567x + 1.5717$
 $R^2 = 0.4102$



One hundred suitable schools, according to the criteria already mentioned in chapter 6 section II part d, were identified and labelled in the table above as school 1 to school 100. These schools made up a total school population of about 90,000 pupils. The fact that there were 100 schools made analysis more convenient. For example, 35 schools (35%) were judged to be outstanding under Ofsted criteria. This compares with 26% nationally (Ofsted, 2012, p.30). At the outset it is fairly easy to see that a higher proportion of Church schools are outstanding compared with the national average. The reasons for this are more contentious.

The reports from Ofsted and SIAS were taken from 2009 to 2013. However, if a school was judged as outstanding by Ofsted before 2009 then it would not be re-inspected. Therefore, for these schools, Ofsted reports were used as far back as 2003, that being the last time that they were fully inspected.

For most Ofsted reports, it is quite easy to obtain statistics on achievement, behaviour and attendance. Occasionally, with the repeated changes of the Ofsted inspection framework, there was no statistic for some criteria and, in these cases, the narrative had to be read very carefully. For example from September 2012, there is no separate numerical judgement on attendance although it is closely associated with 'Behaviour and Safety'. Therefore, where the narrative says attendance is better than the national average, a value of '1' was assigned. Where it reports that attendance needs to improve then a value of 3 was assigned.

c) The value of the correlation coefficient, R^2

The correlation coefficient, R was 0.68 and R squared was 0.4102. To calculate this statistic, I first standardized both the x (SIAS) values and the y (Ofsted) values.

$$z_{xi} = (x_i - \bar{x}) / SD_x \quad z_{yi} = (y_i - \bar{y}) / SD_y$$

Next, to calculate R^2 , I took the average of the products $z_{xi} z_{yi}$. This should be made clear with the example below which is based on the first 5 schools in the table and which I use purely as an example of calculation.

x (SIAS scores)	9.33	9.33	10	9.33	10
y (Ofsted scores)	9.33	8.67	10	9.33	9.33

I then calculated:

$$\bar{x} = (9.33+9.33+10+9.33+10)/5 = 9.598$$

$$\bar{y} = (9.33+8.67+10+9.33+9.33)/5 = 9.332$$

$$SD_x^2 = [(9.33-9.598)^2 + (9.33-9.598)^2 + (10-9.598)^2 + (9.33-9.598)^2 + (10-9.598)^2] / 5$$

$$SD_x = \sqrt{0.107736} = 0.328231625$$

$$SD_y^2 = [(9.33-9.332)^2 + (8.67-9.332)^2 + (10-9.332)^2 + (9.33-9.332)^2 + (9.33-9.332)^2] / 5$$

$$SD_y = \sqrt{0.176896} = 0.420590061$$

I then calculated the average of the z-scores of the x- and y-variables:

x	y	z _x	z _y	z _x z _y
9.33	9.33	-0.82	-0.005	0.004
9.33	8.67	-0.82	-1.57	1.29
10	10	1.22	1.59	1.94
9.33	9.33	-0.82	-0.005	0.004
10	9.33	1.22	-0.005	-0.006
Ave. of z _x z _y : 0.646				

Thus the correlation R is 0.646 and, *pari passu*, $R^2 = 0.418$. Thus the correlation between ethos and outcomes of the first five schools in the table is very slightly higher than the correlation across the whole sample of 100 schools. However this variation is not significant. That is, the sample (of the first 5 schools in the table) is very representative of the population (of 100 schools).

All 100 schools were plotted on a set of axes and, using regression analysis, a 'line of best fit' was drawn through the data. The correlation coefficient, R^2 , for this line was calculated to be 0.4102. This indicates a small positive correlation. That is, as covered in chapter 6 section I part e, the statistic is significant within social science research (DePaul University, 2010; Artois, 2011; Frost, 2013). There is therefore a statistically significant relationship between ethos and outcomes as defined and measured by this process.

d) Limitations with regard to the comparison of Ofsted and SIAS grades

Although the analysis above shows that there is a correlation between ethos and outcomes given the parameters described, the precise nature of the link is not clear. It could be that ethos affects outcomes or it could be that outcomes affect ethos. Moreover, it could be that both ethos and outcomes are affected by a third variable, such as deprivation. However, there is a much more fundamental issue to be addressed. That is, can we assume there is a causal link at all? Isn't the whole notion of Christian ethos a subjective phenomenon as opposed to something that can be quantified and measured?

Using Ofsted measures in research are also problematic for a number of reasons. Not only have Ofsted definitions of effectiveness and performance been highly contested since their inception (Coe, 2013; ATL, 2013; Richards, 2015), but also the measures have developed and changed considerably over time, making longitudinal comparison very difficult. There may also be a variance in how individual inspection teams and, in particular, lead inspectors, apply the centrally determined criteria. For example, would a single SIAS inspector, who is inspecting a school for one day, have the confidence to go against the judgements of a whole team of Ofsted inspectors who have been there for several? More precisely, if Ofsted grade the school as outstanding, is it not tempting for the SIAS inspector with limited resources, including time, to come to a broadly similar judgement?

So, a number of critical questions could be asked of this analysis of the data:

1. Are distinctiveness, worship and leadership the best measures of ethos or should we look for other, better indicators of ethos?
2. Are attendance, behaviour and pupil achievement the best measures of educational outcomes or should we look for others?
3. Are the two sets of variables derived from the two inspection processes intertwined? When the SIAS inspector arrives a few weeks after the Ofsted team is (s)he likely to make judgements which are 'in line with' the overall judgement of the Ofsted report?
4. Does ethos influence outcomes or do the outcomes have an effect on the ethos? That is, what is the direction of causality? Alternatively, could it be the case that both ethos and outcomes are influenced by some third factor such as economic affluence?
5. Should we be looking for a causal link in the first place? Even if one existed, what, if anything, would this actually 'prove'?

These, I maintain, are important questions and worthy of further research. However, this study does not centre on this statistical exercise alone and as an end in itself. Rather the statistical exercise above was used as an entrée, albeit an important entrée, to the second and third research questions involving stakeholders perceptions of ethos and the role of learning habits.

e) Conclusions from the data on Ofsted and SIAS grades of Church schools

My first research question was: 'to what extent does the correlation between SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades support the view that ethos contributes to outcomes in Church schools?' In answering this, the analysis above arrived at a correlation coefficient, or R^2 , which suggests that there is a small positive correlation between ethos and outcomes as defined and measured by SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades in the way explained above. In arriving at this outcome, I acknowledge the limitations of this aspect of the research and address these limitations through asking further research questions and employing further, more qualitative, research methods and instruments to better understand the relationship.

Perhaps the most powerful conclusion that I draw from this initial aspect of the research is that it rules out the argument that, using this process, ethos and outcomes are definitely unrelated.

According to the parameters established, they might be related. The suggestion of my former headteacher, and others, that Church schools have an 'extra dimension' may yet be correct and may yet be defensible on statistical grounds. However, a more interesting and fruitful follow up question to the 'what' may be the 'why' and the 'how'. Research questions two and three were designed to throw light on these. In doing this it was necessary to analyse the data obtained from the case-study school. This is addressed now.

II. What the qualitative data on the case-study school shows

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23, TNIV)

a) Introduction

In carrying out my research at the Bishop Pritchard School I was struck by the friendliness and professionalism of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the staff. I found the staff to be most accommodating, courteous and polite. Many members of staff gave their time generously, including their break-times. For this I was most grateful.

The nature of the research was ethnographic, or qualitative. My 'data' was therefore what I saw, heard and felt as opposed to simply what the statistics about the school suggested. This type of research is capable of richer and deeper meanings but it is also considerably more time-consuming.

The purpose of the research was to address the second research question by illuminating how the purported link between Christian ethos as judged by SIAS inspectors and educational outcomes as judged by Ofsted inspectors was perceived by the stakeholders of this case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School. The third research question, which was related to this, was what light does the work by William Jeynes (op.cit.) on learning habits contribute to this understanding? These were the second and third research questions outlined at the beginning of the thesis in chapter 1.

Including this introduction, I will structure my data analysis from the case-study school in the following 10 sections:

- a) Introduction;
- b) The mission statement;
- c) The contact with parents;
- d) Staff briefing and the building;
- e) Hard work and hard courses;
- f) Pastoral care and going the 'extra mile';
- g) Tutor time;
- h) Assemblies / Acts of worship / Spirituality;

- i) Lessons;
- j) The hidden curriculum – around the school.

b) The Mission statement of the case-study school

The mission statement on the front page of the prospectus reads:

“The school aims, within the Christian ethos of our Foundation, recognising each person’s supreme value and working in active partnership with parents, church and community: to provide high quality education based on Christian care; to promote innovative excellence *in the specialist subjects*; to develop everyone’s potential academically, socially and spiritually; and to equip all for citizenship in our technological learning society.” (School prospectus 2011-12, School motto and mission statement, page 1, italics added to anonymise the school).

Although this mission statement is posted in every classroom, it was not referred to by any pupil or any member of staff, over the 11 days, with the exception of the headteacher. However, this may not be uncommon in a secondary school – particularly in the case of a fairly long and complex statement like this.

Quite understandably, when questioned about the ethos, the headteacher referred to this mission statement:

SG: “Has the ethos changed much in the last six years (since the headteacher, NJ joined) or stayed the same?”

NJ: “Erm, the Mission Statement which you will see in every room in the school hasn’t changed and that drives the ethos. TB (Executive head) led the writing of that, erm and raised its profile and very much gave this school a Christian character. When he became Executive Head and JR (Interim head) took over the day to day, JR did an awful lot without changing any of the wording, to enhance its meaning. So JR did a lot of really good work in terms of raising its profile in terms of strengthening the Christian ethos through the school, and then I’ve attempted in the last six months to then sort of build on that even further……. So I’ve talked in staff meetings and in worships about where it says there, ‘Recognising each person’s supreme value’, rather than just recognising in terms of growing people’s supreme values, in terms of equipping all for citizenship but actually equipping all to be role models or leaders in society. So not everybody can be a leader but everybody can be a role model, which for me has a very different meaning to just being a citizen.” (Interview transcript, Head Teacher NJ, 31/01/12).

When prompted on the curriculum, the headteacher was keen to elaborate on how the Christian ethos was made manifest in lesson planning:

SG: “How do these words (about Christian ethos) actually impact on teaching and learning?”

NJ: “Lots and lots of ways. I mean on a very obvious level, erm, in the last couple of years we have actually asked staff to develop its explicitly Christian themed lessons within each scheme of work to aim to get one task per term which will explicitly come at the topic they are doing from the Christian ethos, Christian angle, and some element of Christian reflection. Now it might be an ethical issue, a sort of awe and wonder of creation. It might even be a mystery sort of issue but to encourage that kind of reflection about where God is in that issue, so we've got it explicitly developing throughout the curriculum regardless of the subject. And in fact especially not in RE and PSHE where it might be sort of part of that subject, no it's part of the curriculum. But that's just a fraction of it. It's about getting the right, what we said earlier, what's in the news today. It's about going right back to the basic curriculum you are offering. Is it inclusive, does it give all pupils an opportunity to succeed?” (Interview transcript, Head Teacher NJ, 31/01/12)

This bold assertion by the school leadership that the mission statement was being translated into the curriculum was also supported by the staff governor.

“But I think all the staff were aware with him (JR) in charge that we had to be looking at how our lessons, how our behaviour reflected the ethos of the school. Were we just teachers or were we teachers in a Church of England school? And again, were we governors or were we governors of a Church of England school and is that different? And you were constantly asked to reflect upon that. We had an INSET part where we were looking at a lesson plan; we were given a lesson plan for a History lesson and another one for an RE lesson and we had to say, ‘How could this be ... Where's the Christian twist in this, where's the faith that we can put through? What's the problem with this? It was about witches in an English lesson I think as well. And, of course, part of the gothic genre scheme of work you are bound to come across super natural and so on, but then how do you balance that for the Christian ethos. It was a very interesting exercise to do and I think having taught in some many other schools this is different, it is very different here.” (Interview transcript, Staff Governor CP, 22/05/12, brackets added).

In May 2010, the Bishop Pritchard School was judged to be an ‘outstanding school’ by Ofsted. The following month, June 2010, the diocesan inspection also found the school to be outstanding. This was attributed, in part, to the ethos of the school:

“The strong Christian ethos has had a significant impact on the personal development and academic achievement of all the pupils.” (SIAS Report, Bishop Pritchard School, June 2010, p.2).

While the ethos has contributed to the educational outcomes of the school, is this mainly due to the manifest aims of the school outlined in its mission statement? The clear Christian direction provided by the leadership of the school may be, in many ways, a necessary condition for success but is it, of itself, sufficient? In order to discover the main reasons for success, it was necessary to probe more deeply into the life of the school using ethnographic research methods.

c) The contact with the parents

Each week the school produces a newsletter for parents entitled ‘INTOUCH’ (a pseudonym). This is an A4 piece of paper with text and images printed on both sides. It is given to each pupil at the school to pass onto their parents. It is also posted on the web-site so that the images can be seen in colour. The fact that it is produced every week means that parents come to expect it and sometimes contact the school if their child has not, for whatever reason, passed it on. This is becoming less of an issue as an increasing number of parents make use of the school web-site via the internet.

The purpose of the newsletter was made clear in one of the editions by the Executive Head teacher:

“INTOUCH is a very visible, and regular, reminder of our desire, as a school, to ensure that parents are kept informed and able to play an active role as partners in their children’s education here at The Bishop Pritchard School.” (INTOUCH Weekly Newsletter No.579, 02/03/12).

In my research, I carried out an analysis of the content of these newsletters by scrutinising a sample of 20 such newsletters which were produced between December 2011 and May 2012.

Each newsletter comprised approximately 6-10 short news stories accompanied by approximately 4 – 6 images, typically of pupils and staff. News stories were mainly written by members of staff but occasionally by the pupils themselves. The target audience was the parent body and one of the main purposes of the newsletter was to portray the school in a positive light.

To this end, news stories reported covered, *inter alia*, the success of all the school sports teams, success in performing arts events, charitable fund raising events, school visits abroad, letters of praise for the school from the general public and prominent individuals who have recently visited the school as guests. There were also a small amount of notices which were purely for information, such as forthcoming parents’ evenings, options evenings or INSET days.

The content and style was entirely consistent with any school newsletter although, the frequency with which the newsletters are produced was unusual. Most schools produce newsletters once a month, or once a term, as opposed to once a week. Where the newsletter departs fundamentally from other school newsletters is in the headteacher's introduction.

Each week, the Christian ethos of the school is made explicit in the opening narrative of every newsletter. Invariably the headteacher will communicate to parents what the school has been looking at during worship times in the week leading up to the day that the newsletter is published on the Friday. Although the headteacher's report is relevant to education in general and the school in particular, he does make frequent use of Gospel stories, famous Christians from the past and even lines from a hymn.

The following extract from the headteacher's introduction is typical:

"The Kingdom of heaven is 'like treasure in a field'. This thought for the week has been used in worship to remind every pupil of their own supreme value and as such, that they are all valuable treasure. Feeling valued and treasured is something we all thrive on, whether as individuals, or as a family, or as an institution. Therefore we feel very proud to receive heartfelt recognition from AB, the Director of Children's services." (INTOUCH Weekly Newsletter No.573, 13/01/12).

Such a prominent statement of Christian ethos, every week, is unusual, even for a Church school. What is significant is that, talking to a parent about the weekly newsletter, she never mentioned the headteacher's opening narrative. She seemed to value the fact that she was regularly informed and the fact that her child's school is doing well, more than anything else. This divergence between the manifest aims of the school leadership to promote the Christian ethos through the newsletter and the view of this one parent may be explained in various ways. Perhaps the parent was 'immune' to the Gospel message or, alternatively, perhaps in our modern culture, it is not common to talk about spiritual things – even in a Church school. A larger sample of parents would be needed before any general conclusions can be drawn. I requested to meet with the school's PTA but was informed that it was no longer running.

Where there may be a meeting of minds between the school leadership and this one parent concerns the inclusive nature of the school:

"I mean obviously I haven't got anything to compare it with as this is the only school that I know, so I don't have anything to compare it to, but I really do believe that they take everybody as an individual and cater to their needs.....I just think it's just catering to every child's needs and caring for the individuals and you know if that child is going to excel there, then they're going to put all their efforts into that child excelling in that area rather than sort of treating everybody as a whole. It's just treating everyone as an individual and supporting their strengths, you know, and their weaknesses, just sort of working

with them individually and caring as well..." (Interview transcript, Parent SS, 15/05/12).

This dovetails nicely with the comments from the headteacher, already noted, about the need for an inclusive curriculum:

"It's about going right back to the basic curriculum you are offering. Is it inclusive, does it give all pupils an opportunity to succeed?" (Interview transcript, Head Teacher NJ, 31/01/12).

Based on the life and teachings of Jesus, many would argue that Christianity is intended to be an inclusive religion. Jesus had many companions who were considered at the time to be 'outsiders' from the respectable community of the day. Today, membership of the Church of England is open to everyone within the parish or outside it. There is no need to belong to a particular group, ethnic background or culture in order to join. The words of the famous hymn by William A. Dunkerley in 1908 capture this sentiment:

"In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth."

The Apostle Paul writes to the Church in Galatia: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 2:28 TNIV). In the Gospels, we have the words of Jesus "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 8:11, TNIV).

Inclusivity may be regarded as a key feature in the teachings of Jesus. Nonetheless, Church schools with a Christian ethos cannot claim to have a monopoly in being inclusive. Many secular schools with humanistic tendencies will have an ethos which is highly inclusive.

Inspection reports from Ofsted and SIAS would suggest that the inclusive and caring nature of the Bishop Pritchard School does contribute to its good educational outcomes in terms of attendance, behaviour and exam results. More will be said about this later. However, a friendly, caring and supportive ethos does not make the Bishop Pritchard School markedly different from many other (non-Church) schools. If we are searching for a 'distinctive' Christian ethos having an impact on educational outcomes, then we may have to look elsewhere.

d) Staff briefing and the building

Staff briefing takes place every Monday from 8.25am until 8.40am. In what follows I will outline not only what is said but also the physical location and other non-verbal messages that are conveyed to the staff by the school leadership about the school and its Christian ethos.

Staff briefing takes place in a newly refurbished staff room. This is a large and very pleasant room which can easily accommodate all staff members who are not on duty that morning. The bright red and pink colours of the room depart from the rest of the school which is green. All classrooms and corridors are painted green which is the same colour as the stripe on the school tie and the badge on the school blazer. Although not unpleasant, the monotony of green throughout the whole building, including the new science and technology wing, is something that the pupils commented on. The staff room, which pupils and parents will seldom see, is therefore something of a colour oasis.

The headteacher, dressed in a suit and tie, starts the briefing promptly at 8.25am by saying "Good Morning" in a formal manner to all the staff and then hands immediately over to the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The Deputy Head, also dressed smartly, talks for 10 minutes about the outcomes of the behaviour review process which came from the working group of staff and others. The presentation was professional, making use of the large plasma screen which displayed a series of PowerPoint™ slides. All the staff listened in silence and a small number made notes on the 'pink'. This is a weekly bulletin of notices for the staff which is produced in an A5 booklet on pink paper. At the end of the talk by the Deputy Head, there are no questions as he hands out an A4 piece of paper summarising what has been said in a succinct way.

This 10 minute presentation opportunity every Monday is considered by the school leadership to provide good professional development. Other presenters have included the literacy co-ordinator, the numeracy co-ordinator and, indeed, any staff member who needs to deliver some aspect of training. As an indication of my judgement of its usefulness, I introduced a similar initiative at my own school, following consultation with my senior management team.

On completion of this training, the headteacher then both issues and receives general notices from the staff. The headteacher is once again quick, but also sincere. He uses first names of all the staff that have their hand in the air. There is no hierarchy of notice givers and every member of staff is free to raise their hand and make an announcement. The notices are typical of any secondary school whether it professes a Christian ethos or not. The field notes below record one staff briefing:

The headteacher then gives some general notices saying that year 8 are out doing 'Bush craft' in the New Forest and year 10 are on work experience. He thanks the PE department for such a good sports day. He then asks if there are any other notices. Staff put up their hands and the Head calls them by first name. The head of year 8 says that a lot of year 8 are NOT out. The head of year 11 thanks everyone for the success of the year 11 prom. One science teacher (Mr P) talks about Global education and the right for every child in the world to have an education. He says he will leave bits of paper in his pigeon hole for staff to collect. He says that the local MP has now taken this on board as a result of the pupils' lobbying, which is a 'big tick for Bishop Pritchard pupils'. (Field notes, staff briefing, 10/7/12).

Where the staff briefing would depart from other (non-Church) schools is in the final part of the briefing. At about 8.38am, the headteacher hands over to the Chaplain, VF. She reads from Psalm 139:

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalm 139:7-10, NIV).

The Chaplain then follows this short reading with a brief prayer in which she prays for the week ahead mindful that year 8 are out, under canvas, and year 10 are in a variety of locations doing work experience. In this sense, the Bible passage is entirely appropriate. The staff briefing finishes at 8.40am precisely, with the headteacher wishing everyone a successful day and week.

On the surface, there is nothing within this staff briefing which would suggest that the school has an overtly strong Christian ethos. Even the short devotions at the end are based on the Old Testament, make no reference to Jesus, and could well be heard in the local synagogue or a Jewish Free school. There is a strong awareness of justice in global issues. The school enjoys a strong link with a school in Babubbu (a pseudonym), a rural village in Africa, and has many activities to raise both money and awareness of injustice in various parts of the world. The comment of Mr P in the field notes above typifies this global community dimension which is also frequently reported in the weekly newsletter. While this is important and at the heart of the Gospel, can a Christian community claim to be distinctive in its advocacy of charitable support?

Neither can an overt Christian ethos be detected from symbols around the building. There are no statues, few crosses in the corridors and a chapel which is small, simple and doesn't occupy a prominent position in terms of the building layout. During my research no clergy, apart from the Chaplain, were seen and the Chaplain herself frequently did not wear a dog collar. Yet my discussions with stakeholders and reading about the school suggests that there is a Christian ethos. In order to understand the nature of this Christian ethos, I needed to understand more about the context and history of the school.

As already noted in chapter 3, in the mid-1990s, the Bishop Pritchard School was struggling to attract any pupils and was threatened with possible closure:

“.....it used to be called Bishop Hell in the area really. People wouldn't come here. It was in the paper with bad stories every week and it was quite a tricky set up. The Church was thinking of pulling out, in fact a number of clergy said they didn't want to be associated with the school and things like that, which was tricky, and behind the scenes there was a movement going on in the sort of north of the town which isn't very far away from us really to ask for a new

school to be built, really with the view the local MP was backing up because he wanted, they really wanted to close this really and open another one. So that was all quite interesting and the local paper was full of it. The school was 'Ofsted'²⁷ in 1994, November, by the local county inspection team interestingly and I think if it had been inspected by anyone else ... it was in special measures as it was, it was serious weaknesses. But it was probably worse than that if I am honest." (Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 21/02/12).

The current executive headteacher was appointed in 1996 as headteacher and has overseen the Bishop Pritchard School ever since. His background was Free Church, a Baptist Church. In addition, those appointed by Trevor Brown, such as the Chaplain and the other members of the management team, are also 'low church'. The Chaplain herself attends the local (non-denominational) Church to which many of the children and their parents go. This is a very large church serving the local Christian community – many of whom live in this part of the town and the East side of the town where the school is located. In the worship life of this Church, statues, ornate crosses, robes and incense are not used. In this sense, this big feeder church might also be considered very 'low church'.

While there are few overt Christian symbols at The Bishop Pritchard School, it would be wrong to assume that no symbols of influence are used. The leadership of the school use the 'symbols' of formality, discipline, respect, politeness and friendliness in their interaction with the staff. These symbols were used, perhaps sub-consciously, by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher during the staff briefing and at other times during the school day. For example, in my first meeting with the headteacher, he commented on how having the shirt top button undone underneath the tie was not acceptable at the school. Certainly the staff had accepted this ethos of smartness and I never felt out of place as I arrived each day in a suit and tie to carry out my research.

Moreover, the staff were swift to report that they felt valued and respected by the school leadership and this was manifested in the amount of money spent on the newly re-furbished staff room.

"I feel valued by the school. I was a cover supervisor then I did a PGCE now NQT and next year taken on full time. They respect you if you are a good teacher. They do recognise good teachers.....The staff room is really nice which makes the staff happy. NJ (Head) is easy to talk to. There is support from SMT. NJ sees all the NQTs and says well done at the end of the year. You think that people don't realise what you are doing but they do. Someone is keeping an eye on you and you are looked after." (Interview transcript, Newly Qualified Teacher SB, 10/7/12).

²⁷ This is a colloquialism used by education professionals to denote the process of being inspected by Ofsted

Many of the leaders and other Christian staff at the school would say that they hold these values of respect, love, hard-work, self-discipline and submission to a higher authority, because of their Christian faith. It is these symbols that were evident in the staff briefing and at other times as staff related to each other. While, according to the head of RE and other senior staff, not all staff would profess to be Christians, the vast majority would profess to support the Christian ethos of the school as was being modelled by key staff. This was verified by both an internal audit of staff views and also an 'Investors in People' report of the school in June 2012²⁸. As noted in my personal biography (chapter 3 section I), I have come to hold the view that a range of views and beliefs can still be consistent with an authentic Christian community. After all, not everyone who attends Church on a Sunday holds the same beliefs as the Vicar and, indeed, some may not believe at all.

With regard to the value of hard work, the executive headteacher was known for his extraordinary capacity for hard work during the early days of his appointment (chapter 9 section II part c). This would extend into the classroom and the pupils would also embrace these values in terms of their learning. Could this explain, in part, the favourable educational outcomes? It is to this value that I now briefly turn.

e) Hard work and Hard courses

In my research at the Bishop Pritchard School, there was a feeling from both pupils and parents that their (religious) school was markedly different in this respect from the other (non-religious) schools in the town. The following comments are typical and give a flavour of the different school ethos as perceived by the pupils:

SG: "Did you all start in September of year 7?"

L1M7: "Erm, well I didn't start in September I started in October."

SG: "With Year 7 or Year 8?"

L1M7: "Year 7."

SG: "Year 7, okay."

L1M7: "My first impressions of this school was that it was very well organised and it gave me, as the week went on, it gave me more impressions that this is a good school because the other (*non-Church*) school I went to, my big brother went to it but he was saying it isn't a very good school and this school phoned us one day to say, 'We've got a place for you' five weeks into XXX High, the school I went to, and I chose here because I heard it had got good results in GCSE; that I had to decide between friends, because I had all my friends in XXX High, and I only had like two or three here, but because I want the best for the future I

²⁸ The Investors in People (IIP) award measures the quality of Human Resource management in an organisation by interviewing a large and representative sample of staff.

chose here. Yeh, when I came here it was well organised, the teachers expected the students to work hard.” (Group interview transcript, Ks3 pupils, 27/03/12. Italics added)

Diligence was one of the reasons, according to Jeynes (2003), that religious schools in his study out-performed non-religious schools. The second key factor, and even more statistically significant, from the nine learning habits used by Jeynes, was whether the student was following harder courses (Jeynes, 2003, pp.153-156). This finding in North American schools was also made by the Cardus Educational Survey. Cardus (2014, p.18) noted that graduates of religious schools reported that they felt better prepared for the harder STEM subjects than was the case for their non-religious public school counterparts (see chapter 9 section II part b).

The present Government would argue that schools should focus more on the traditional academic courses within the curriculum and less on vocational courses which may be considered less rigorous (DFE, 2010; Wolf, 2011). Certainly in conversations with the pupils at Bishop Pritchard School, there was little awareness of non-traditional courses. In addition, although not compelling pupils to take all the English Baccalaureate courses, the advantages of this option were made clear to the parents and pupils when choosing GCSEs. The English Baccalaureate was introduced by the Government in 2011 as a way of creating more rigour into the secondary school curriculum in English schools. It has found renewed interest amongst the Government in 2015. The English Baccalaureate would be awarded to pupils who secured good passes in English, Maths, Science, a language and a humanities subject (although not Religious Education).

A surprising conclusion from Jeynes' work was the assertion that 'high levels of student participation are somewhat negatively correlated with academic achievement'. (Jeynes, 2003, p.164). In all the six lessons that I observed at Bishop Pritchard School, there was little emphasis on group work and no instance of high levels of pupil participation. Whether consciously, or sub-consciously, the teaching that I observed was fairly traditional and didactic. This finding was also supported by the deputy headteacher. It would appear that wish of the Senior Management Team, for a more pupil-centred approach to learning was not being reflected in the classroom (see also chapter 5 section IV part b). Ironically, it is possible that this inability by the SMT to implement a pupil-centred approach to learning was resulting in higher pupil achievement (chapter 9 section IV part c).

On a different note, Jeynes is quick to acknowledge the possibility that good learning habits in a religious school could originate from the family and the home and not the school (Jeynes, 2003, p.161; Mentzer, 1988). He points out that the work ethic values of some religious families may be present in the children before they start school. In the case of Bishop Pritchard School, I explored the learning habits of the year group which had a higher proportion of religious families than the other year groups.

The admissions policy at the Bishop Pritchard School allowed for 50% foundation places and 50% open places. The foundation places are reserved for those children who have a letter from their local church leader confirming that they attend church regularly. Although this facility exists for the Church community, it is never fully taken up. That is, typically, only about 40% of the pupils regularly attend church. However in September 2010 the full 50% quota was taken up. This meant that, in the academic year 2011/12, the year 8 cohort had a significantly greater proportion of Church attending pupils than any other year group at the school. What were the perceptions of the staff at the school about the learning habits of this year group?

SG: "Learning habits of the current year 8?"

VF: "The impression I get, I remember particularly from last year when they were Year 7 is that they more they were more ... they were less disruptive apart from I did hear from the children with special needs that they were just as challenging as other years, but in general the whole year group was calmer and more ready to learn and to be co-operative, I think generally it has been my impression and I have got quite a few of those children, mostly in my gardening group, as well as from Year 8. So I've got to know some of them quite well and most of the ones in my gardening group are from lower ability but are actually, but they are not difficult to deal with at all and they are quite caring of each other, and it mostly feels quite tranquil when we have gardening club which you wouldn't necessarily expect, except on ADD²⁹ day when they were a bit more lively." (Interview transcript, School Chaplain VF, 28/02/12)

One of the great debates concerning the perceived success of Church schools revolves around the 'school effect' and the 'family background effect'. That is, are the good results the product of what the school does or what the children already have brought into the school by virtue of their upbringing. This is a recurring challenge with research on Church schools (Green 2009b, p.83). In defence of the school effect, it would be reasonable to point out that young people will be heavily influenced by their school environment (chapter 4 section VII part c). A young person at Bishop Pritchard School or any Church secondary school will spend approximately 7 hours a day at school for 40 weeks of the year for 7 years. Moreover, these statistics exclude all extra-curricular activities and residential experiences in the evenings, at week-ends and during the holidays. It would be unrealistic to suggest that the school does not have an influence on the academic outcomes achieved by its pupils (Jeynes, 2003, p.165). However, Arthur et al. (2006) arrive at a different conclusion. In researching 16-19 year olds, their research demonstrates that students perceive that the main influence on their character formation takes place outside school and that school is simply about passing exams (ibid., pp.18-19). The main critique of this latter research concerns the sample used. The small sample comprised academically able and independent 16-19 year olds. Whether the same

²⁹ ADD day or Alternative Direction Day (pseudonym) is a day when the normal timetable for the year group is collapsed so that they can have a different educational experience – usually addressing Spiritual or Moral or Social or Cultural education needs.

conclusions would be drawn from a more wide ability sample spanning the full secondary age range is more debatable.

Perhaps a more fundamental debate to be had is whether hard work can be regarded as a Christian habit emanating from the Christian ethos of a Church school in the first place. This conundrum has already been touched on in this thesis (Chapter 1 section III; Chapter 3 section I part d). At the dawn of time God worked to create the universe. It would be reasonable to infer that this was 'hard' work because on the seventh day God rested (Gen 2:2). There may be another dimension to the Christian basis for hard work. From the perspective of the staff particularly, the notion of serving others is a key part of Christian teaching as evidenced by, for example, Jesus' teaching of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Here, the benefit to the pupils having good exam results may inspire the teachers to set more homework and work them harder. The interview with the Key Stage 3 pupils implied that this was what was happening. The reasons for it were not articulated by them.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that, in the perceptions of the stakeholders, hard work and hard courses may contribute to an understanding of the impact of the Christian ethos on educational outcomes at the Bishop Pritchard School. There are limitations in drawing direct conclusions from the work of Jeynes to the Bishop Pritchard School. The work by Jeynes focuses on academic achievement and not on other educational outcomes such as behaviour and attendance. Furthermore the research is based on American private religious schools where the strength of the religious foundation and religious links are likely to be much more significant than English Church State schools – even for year 8 at the Bishop Pritchard School. Lastly, in so far as hard work means serving others by making sacrifices for them by going beyond what is normal, this finds a resonance in the next session on pastoral care.

f) Pastoral care and going the extra mile

"If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles." (Matthew 5:41, TNIV)

One of the recurring phrases and themes in researching the school was the notion of going the extra mile. This was frequently said in the context of seeing things through to the end with an air of persistence, meticulousness and diligence (see chapter 9 section II). The story from the executive headteacher (Trevor Brown) on joining the school in December 1995 captures this:

TB: "Behaviour was off the wall, no great structures worked really and the children would tell me much less polite words that the area's rubbish, the school's rubbish and they're rubbish and actually that I'm rubbish, which I thought was awful. So what I had to do was to somehow get these youngsters and the staff to see the vision of what could be and also build a Church school out of this. Does that make sense?"

SG: "I understand"

TB: "And a lot of that was personal to staff if I am really honest. The first thing I did was – I got the toilets sorted and monitored to death, just made sure systems worked. Kept putting systems in, kept making sure things were actually happening ... I also threw out every policy in the school the first week I came. The governors sort of said, 'What?' I said, 'Well, we are not following any of these policies. If Ofsted come in and ... I'd rather say to Ofsted, 'We're not following any of those and we've got three policies we're developing. We developed a Behaviour Policy, a Rewards System and something else, I can't remember what it was now as it was 16 years ago. But three key policies we developed early on.'" (Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 21/02/12).

My biographical conversation with the head of year, Catherine Pratt (a pseudonym), highlighted in practical terms one of the ways in which the staff at the school went the extra mile for individual pupils who had specific needs:

"I have an autistic boy in Year 7 who really found transition one of the hardest things in his life. He's obsessed with bugs, he can't have anything to do with insects. He's obsessed with cleanliness so we had wash the chairs down before he used them...one thing we also discovered was that he hates stickers and so we had to find alternative ways of rewarding him. But the worst thing was getting him to cross the threshold into the school building in the morning. He was fine once he was in. So for the first two weeks I physically carried the child into the building with the parent alongside of me, and then he would be hysterical for 25 minutes and then he would calm down beautifully, go off to tutor and fine have a lovely day. And every single morning for the first two terms up till Christmas he was hysterical, and then after Christmas things began to fall into place with him so I would just walk into the building with him. And now I don't even have to meet him at the door but he will still come here first, just for a word and a reassurance, or to tell me whatever is going on and then he will go to his tutor. His latest thing is sex education. It's all gooey and sticky and horrible and he doesn't need to know about any of that. He doesn't want to know it. So we're dealing with it. I had to make sure I was here for him every single day, and if I was ill or anything my colleague Peter (a pseudonym), he would always let Andrew (pseudonym for pupil) in and sit and try and calm him down. We gave him sort of small repetitive jobs to do that would occupy him to just keep his mind off and he seems to be well settled. But this sort of thing is fairly rare. But if you are going to be a head of year you've got to go that extra mile in looking after a child because I would want someone to do that with my child." (Interview transcript, Head of Year CP, 07/03/12).

The diligence, conscientiousness and dedication with which staff follow things through would appear to be significant. However, although the head of year was a self-professing Christian who claimed that her approach to relationships was influenced by her pastor, other heads of year in other 'community' schools may also often do something similar for pupils in their charge. It is highly possible that the behaviour of this head of year did have an impact on the attendance statistics for this pupil and also his examination results. What is less clear is how the ethos of the Bishop Pritchard School differed from the ethos of another non-Church school. Nonetheless this story illuminates the actions of one head of year in one Church school whose actions are consistent with what she perceives the Christian ethos her Church school to be:

SG: "How is Bishop Pritchard different from a non-Church school?"

CP: "Do you know, I don't know if I can put my finger on it for you. I think because as staff, regardless of what your role is in the school, we are all absolutely conscious of the Christian ethos of the school. We know what our foundation is. We have a prayer on a Monday morning together as a staff when we have briefing. We joined together to do Eucharist. When we go to worship the first thing is the Lord be with You and also with You. So everybody is conscious every day that we are here for God. You don't have to be a Christian but I think it's the heart of the school. I was talking to a colleague who used to teach here and now teaches at our partner school, XX. We did some joint Inset together and we have lunch together as we hadn't seen each other and she said, 'I would come back to Bishop Pritchard in a heartbeat'. But I said, 'But you're Head of Art here, you've done so much better'. She said, 'Oh, I love teaching here but it has no soul in this school'. And when you walk into Bishop Pritchard you can feel the difference, that there is an essence to the place which means you belong and that you're part of something bigger than just education. It's a whole mind set." (ibid.).

Once again, the perception by the head of year and possibly others that they are there for God and part of something bigger may throw further light on the assiduousness, conscientiousness and diligence of the staff with regard to pastoral care (see chapter 9 section II). A further insight into pastoral care is what happens in tutor time.

g) Tutor time

In my research at the Bishop Pritchard School, I was able to observe two tutor periods. These take place at the very start of the day from 8.40am and represent the first formal contact that the tutor (teacher) has with his or her tutor group. I observed one year 7 tutor group on a Monday and another year 7 tutor group on a Tuesday. Year 7 children are all either 11 or 12 years old. The Monday period was an extended period until 9.05am as there are no assemblies on a Monday for this year group and the first lesson started at 9.10am. The Tuesday period took

place from 8.40am until 8.55am when there was a lower school assembly until the first lesson at 9.10am. During this time there was little opportunity for anything more than taking the register and giving a few notices. I will therefore focus my description of the form and content on the tutor time on the Monday period.

The tutor entered a small green classroom, which was her teaching room, at 8.40am exactly. The room was approximately 55m² with 16 white tables and 32 green chairs. There were some displays of current children's work on the walls although this was made more difficult by a lack of pin boards. There were some Christian symbols on the walls although this was to be expected as it was also an RE teaching room. The technology including the teacher's computer, an interactive whiteboard, speakers and an amplifier were used by the teacher.

At the start of the tutor period, the tutor (who was also head of RE) tells the class to get out their reading books. The pupils do this quietly and compliantly. During their silent private reading, the tutor takes the register by calling out names and entering the data directly onto the computer at her desk. During the taking of the register, the tutor displays on the whiteboard the pupil notices for the day. This is known as the 'yellow bulletin' and is produced each day/week by the administration office. The yellow bulletin includes the theme for the week and the daily notices. The notices for this day included, *inter alia*, information on how to get CDs for the summer concert, a thank you to older pupils for helping with the primary school children, homework arrangements and other extra-curricular clubs this day/week. This is a common way of communicating key information which is used by most (but not all) secondary schools. What is unusual is the fact that the yellow bulletin also lists those pupils at the school who have birthdays on this day. Today it happened to be two year 8 pupils, JL and BS. The fact that every school day of the year, the school makes an effort to record and publish the pupils' birthdays contributes to an understanding of the ethos of the school. I reflected on what the pupils had told me in the group interviews earlier on in the year:

L1M7: "I think it's kind of like fun because like on the day of your birthday all your friends realise it's your birthday and you do get a lot more ..."

SG: "Birthday things? Sweet!"

L2M7: "And you get a lot more respect from your friends, because they all know that it's your birthday so they kind of like say, 'Happy Birthday' to you."

L3F8: "For example, my birthday was last Friday and I must say for some people it may be a bit annoying. They may want to keep their birthday a secret, because people will be coming up to them and seeing what they have, so if they have any chocolate they all want some, but the good thing about it is that they are all coming up to people's birthday, saying, 'Happy Birthday, hope you have a nice day' and it's nice to know that people actually care and actually come up to you to say, 'Happy Birthday' instead of hearing from someone else. It's nice to know at the start of the day." (Group interview transcript, Ks3 pupils, 27/3/12).

While the pupils read the yellow bulletin, the tutor asks the class about one pupil who had been persistently absent. There was a sense of caring for this individual by the teacher and the offer of practical strategies to get this pupil back into school by making him feel welcome.

The teacher then enters into a dialogue about a boy called KK who hasn't been in school for a while. Does anyone know why? He is not on Facebook is he? We will get a card for him and if anyone lives nearby they can put it through his letter box. (Field notes, Tutor Period, 9/7/12).

Next, the tutor invites the pupils to share any news that they have from the week-end that has just passed. Finally, the tutor displays on the whiteboard the names of all the learners who have earned their bronze, silver or gold certificates. These certificates are awarded to those learners who achieve a certain amount of attendance and recognition for good classwork, good homework and extra-curricular activity. As this tutor group is a year 7 group, the pupils are keen and most of the class are successful in achieving the gold award.

"Anyone got any news to share about what they did over the week-end? Lewis!" "On Sunday I went to Wimbledon to see Andy Murray play Roger Federer." The teacher says "I am pea green." One girl says "but he didn't win!" The teacher says, "it doesn't matter, it is the experience and the atmosphere." The teacher talks about how long it takes to put the new roof across and get the air conditioning right. Nobody is really listening.

"Anybody else with news to share?" "Me and my mum preparing for my sister's surprise party". Teacher shows interest and is encouraging. "What about you Haydn?" "I went up to London and I also did Cadets on Saturday." Teacher says "you like cadets don't you?" "Jack!" "I went to XXXX." There are 3 hands up as others want to share. George says "I am going to the British Superbikes later in July." "Where?" the teacher says and they both agree that it is up country. One child says "Sick"³⁰

The teacher then gives out headteacher certificates. They all get one because they are in year 7 and keen not to be absent or get any behaviour points for poor behaviour.

The T shows a Microsoft Excel™ spread sheet for all the bronze, silver and gold. Most of the class (who attend) have already got gold. There is a page in the planners which shows what you need to do to get the various awards – Bronze, silver and gold. (Field notes, Tutor time, 09/07/12).

³⁰ In youth culture, 'Sick' means 'really good'.

Overall, the atmosphere created by the tutor, the school and the pupils during this tutor period was one where the value of the individual was emphasized. The pupils responded well to the encouragement of the tutor and felt able to share their news. The tutor, who is a self-professed Christian, did not read out, or get the children to read out the thought for the week on this occasion. Neither did she lead or facilitate a traditional act of worship during the tutor time on this occasion. However the pupils had space to reflect on their lives and space to be thankful for the opportunities they had. This approach accords with more contemporary views of spirituality (Comte-Sponville, 2007; Antinoff, 2009). However, the tutor did not on this occasion develop a sense of community and tradition based on an explicitly Christian narrative which may have been more appropriate for spirituality within a Church school (Wright, 2000). Perhaps this was done last time or will be done next time.

h) Assemblies and Acts of Worship

The size of the school, with well over 1,000 pupils, coupled with the lack of a large sports hall, means that it is not possible to have whole school assemblies. Assemblies therefore tend to take place in the school hall which seats up to 450 pupils. For the pupils, they will have two assemblies a week with a large group of 400+ pupils. The other three days will be spent with their tutor in the tutor base carrying out a range of activities, some of which will be school administration and some of which would be counted as worship.

For example, one teacher attached to a year 7 tutor group explained the weekly routine for her tutor group in the following way:

“Monday is diaries (pupils have a diary for the year) and how many merits and how many conducts. We get the children to stand up in front of the class and say how they are going to avoid being late or getting any more conducts (Chewing gum, unruly behaviour, lates). They have to explain to the class how they are going to put it right. This is a powerful motivator not to get another conduct.

Tuesday is worship – often with CP

Wednesday year 7 go through the PowerPoint™ produced by the Chaplain on the theme of the week

Thursday = Go through a topical story in the news. How does this affect them? How does it affect us? How does it affect the rest of the world?

Friday = Worship again. Other teachers take in turn to lead. Sometimes outside speakers. Not always to do with Christianity. One member of staff did it on the Olympics and there was a moral to the story.” (Field notes following informal discussion, NQT attached to year 7 tutor group SB, 10/07/12).

I observed a Tuesday assembly for year 7 and 8 in the hall. The hall was fairly typical for a secondary school, being of a rectangular shape, facing a stage at the front. Normally an assembly on a Tuesday for year 7 and 8 would comprise about 400 pupils, together with their tutors and other staff leading the assembly. However, on this day, a large part of year 8 were away on a school trip so the number of pupils, in total, was closer to 300.

The assembly is taken by the headteacher, NJ, and the theme for the week is a quote from Wendy Craig: "It is not what you do once in a while, it's what you do day in day out that makes the difference." These words are also printed in the pupil diaries and will appear on the yellow bulletin for pupils during the week. Finally, the Chaplain produces a series of PowerPoint slides for tutors on this theme.

The following field notes cover the content of the assembly for year 7 and 8 combined which was a typical 'awards assembly'.

Mr Johnston (a pseudonym), headteacher, is stood by the doors and says good morning to the children, the staff and myself as we enter the hall. All is silent and in neat rows. The Head teacher speaks "Good morning year 7 and 8. Some of you are rightly happy when you get merits for a good piece of work or helping someone beyond what is normal. But a merit is a small part that contributes to something more like a bronze award or a trip in November? Those of you who are going into year 9 next year will have something called a vivo. This is a bit like Tesco club card points. Points which allow you to buy something. I am delighted that so many people have got awards. It will cost me a lot of money but you are worth it. How does all this link in with the theme of the week 'It's not what you do once in a while, it's what you do day in day out that makes the difference'." This is on the screen behind the headteacher. This is the same as the weekly PowerPoint produced by the Chaplain. The headteacher says "A merit can be considered the once in a while. It is more about what you do over the course of the term or the year that really counts."

The headteacher then talks about the awards.

"Bronze awards to the following in year 7. You will get a certificate and be glad to know that you can still get a Bishop Pritchard pencil. We will keep this for future years because we know how much you like it." The head of year 7 CP, hands out the certificate, the chaplain hands out the pencil, the headteacher reads the names and another member of staff hands out the vouchers. The headteacher continues:

"Year 8 bronze award and you get a free swim at the KINGS centre (a pseudonym) but neither do we deprive you of the pencil.

Year 8 silver = WH Smith vouchers for £3 each. I know a lot of you are not here because they are getting wet but having a good time doing bush craft" (Half of year 8 are camping for the week).

“For the gold there is not enough time. About 50 of you in each year group haven’t yet got your awards but you still have 2 weeks left. If you have got a bronze or a silver this year, persevere and get attendance up or whatever and get a gold next year.”

The headteacher finishes with a prayer:

“Almighty God, we thank you for the success of this year with all those getting bronze, silver and gold. We pray that you would keep us safe as we approach the summer holidays. We ask this in Jesus name.” The children respond: “AMEN.”

The headteacher says “Thank you. Have a good day.” (Field notes, Awards Assembly, 10/07/12).

The assembly was easy to follow and was linked to the weekly theme. Once again, the ethos of valuing the individual and rewarding hard work was manifest, as large number of pupils came to the front of the hall to collect their rewards. The rather formal but friendly style of the headteacher was typical and can be seen in other aspects of the school, for example the staff briefings. The distinct Christian ethos at the Bishop Pritchard School which revolves around the values of respect, love, hard work, high expectations and submission to a higher authority (or compliance) could be detected in this assembly and could, no doubt, rub-off on the new pupils and new staff each year.

What effect did the worship life of the school have on educational outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, personal development and examination results? Worship in a secondary school is open to various interpretations. To the Christian headteacher, worship may be defined as everything about the school which expresses the ‘worth’ of God. To the pupils, the majority would probably understand worship as the 15 minutes in the morning during morning assembly from 8.55am until 9.10am. The comments from the pupils below adopt this latter understanding. Thankfully, almost since its inception, Ofsted had recognised that identifying pupils’ spiritual development is not straightforward. It is easier to evaluate the opportunities offered by a school. Certainly the pupils gave mixed views on worship. Some were fairly positive about the provision of worship:

“I think the worship and the tutor time in the mornings, it brings an impact that we can take out throughout the whole day, so that like it kind of sticks in our minds and then we try to like use that throughout our day and like let’s say the thought of the week was something then in the worships and tutors then it would really be explained to us so that we can use that throughout the week.” (Group interview transcript, L1M7, 27/03/12).

Other pupils were more critical

“...the Christian Act of worship doesn’t affect things because the non-religious people don’t even listen!” (Lesson observation Field notes, L4F9, 09/07/12).

And

SG: “Does the fact that this is a Christian school make a difference?”

- L5F8: “No!”
- SG: “What makes the school good?”
- L6F8: “It is the teachers. The teachers are nice.”
- SG: “Is this because THEY are Christians?”
- L6F8: “No, they are nice because that is their job. Miss XXX is nice and she is not a Christian.”
- SG: “What about the way that the school is organized and run by the headteacher, do you think that makes a difference?”
- L5F8: “He goes on about it a lot.” (Lesson observation Field notes, Year 8 class, 09/07/12).

The last two sets of comments typify many of the remarks made by the pupils about the Christian ethos of the school in general, and the worship life of the school in particular. Some pupils were not able to see the relevance of worship towards their exam results. Instead they praised the teachers for their hard work and commitment. The evidence might suggest that they were not able (or willing) to appreciate the way that the worship, ethos and teachers' attitudes were interwoven. As I have noted earlier, Donnelly (2000; 2008) highlights the possibility that the intended ethos of a school written into the brochures by the school authorities may be very different from what the pupils perceive – rightly or wrongly, that is, the 'experienced' or 'lived' ethos.

One of the reasons that Bishop Pritchard was chosen to be the case-study school was its intentional Christian ethos as promoted in its literature, on its web-site and by the senior staff (chapter 1 section IV part c). It was not clear from my short research that the pupils shared this intentional ethos. In particular, throughout my interviews and conversations with the pupils, although the pupils believed that their school was a good school with good behaviour and good exam results, they were unable to articulate how the intended Christian ethos of the school impacted on these outcomes. However, my sampling of pupils' views was small scale and although covering all year groups, was opportunistic. I did not test my hypothesis by using a questionnaire to the whole school or, indeed, to a representative sample of pupils.

Two important considerations need to be made. Firstly the pupils did not suggest that the actual or lived Christian ethos had no impact on their school's outcomes, merely that the intended ethos as expounded during assemblies did not influence their exam results. Secondly, although they could not articulate a reason themselves, this did not mean that they weren't open to possibilities that were presented to them. For example, when I questioned the pupils on learning habits in a Church school, they acknowledged that these might be significant (see, for example, chapter 7 section II part e).

i) Lessons

Over the 12 days, I was able to observe six lessons covering three year groups, taught by four different teachers in two subject areas.

In planning my research, my great fear was that my presence in the classroom would distort the learning experience. I was pleased to note that, after only a few minutes in the classroom, both the pupils and the teachers seemed to relax and the lesson flowed as if I wasn't there. The teachers had not planned special lessons and the pupils were open and honest in their responses to my questions during the lesson.

The format of each lesson included teacher explanation, question and answer, reading and writing, watching videos, some paired work and group work, and some self and peer assessment. Overall, and in general, the teaching was relatively 'teacher-led' and this concurred with the comments of the deputy headteacher, Mark Thatcher (pseudonym). However, it was important for my research that I conveyed to the teachers that I was not carrying out research into teaching and learning styles, but was purely looking at the ethos in the classroom and trying to ascertain if this ethos was impacting upon the outcomes of the school. Of course, this style of teaching may be a reflection of the school's ethos. Nonetheless, I was very guarded about any comments that I made in passing before leaving the school each day. I was acutely aware that if I said anything judgemental about the quality of the teaching then this would reverberate around the staff room and, on my next visit, there would be less of an 'openness' to my research. It was crucial to build up a level of trust with the teachers during the lesson observations so that I was able to see things as they are and speak to the pupils in a relaxed manner.

In terms of ethos, I was able to make a number of observations. The first observation concerned relationships. Relationships were positive. The pupils respected their teachers and respected their peers with the result that learning took place. Respect was one of the underlying values I discovered in the school. The way I was treated, the way staff treated each other, for example in staff briefing, and the way that staff treated pupils, was based on respect. This respect of others spilled over into respect for the building, which I will return to later, and respect for equipment:

"Christian acts of worship are mainly about respect. Respect for each other and respect for property and equipment. I don't know about other subjects but they (*the pupils*) respect the equipment in IT." (Interview transcript, IT teacher SB, 10/07/12, brackets added).

A further observation from the lessons was the degree of compliance the pupils exhibited. The pupils, in general, complied with the requests of the teacher without questioning. There were

very few incidences of bad behaviour but, where there were, the pupil(s) in question quickly complied with the teacher's request. The following field notes come from a lesson with year 9 bottom set:

Uniform in the classroom is good and complies with school guidelines
Girls wear trousers predominantly – v. few skirts in this lesson. They often wear fashion trousers with laces up the front or tight and stretched across the knee ('skinny' trousers)
Very little body piercing and make up. The teacher keeps nail varnish remover and gave it to a pupil to remove her nail varnish during the lesson which she did without complaining
Bad language was used by a pupil in the lesson. Once the teacher heard, she challenged this language.
"Christians don't use that sort of language said one pupil"
"But I am not a Christian said the girl"
"But I am said the teacher.. and you are in a classroom in a Church school."
The offending pupil was silent and contrite. (Lesson observation field notes, Year 9 class, 09/07/12).

By virtue of being part of a large organisation with a network of (professional) contacts, Church families may be better able to navigate their way through the education world. There may also be theological reasons why Church families may exhibit greater resilience. The following words from the school chaplain explain this view succinctly:

"... I think there is also a confidence thing that, because they've (*church families*) got a supportive environment, that they're actually more confident and perhaps less afraid of schools than people who haven't got that kind of back up in their lives." (Interview transcript, School Chaplain VF, 28/02/12).

Is there any evidence of this resilience within the small number of lessons that I observed? In one year 8 lesson, the pupils had been amalgamated from different classes into one classroom. The reason for this was that there was a year 8 activity that week which meant that half the year group were not in school. The teacher introduced the topic and asked the pupils to work in groups all lesson. Although it was a different teacher, a different classroom, different people in the class and a different activity, the pupils coped without any need for teacher support or help.

While the pupils were compliant with regard school rules, they were confident to air their independently held views. Compliance with authority did not preclude an intellectual resilience. There was independent thinking shown by many pupils in the RE lessons that I observed. Some of the comments made included:

“I have no time for homeless people. If I bought a bag of weed then you would tell me off for making the wrong decision. So they have made a conscious decision.”(Lesson observation field notes L6F9, 09/07/12).

and in another, year 8 class:

“How can Jesus be God’s son and also God?” (Lesson observation field notes L7M8, 09/07/12).

One of the other aspects of the RE department was the way the teachers reacted to the questions posed by the pupils. The teachers showed respect for the pupils’ views and did not react as Christian apologists. For example, when one pupil expressed a view which departed from mainstream Christian teaching, the teacher did not criticise this in any way. The liberal paradigm operating in Church schools in England has already been noted (Casson, 2013; Francis and Penny, 2013).

Teacher asks one boy, quite able – this is year 9 set 2 of about 9, “How do you get into heaven?” The boy replies “Do good stuff and be religious”. The T is very sensitive throughout and never corrects in a patronising or condescending way. It is always very positive and very supportive. *As a teacher myself, I felt at the time that there was scope to provide a further question to this boy which would encourage more critical theological engagement. In the event, the class teacher simply moved onto someone else and sought their views. Perhaps the class teacher, however outwardly relaxed, was keen to create a good impression of the school for me and so skirt over the simplistic reply. In the event, it probably had the reverse effect. However, as stated, I was not there to judge the quality of the teaching!* (Lesson observation field notes, year 9 class, 09/07/12 with further reflections in italics added later)

In articulating the ethos of the Bishop Pritchard School it was important to acknowledge the effect that the school has on its pupils outside of normal lessons, tutor times and assemblies. Break times, lunch times and lesson changeover times will, *inter alia*, also influence the character, or ethos, of the school and, in turn, the character and values of its pupils. It was therefore relevant to consider this hidden curriculum.

j) Hidden curriculum

The term 'hidden curriculum' refers to learning and school experiences which are not part of the formal curriculum prescribed by the Department for Education and the school itself.

In addition to observing lessons and talking to staff, I was able to observe pupils' behaviour at morning break, at lunch time and in movement around the building at lesson changeover.

Head of RE, RR, came and greeted me at about 11.05am. Very friendly and welcoming. I followed her to the staffroom for coffee. Very nice staff room. Lots of boxes of doughnuts on the table when I arrived. RR was on playground duty so she asked if I would follow her. I said that I would be delighted to do so. I gave her a copy of the book. "The Bible and the task of teaching"- as a token of appreciation for her time. At playground duty I was in a playground in one part of the open spaces – of which there were many. In the playground, there were mixed year groups. Behaviour was calm. A bit of play fighting broke out and the teacher on duty, RR, went over and gave them a long talking to followed by behaviour points in their diaries. I talked to two year 8 girls. One eating a tangerine. She was very smartly dressed and very polite. She said she wanted a Christian school and was very happy at Bishop Pritchard. RR introduced me to some year 11s. Two of them shook my hand. They were pleasant and amenable. Very little litter was dropped although, at the end of break, there seemed to be some amount of litter near where the year 11s were congregating. The seagulls amassed quickly and in great numbers when the children went in. I followed RR around the building. The pupils did not seem particularly punctual but behaviour was calm and again, inside the building, there was very little litter. (Field notes, Break Duty RR, 28/02/12).

The issue of litter is one of the challenges facing most secondary schools in England. At the Bishop Pritchard School, litter was minimal. I was interested in finding out how this was achieved. Was it simply that the pupils were extremely well 'brought up' by their parents and/or extremely compliant with school rules, that is, submitting to a higher authority. The explanation for the lack of litter, amongst other things, was given by two sixth formers when I first toured the school. My field notes, written up immediately afterwards, capture this interaction:

I toured the whole school with two post 16 trainees. These were pupils who had stayed on at school for an extra year or two to study for further qualifications. They were treated like the staff and could access the staffroom. They took me over the bridge into Science top floor and technology bottom floor. I didn't go into any classrooms. All the doors were shut and the pupils seemed to be on task. There was no manifest bad behaviour anywhere. The

walls and doors were all painted Green. There was no litter anywhere. L8F12 said that CCTV is everywhere and picks up anyone misbehaving. The punishment for dropping litter has been raised from a behaviour point to a detention. This was considered serious and it was felt that it was working. The two girls were very polite and when I held the door for them they said thank you.

SG: "Have you seen a big improvement since you joined 6 years ago?"

L8F12: "No not really it hasn't changed much really"

SG: "Have exam results gone up?"

L8F12: "Yes Mr Brown showed us graphs of this"

SG: "Why have exam results gone up?"

L8F12: "Good teaching"

SG: "What do you like about the school?"

L8F12: "The teachers care for you and help you"

SG: "What would the children say is the best subject?"

L8F12: "I like Science and DT because they are more practical"

SG: "What would you change about the school?"

L8F12: "The walls are a bit dull"

SG: "Are year 7 better behaved than your year group were?"

L8F12: "Not really, all year groups behave fairly well"

At 12.35pm the two girls brought me back to the office. I thanked them and shook their hands. (Field notes, Tour of School with two year 12 girls, 24/01/12)

The observance of the rules for not dropping litter appeared symptomatic of the response by the pupils at the school to authority in general. In my 12 days at the school I never observed any behaviour which challenged the authority of the school or its staff. My evidence from documents, staff and the pupils themselves also supported this finding. In analysing inspection and other reports about the school, one of the recurring themes appeared to be the compliant behaviour of the pupils (see chapter 9 section IV part c); whether this is due to the 'home effect' or the 'school effect' is a more contested issue.

k) Summary of data analysis of the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School

This section has described the data obtained from the Bishop Pritchard School. The purpose of this was to better understand section I of this chapter which suggested that there may be a statistical relationship between the ethos and outcomes of Church schools. In this section I have started to address my second and third research questions:

2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders in one Church school and the headteachers of a sample of Church schools as to the connection between the ethos and outcomes in their respective schools?

3. What contribution does the research on learning habits by Jeynes (2003) in the United States make to explaining, understanding and interpreting the perception of these stakeholders about ethos and outcomes in Church schools within England?

For the 12 days that I spent at the school I have analysed a range of data and in this section I have grouped the different types of analysis into nine parts which cover a number of different aspects making up the life of the school and seeking to shine a light on the two research questions above. These different aspects of the life of the school have included, *inter alia*, its mission statement, links with parents, assemblies, lessons, pastoral care and hidden curriculum.

In chapter 8 I explain how the data was coded and then present the findings from not only the case-study school but also from the internet survey that resulted and, finally, from the group interview of a small sample of headteachers.

8. Coding the Data and Presentation of Findings

“Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13, GNB).

I. Coding the qualitative data

a) Introduction

Chapter 7 presented the data in such a way as to give the reader a ‘feel’ for the case-study school in a structured way covering each of the different areas that are relevant to my research. This raw data was also combined in a way to be able to address the three research questions posed at the start. In addition to this, however, it was also fundamental to my research to analyse the data in more depth and to examine what underlying themes lay behind what was seen, heard and felt. This preliminary coding had to be developed in a systematic and rigorous way. This ongoing process of coding is explained in more detail below.

The first stage was to re-read through all the transcripts and field notes and reflect on what had been said and what had been written. After this, I highlighted all comments, phrases which related to the broad research area of ethos. In the early stages of data analysis, I didn’t want to be too exclusive in what was relevant. I was keen to capture not only the written words but the feelings and emotions that were expressed including the pauses and the emphases. This is in accordance with the integral inquiry approach to research that I adopted. Accordingly, and where my memory allowed, I annotated the transcripts with comments on facial expression as quickly as possible after the interview took place. Pauses were recorded in the transcripts and I was sensitive to those parts of the transcripts which used stronger language such as “this is really important.”

A standard biographical interview proforma was used to code all the interview transcripts that were obtained from the Bishop Pritchard School. The structure of the proforma followed the work of West (see Merrill and West, 2009, pp.137-140). This proforma was used for the auto/biographical interviews as well as the unstructured interviews and documentary sources.

Two examples of the proformas used are shown in appendix J and K. These are the proformas used to code the interviews with the deputy headteacher and the executive headteacher respectively. These two are chosen because they represent two styles of interview. The first, appendix J, with the deputy headteacher, follows the style of a lengthy informal conversation and tells the story of the school as a biography – a biographical conversation. The second, Appendix K, with the executive headteacher, tells the story of the headteacher himself which became the school’s story. In this sense it is more autobiographical. In addition, although my background, words and body language had a significant influence on what was said (chapter 3

section I; section II), the form of the interview was more of a monologue and might best be described as an autobiographical narrative or story.

The intention behind the proforma was to develop a way of recording and reflexively considering the key issues in the interviews, in relation to research questions 2 and 3, in a standardised and consistent format which allowed for comparisons. It was crucial for me to immerse myself in the material and to allow it to work on me as I worked on it. The idea was to explore, iteratively, the key themes and conceptual issues raised in relation to the relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. In doing this, I sought to always bring alongside other literature and other data from the case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School. For example, notes from my daily journal could be woven into the narrative. It was important for me to include issues that I did not understand so that I could re-visit them, either with the interviewee or another interviewee at a later date. In line with the integral inquiry approach, the proforma was designed to be all-encompassing as well as capable of adaptation. The idea was to create an understanding of the material as a whole by joining up the different parts of the narrative.

The proforma was divided into four main aspects (see also chapter 5 section VIII). The first of these were the themes emerging from the interview(s). These were the key moments of the biography which may have caused a change in direction of the interviewee's life or understanding. These were generally the areas which had a deep and profound influence on the interviewee such that the interviewee was able to recall them easily and felt them worthy of sharing with the interviewer. The fact that they were easy to recall may stem from the fact that the interviewee may have told this story many times. If this narrative was highly significant, it may have evolved as something of a legend within the school. In this way it might have influenced generations of staff at the school. An example of this was the reputation that the (now) executive headteacher earned in the early days of arriving at the school and turning it around. The local paper and radio station referred to him as Harvey Jones and this name began to stick in the eyes of the parents and staff (see chapter 9 section II part c). There was often an interesting interplay between the past and the present. Within this, I was particularly keen to find broad themes that would contribute to an understanding of Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes. In this process I also sought to cross-reference the material with other data from the school or, indeed, other schools, including my own.

The next aspect of coding the interviews concerned the recording of the process. This noted the nature of the interaction, including issues of power and the possibility of unconscious processes. Frequently it was important to reflect on what was not said as opposed to what was said. Understandably perhaps, members of staff never said anything negative about the school. As a result some of the answers were formulaic but, within that, some members of staff were very open, frank, and honest. For example, as previously mentioned, the head of year was very direct with me in telling the story of the school and her part within it (chapter 6 section III part c). It was important for me to reflect on why this was and what this meant in the context of managing and interpreting all the material. In this case she wanted to pour out her passion for

her job to someone who both understood and had the time to listen. This is perhaps a natural human emotional need. In term of my research it proved to be a very rich source of data.

Thirdly, the proforma recorded what was termed the 'ethnographics' of the interview. This was the environment around the interview. It could be the immediate environment in terms of the room or building or the local geographical area in which the building is situated. Here I noted the physical spaces as well as any interruptions, together with the reasons, as far as I could discern. For example, as already noted, in one interview with the Deputy Head, the secretary informed him of an 'incident' which meant that he had to leave the interview immediately and return later. This clearly had an impact on the interview by making it more rushed and therefore more formal than it otherwise might have been. In contrast another interview with a member of staff involved a conversation in a quiet office in a remote part of the building. The member of staff had a pupil with them who needed 'time out' from lessons. The pupil was asked to put the kettle on and make us all a drink. The fact that the pupil did this without further questioning suggested to me that this was quite a common occurrence. In the event the conversation was very informal and open and the pupil, when she did eventually return, didn't appear to impact on what the member of staff said in any way. Perhaps the pupil had such intense problems herself that she wasn't interested in listening to anything else. All this information was recorded on my proforma to both add to the data and enable me to make sense of it.

Finally the proforma recorded any sense of gestalt or overall form and patterning in the material. Here, I tried to piece together possible interconnections as a basis for further reflection. Often when the bigger picture was seen, the reasons for the responses began to make sense. This was the case with both the interview with the parent who didn't mention Christian ethos despite its importance to her (chapter 5 section VIII) and also with the head of year 7 wanting someone to listen to her story (chapter 6 section III part c). Here, the distinction on the proforma between a 'gestalt' and a 'process' became blurred as the two overlapped. This was not seen as a problem as the proforma was always viewed as a tool and not an end in itself. With regard to the overall patterns and themes, a small number began to emerge from the data. However these were somewhat tentative and not overly strong. I discuss these below.

b) Results of coding

In coding all the data, significant use was made of cross referencing. Interview material was cross-referenced with secondary data and vice versa. All the data from field notes, lesson observations, biographical interviews, the prospectus, newsletter and reports on the school were woven together into the analysis using a system of references. In this way I ended up with 22 proformas of which the majority were in the form of auto/biographical interviews and conversations (see chapter 6 section III parts a,b and c). A list of these 22 proformas can be found in Appendix M.

In terms of gestalt, or the overall patterning, the data provided evidence that the Christian ethos of the school was important although there was less agreement and consensus on the way that it impacted on educational outcomes. All interviewees felt that the Christian ethos was

significant but were unable to articulate in a consistent way about how it was significant in terms of educational outcomes. There was a consensus that learning habits were significant but no single learning habit was felt to dominate.

When comparing the themes of each coded interview there was a significant degree of diversity. This is in spite of the context of the interview being the relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes. Each stakeholder, perhaps understandably, focused on their role within the school and their area of expertise. The headteacher talked about leadership, the head of year talked about pastoral care, the pupils talked about hard working teachers and the chaplain talked about the worship life of the school.

In terms of the Christian ethos and the frequency in which themes around this emerged, there was often reference to the themes of faith, hope and love. This language was used in several of the interviews and concepts and ideas were expressed which were grouped around these broad themes.

In terms of learning habits at the school, there was also a lack of clarity and consensus within the data. However, in terms of frequency of the themes emerging, the most common themes revolved around a work ethic and following things through, a sense of hope or purpose and a willingness to follow the rules. I have chosen the titles of diligence, resilience and compliance to capture these more dominant themes with regard to the relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes.

What is highly significant and, as noted in chapter 3 section II, a key finding of this thesis is that these three learning habits emerging from the school ethos and influencing it, correlated very strongly with the values, attitude and actions of the now executive headteacher when he arrived at the school over 16 years ago. The soul of the man found in the soul of the school.

c) Summary of findings from coding the data

Based on the coding exercise of all the data that I collected on the Bishop Pritchard School, the views of the stakeholders sampled with regard to the purported link between their successful SIAS and Ofsted grades, revolved around these three learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance. This was what my research suggested.

Despite this, the notion of learning habits did not appear in the policy documents for school improvement. The school improvement plan made no explicit reference to learning habits or how these might be developed, and harnessed further, to achieve higher examination results. In defence of the school's leadership, a school development plan traditionally focuses on areas of weakness which need to be 'developed'. It may be held that the school already enjoyed successful learning habits which impacted on their positive outcomes. However given the prevailing performativity agenda, it may be fruitful to explore whether some of the positive learning habits identified could be utilised further to achieve even greater examination success in the future.

II. What the qualitative data from the case-study school suggests

a) Sharing the findings with the school

On 6th December 2012 I met with the Deputy Head to discuss a 20 page report that I had submitted to the SMT in November of that year. The content of the report was based around chapter 7 section II and the executive summary comprised 13 points which are recorded below:

My research would suggest that the stakeholders sampled at the Bishop Pritchard School perceive the following:

1. That there was a distinct ethos at the Bishop Pritchard School;
2. That this ethos was based on, *inter alia*, respect, love (in the sense of wanting the best for others), hard work, high expectations and submission to a higher authority;
3. That this ethos may justifiably be called a Christian ethos (see, for example Galatians 5:22). In addition, there was frequent reference to the three inter-related themes of Faith, Hope and Love (1 Corinthians 13:13);
4. That the source of the ethos was complex and represented a cocktail of values held by many stakeholders within the broader school community, both Christian and non-Christian;
5. That the ethos that emerged did so as a symbiotic relationship between the various actors in the school community;
6. That the actual effect of this ethos on the educational outcomes of the school was a more contested issue. Stakeholders differed in their views on this;
7. That from the perspective of some pupils there was a duality of provision where one aspect is the assemblies, tutor times and RE lessons and the other aspect is the other curriculum subjects. For many pupils there was no obvious link between the two aspects;
8. That according to some pupils the success of the school was down to the quality of the teaching alone;
9. That, in contrast, for a few pupils and the majority of the staff, there was a clear understanding that all these different aspects of school life were interwoven and, together, helped to create the positive outcomes;
10. That the values internalized by the pupils as a result of the pervading ethos enabled them to be successful in school for three separate reasons: diligence, resilience and compliance. These three reasons for success may legitimately be termed as 'learning habits';
11. That in general and on average, pupils at the Bishop Pritchard School may be more diligent in completing and submitting work on time, more able to adapt to the world of

- school and happier to comply with the rules and regulations of the school than might have been the case if they attended another school without the same ethos;
12. That the character, theology and performance of the (now) executive headteacher may have been influential in creating and moulding an ethos where these learning habits flourished;
 13. That more research is needed on these three attributes both at Bishop Pritchard School and in the wider context of Church schools before any firm conclusions can be made.

Based on number 2 and 10 above, there appeared to be not one, but several character virtues which emerged from the ethos of the school in the perception of its stakeholders. DFE (2015) identified no fewer than 18 character virtues which may operate in schools. These included, amongst others: perseverance, resilience, ambition, tolerance, respect, curiosity, optimism, integrity, conscientiousness and focus. Jubilee (2015) categorised these 18 virtues into 4 main groups: performance, moral, intellectual and civic. What was significant from this data was that the stakeholders perceived that the different groups of character virtues co-existed with each other in explaining the ethos of their schools. What was considerably less clear was how certain virtues such as tolerance (love) and respect could have an impact on exam results. Given the parameters of this study with its focus on the link between ethos and outcomes, the main type of character virtue that began to stick with the stakeholders was the performance virtues. These included resilience and diligence. While the other virtues, like love and respect, may be equally vital it was hard for the stakeholders to explain how they could be measured and used as a justification for examination success.

Quite justifiably this ethos could also be described as a Christian ethos for two main reasons. Firstly, it accords with much of the New Testament teaching, for example the words from the book of Galatians (see chapter 7 section II, and point number 3 above) and, secondly, many of the key leaders, and others, who carry the ethos would profess to be Christians. There are also many, who would not profess to be Christians, who are nonetheless keen to embrace this ethos, as outlined, for example, in the school mission statement. The reason for this may stem from the respect held for the Senior Management Team (SMT)³¹ and, linked to this, the high morale amongst staff, parents and pupils. The stakeholders liked their school and took pride in their school and what it stood for. There was a loyalty to the school by the pupils, parents and staff which goes beyond the loose agreement made to uphold Christian values on joining the school.

The source of the ethos is therefore complex and represents a cocktail of values held by many stakeholders within the broader school community. This would involve governors, the SMT, staff, parents and pupils. The ethos that emerges does so as a symbiotic relationship between the various actors in the school community. When staff and pupils come together for worship there is a sense of common purpose and identity through which different stakeholders are able

³¹ At the Bishop Pritchard school, like most similar secondary schools, the SMT comprised the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and bursar

to feed off each other in promoting this ethos even if they are not self-professing Christians (see for example interview transcript CP, 07/03/12 in chapter 7 section II part f).

The effect of this ethos on the educational outcomes of the school is a more contested issue. Does the ethos have an impact on behaviour, attendance, exam results and the personal development of the pupils? The opinions of the various stakeholders differ on this topic. Generally the senior staff think that there is a strong link whilst many of the pupils cannot discern any link at all. Frequently when asked about the Christian ethos or the worship life of the school, the pupils cannot see how this has any impact on the curriculum subjects outside of RE. For the pupils, there is something of a 'duality of provision' within the school. There are the curriculum subjects and then there are the tutor times, assemblies and RE lessons. For many of the pupils there was a chasm between the two (see, for example field notes L5F8, 09/07/12 in chapter 7 section II part h). This lends weight to the view that education is split between the secular/sacred, fact/value, public/private spheres where issues of faith are only addressed in assemblies and RE lessons. This is a key issue and worthy of further research which is beyond the scope of this study. Here we note *en passant* that the consequence may be that a school could end up with what Benne calls 'two-spheres' or two unconnected areas: faith and learning (Benne, 2001, p.142).

However, on closer investigation, this duality of provision view may be exposed as being overly simplistic. There were a small number of pupils at the school who could see that the reason for the good teaching and learning in the curriculum subjects stemmed, in part, from the ethos that pervades the school (see, for example group interview transcript with L1M7, 27/03/12 in chapter 7 section II part h). Teachers, parents and pupils combine to create a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom which feeds directly into good examination results and other positive outcomes (see, for example group interview transcript Ks3 pupils, 27/03/12 in chapter 7 section II part e). This accords with Blomberg's argument for an 'integral epistemology' which recognises that: "all things are part of one larger whole – God's creation." (Blomberg, 2007, p.58)

With regard to points number 10 and 11, the data from my case-study suggests that there may be something worth exploring with regard to the learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance in Church schools in general. The data obtained from the Bishop Pritchard School indicated that the stakeholders perceived these three learning habits to be significant. As a result of the pervading ethos which operated at the school, certain values or habits were believed to be internalized by the pupils. The habits of diligence, resilience and compliance were transmitted within the wider school culture and inculcated within the school community. As a result it was believed that pupils were diligent in completing and submitting work on time, they were able to adapt to the world of school and they were, in general, happy to comply with the rules and regulations of the school and the examination boards.

b) The response of the school

When I returned to the school to share my findings they were very appreciative of the work done and the information provided. More importantly, they felt that the suggestions made, both positive and negative, were fair and reasonable:

SG: "Thank you for reading the report."

MT: "That's alright. I think it's fair, that's for sure. It seems a very fair reflection of our school and it has given us something to think about. The executive summary point 2 was interesting: That this ethos was based on, *inter alia*, respect, love, hard work, high expectations etcetera and I wondered how you evidenced that. And then I read through the whole report and I began to see it come out in the later sections. I also reflected quite hard on the things we do, like worships and mission statements and the people we are and I liked your point, again in the executive summary, that it was more holistic or integral..... your words on the lesson observations were also quite challenging for us."
(Interview transcript, Deputy Headteacher MT, 06/12/2012)

The purpose of my research was neither to confirm the *status quo* nor to shock but rather to invite deeper reflection. Although not primarily designed for the audience of the school's leadership, I was pleased to note that the SMT were not in disagreement with my findings. One area of concern, perhaps understandably, was over the word 'compliance'.

MT: "Now, it's really interesting that you have teased that out [compliance], and what we are trying to work towards is cooperation rather than compliance.... And that idea of co-operation rather than compliance for me is a much more Christian way of doing it. It's much more fair, it's communicative, it's a sense of giving people a chance to repent and not to do it again if you see what I mean rather than just saying, 'This is the way it is, don't do it!' So co-operation was one thing I just thought. I was going to ask whether you think we've got compliance or there is cooperation?"

SG: "The themes and language emerging from my transcripts of conversations pointed to more of a sense of compulsion than free choice."

MT: "I don't think change it, it is something that we will need to work on in our pastoral care." (ibid.)

Although not articulated in the interview with the deputy headteacher, it is possible that his thinking was that, in the prevailing liberal education climate, compliance would be frowned upon. The language of the school prospectus emphasised innovative excellence (Mission Statement and Page 1 of Prospectus). The word compliance would not sit easily with this aspiration for the pupils amongst the staff and prospective parents. However, he did understand the perspective from the pupils at the school might be more to do with being

compliant rather than co-operative. The school said that they would work on this aspect of their pastoral care.

c) Limitations of the research of the case-study school

In outlining my findings from the Bishop Pritchard School caution must be exercised. These findings need to be understood as my interpretation of views expressed by a sample of stakeholders at the school and this sample, although diverse, may not be representative and often comprised members of staff who were in leadership positions at the school. This is common in researching schools as these people are often freed-up from the necessity of teaching and are also experienced in speaking to visitors in such a way as to avoid disclosing incorrect, sensitive or inappropriate information. My concern is the weight given to the management agenda of both performance and Christian values to the neglect of other messages which may emerge from a school with many diverse 'voices'. The extent to which the resulting ethos portrayed was genuinely democratic was brought into question. The tensions surrounding the performativity agenda have already been addressed in chapter 6 section VI.

However, the practical difficulties of finding a time and a space for me to be alone with pupils have already been identified together with the attendant ethical and safeguarding problems (chapter 6 section III part e). Despite all of this, it was an acknowledged difficulty in the research to capture the 'pupil voice'. This is one of the limitations of the study which I re-visit in chapter 10 section III. While it was not always easy, for ethical reasons, to be alone with pupils, it may be considered to be unethical to have not given more time and space to pupils' views.

As has already been suggested (chapter 1 section V and chapter 7 section II part h), one way round some of these problems would have been to conduct an anonymous survey. The setting up of an on-line survey with either the staff, the pupils, the parents or the governors would have the effect of accessing a larger number of people who were otherwise unavailable. Alternatively it might have been possible to profile staff members so that I spoke with a certain proportion who were not self-professing Christians as well as those who were.

I revisit some of these limitations, together with the reasons behind the choices I made in conducting the research – in chapter 10 section III.

While the tentative findings from this case-study are acknowledged with a caveat when conclusions are drawn, it is important to note that this particular type of research was not predominantly about drawing definitive conclusions but illuminating possibilities. This particular aspect of the research study corresponds most closely with an ethnography where the very notion of generalizable conclusions existing is contested (chapter 5 section V and VI). The plan was to take the suggestions from the case-study school and see if they resonated with other schools. This is covered now in section III below.

III. The follow-up findings with the headteachers of Church schools

a) The statistical internet survey to the secondary headteachers

Using the three main themes that emerged from the coding exercise at Bishop Pritchard School, I conducted an internet survey of the 100 Church of England Secondary Schools to explore their response to the themes of diligence, resilience and compliance. I also added the word co-operation to reflect the wishes of Bishop Pritchard School following their response to my research. The survey consisted of the 8 questions below and was emailed to the headteacher (or Principal) of each of the 100 schools in the selected sample. The questions and the results are shown below:

Statement for response	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	No response
1.Children from Church families are, on average, more diligent than children from non-Church families	45.45%	31.82%	22.73%	0%
2.Children from Church families are, on average, more resilient than children from non-church families	18.18%	45.45%	36.36%	0%
3.Children from Church families are, on average, more compliant than children from non-church families	50.00%	18.18%	31.82%	0%
4.Children from Church families are, on average, more co-operative than children from non-church families	59.09%	18.18%	22.73%	0%
5.Children from church schools are, on average, more diligent than children from non-church schools	36.36%	22.73%	31.82%	9.09%
6.Children from church schools are, on average, more resilient than children from non-church schools	22.73%	22.73%	45.45%	9.09%
7.Children from church schools are, on average, more compliant than children from non-church schools	36.36%	18.18%	36.36%	9.09%
8.Children from church schools are, on average, more co-operative than children from non-church schools	45.45%	22.73%	22.73%	9.09%

20 schools responded initially and following a further email request another 2 schools responded. This meant that 22% of the sample made a response which is slightly above the target of 20% and would be considered to be statistically significant. A small number of schools emailed me, by return, to inform me that they get so many surveys of this kind that they have a policy of not responding to any of them and so being consistent (see Appendix H).

Eight of the headteachers completed a ninth question which gave them the opportunity to write any further thoughts on the topic. The eight responses varied and ranged from a request for a copy of the results to take to governors to methodological limitations. One headteacher said that "It depends how you define Church!"

One limitation for questions 5 to 8 concerned the professional experience of the Church of England school headteacher. If they had never worked in a local authority school, they would be unable to comment on these latter questions. Indeed the 9.09% (2 headteachers) making no response may be for precisely that reason. To counter this criticism, most Church of England headteachers would have a working knowledge of 'non-faith' schools in their community by virtue of local authority meetings, conferences, networks and admitting pupils from different schools into their school.

As can be seen from the data, those who responded to the survey felt that cooperation, compliance and diligence were features of Church schools (and, more so, Church families) whereas resilience was not felt to be a factor of the pupils in a Church school (nor Church families).

b) The group interview with a selection of 6 Church of England secondary headteachers – the focus group

In September 2013, I arranged a group interview with six Church of England secondary school headteachers during their annual conference in York. I arranged the interview for just under one hour to take place in the bar just before all the conference delegates adjourned to the dining hall for their annual dinner. Just like all the auto/biographical interviews, the interview was taped, transcribed and coded using the standard proforma.

The context of the group interview, or conversation, was an article that I had published in the AASSH journal which was distributed to all delegates at the conference in the joining packs. Earlier on in the day, I approached various delegates, from a range of different schools, and asked them if they would be prepared to share their views with me in an informal style interview or conversation. At the start of the informal interview, or conversation, I asked the six headteachers for their views on the relationship between ethos and outcomes in their respective schools with a particular emphasis on the three learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance that I had mentioned in my article.

In coding the transcript, I identified the key themes that were mentioned together with the body language, facial expressions and passion with which the views of the six headteachers were expressed. I did this from memory as soon as possible after the interview. As far as the process was concerned, the nature of the interaction was very informal, even jocular. There was no sense of the meeting being chaired or overly led by the researcher as the respondents spoke consecutively without the need for targeted questions. This empathetic style within a respondent-led discussion meant that the conversation flowed for the full 40 minutes allotted during the conference programme. At the start of the discussion I set the scene by inviting the respondents to reflect about Christian ethos and educational outcomes in their respective schools together with the possible contribution of learning habits in general and the three learning habits identified in particular. This is shown in Appendix I.

In terms of other ethnographics, the six headteachers sat in comfortable lounge chairs in the lobby area just outside the bar of the conference hotel. I offered to buy each one a drink which

they then brought to a small table placed in the middle of the configuration of chairs. Also on this table was placed the sound recorder. The participants appeared to respond confidently to the presence of the technology.

Given the prevailing climate of performativity impacting on Church of England schools (chapter 2), there was a further important discovery in analysing the data from the headteachers. One of the dangers, I perceived, was that the short term drive for exam results might jeopardise the school's Christian ethos which was necessary to create the environment in which those exam results could be achieved and sustained (chapter 2 section I part d; chapter 3 section I part c and d). I was therefore delighted to note that in none of my communications with the stakeholders at Bishop Pritchard school nor in the internet survey of 100 headteachers did any of the Church school stakeholders put performance above the needs of the 'whole child'. The same was true of the group interview with the headteachers here.

For example, in terms of gestalt, or overall patterning, one of the key themes that arose both in terms of frequency and the conviction with which it was mentioned was love. Several individuals within the group ascribed the success of their schools to a sense of love and caring for both pupils and staff. This theme recurred without contradiction through the 40 minutes.

The following comment was typical:

“Our distinctiveness is that care, that compassion, that every child is an individual, not a number, not a grade boundary and we value them actually they are loved just because they are, not because they're clever or they're from middle class road... So, I suppose the challenge for me and the difficulty I have as the head is to communicate that idea of success being part of loving the kids.” (Group interview of heads, PN, 19/9/2013).

Was this the headteachers saying what they thought I wanted to hear? Was there researcher bias associated with this exercise? Given the ethnographics surrounding the interview and the fact that some of the headteachers were more experienced than I was, I suggest not. In my experience of working in and with non-Church schools there is more debate about statistics, grades and targets than happened here. However more research would be needed before any firm conclusions could be made to confirm or refute this comparison.

In terms of learning habits the evidence from the group interview of the six headteachers slightly went against the results of the questionnaire that they had been invited to fill in earlier in the year. In the May of 2013 all Church of England secondary school headteachers had received a questionnaire and some of the group of six headteachers had completed it (chapter 8 section III part a). Diligence was identified as a significant factor from the internet survey with over 45% believing that children from Church families are more diligent than those from non-Church families. However, this trait was not mentioned in the group interview. For example, with regard to diligence and the work of William Jeynes (2003), one headteacher commented:

“I think it may be American culture, I don’t recognise it here.” (Group interview of heads, NT, 19/9/2013).

However, careful analysis of the focus group transcript revealed a sense where the headteachers did express the spirit of diligence. There was frequent use of the phrase ‘going the extra mile’ with staff and pupils.

“It’s about that extra bit, that extra push... and that means the staff do their best and the students do too.” (Group interview of heads, JR, 19/9/2013).

While the word diligence was not used there was a belief amongst these six headteachers that Church of England schools did, when compared with other schools that they had worked in, seem to go that ‘extra mile’.

By contrast, resilience did not score highly on the internet survey of 100 headteachers of Church of England schools. A possible reason for this was the lack of explanation given to this term on the survey. The term might have been interpreted as outwardly ‘tough’ as opposed to inwardly strong. Without further investigation, I can only conjecture! Nonetheless only 23% of respondents felt that children from Church schools are more resilient than children from Community schools. However, resilience was one of the significant themes emerging from the group interview exercise.

“...that sense of focus and a sense of perseverance in order to get there....they’ve got their faith in the background, and their faith helps them to guide them in the right direction.....God has given us all a hand that we can deal with, no matter what happens we will have a hand that we can play to the very best of our advantage.” (Group interview of heads, JR, 19/9/2013).

With regard to the attribute or learning habit of compliance or co-operation, the group of headteachers were more confident with the use of the word co-operation and, linked to this, the idea of sharing. This mirrored the results from the internet survey where a greater proportion of headteachers who were surveyed subscribed to the view that children at Church schools were more cooperative than children from Community schools, in their perception. In the group interview, there was a sense that the school community was all pulling in the same direction, not out of fear but out of a belief in a shared narrative. Such a scenario is more akin to co-operation than compliance.

“Young people will assimilate the atmosphere and.... if they see that we (headteachers) are authentic about the vision, the common narrative and that it’s real and it affects them, they will flourish almost without us.” (Group interview of heads, NT, 19/9/2013).

And:

“There’s a common narrative, a common rigidity, in Christian traditions that we all do it this way. This is consistency.” (Group interview of heads, PK, 19/9/2013).

Dearing urged all Church schools to be distinctively Christian (Dearing, 2001, p.9) and suggested that all Church school headteachers should be viewed as lay ministers (ibid., p.60). Following this interview with the Church school headteachers, I reflected on whether the comments that were made were in fact distinctively Christian or, alternatively, could they have been made by the headteachers of Community schools who were not self-professing Christians? The pre-eminence of the word ‘love’ in the conversations was significant. The love talked about in this context was based on the Greek word ‘Agape’, or sacrifice for others. This is a fundamental concept in the New Testament and differs from the more secular words of ‘caring for the kids’ which may be heard more in Community schools. What was perhaps more significant was that the learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance/cooperation were not opposed by the Church school headteachers as being predominantly ‘secular’. Once again there was the implied link between diligence and ‘going the extra mile’; resilience and faith and, lastly, cooperation based on a common narrative which we all share and to which we are privileged to submit (chapter 1 section III; Chapter 3 section I part d; chapter 7 section II part e).

9. Discussion of Findings

I. Introduction

In coding the data from the case-study school, the words, ideas and themes that frequently emerged to explain similar events and concepts were grouped together to make the analysis more manageable. The first group of words that predominated revolved around: a work ethic, going the extra mile, following things through and working hard. For this group of words I used the word diligence as the single best word to capture this language. The next group of words that predominated revolved around: a sense of hope, a purpose to life, a reason to keep going and the ability to cope with the 'ups and downs' of life. For this group of words I used the catchall word of resilience. The third and final group of words that came from coding the data revolved around the ideas of: submitting to a higher authority, following the rules and not challenging authority. Here, I used the word compliance. These three words then became the most frequently used themes on my proformas (see, as an example: Appendix J and Appendix K).

The extent to which these three themes are distinctive traits of a Christian ethos as opposed to another kind of ethos, is a fascinating question which is beyond the scope of this thesis to take further at this stage. To answer such a question would merit another PhD thesis to explore the theological and philosophical underpinnings of each theme. The purpose of this thesis is not to justify what learning habits can and cannot be labelled as distinctively Christian. The purpose of this thesis is to faithfully illuminate the perceptions of the stakeholders of one Church school as to how the ethos of their school is reflected in the learning habits of the pupils within the school and therefore its educational outcomes. However, the nature of this research cannot avoid this question altogether. Accordingly, I make a brief reference below to how Christian distinctiveness informs the Church school ethoses based on my findings. Beyond that I make no attempt at further substantial claims for this research. In what follows therefore I focus mainly on the more functional interpretations of each term.

II. Diligence

a) Related words found in the data

Work ethic, going the extra mile, following things through / up, seeing things through, hard work, assiduousness, industry, conscientiousness

Can these words be said to be distinctively Christian and capable of emanating from the Christian ethos of a Church school? Throughout this thesis I have argued that they can (see, for example chapter 1 section III). In chapter 3 I outlined my new creation theology based on

Wright (2007); eschatological duality over ontological dualism. This asserts that work is important because we are co-workers with God and we are called to work the ground of his whole creation, including children, which he has entrusted to us (Genesis 1:28; 2:15; 3:19). In this study I have also made frequent reference to the comments from stakeholders of 'going the extra mile' (see, for example: chapter 7 section II part e; chapter 8 section III part b). This comment, based on Matthew 5:41, can be linked to the calling of Christians to servanthood (see, for example John 13:12-17). In terms of Christian calling and servanthood, the work ethic adopted by the headteacher, Trevor Brown, has been instrumental in the creation of the school ethos. This is covered in section c below.

b) Does existing research support diligence as a contributory factor to understanding educational outcomes

For Jeynes (op.cit.) the learning habit of diligence was not only a significant factor in explaining why children in religious schools out-perform children in non-religious schools but also, out of the nine factors that were identified, diligence was the second most significant:

“The regression coefficients were largest for the school program and diligence variables, each of which exceeded half a standard deviation in size.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.153)

Indeed, Jeynes goes onto say that this was the most important finding of his whole study:

“The most important finding of this study is that the two variables in which religious schools had the greatest advantage, that is, diligence and having a demanding school program (i.e. taking a lot of advanced classes), were the two variables that were most strongly related to academic achievement.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.159)

Within the context of British schools, the choice of 'program' (subject choices) is limited below the age of 16, mainly as a result of the national curriculum imposed under the Education Reform Act (1988). Although Jeynes was writing about 12th grade pupils, the focus of this piece of research is predominantly pre-16. The dominant factor here is therefore diligence.

Within the literature there is some evidence to suggest that schools with a Christian ethos are perceived to promote greater diligence. For example, in summarising the current literature on the impact of schools with a Christian ethos, Green (2009b) writes in the following way:

“The bias in the research towards measuring the impact of schools with a Christian ethos on attainment reflects global shifts in education policy. ...In England and Wales maintained schools with a Christian ethos have been directly co-opted into this agenda because of the perception that they raise

standards and that Christian character formation will promote diligence, hard work and attainment.” (Green 2009b, p.78)

It is perhaps significant that the words: diligence, hard work and attainment are combined together within the context of Church schools.

Francis (2005b) compared the values of over 12,000 boys attending non-denominational schools with 136 boys attending independent Christian schools. He concludes that the ‘values environment’ modelled by 13-15 year old boys in the independent Christian schools was significantly different from that of the boys in the non-denominational schools. Further, the boys attending the Christian schools reported more positive attitudes towards the Church, the Bible and, crucially here, towards hard work and diligence.

This positive religious attitude was also identified as a significant factor in North American schools by the Cardus Educational Surveys, Cardus (2011; 2012; 2014). Although graduates of religious schools did not actively seek high paid jobs there was nonetheless a very strong sense of Christian calling to the more demanding professions in health care, social work and education. This trait was particularly prevalent amongst graduates of Evangelical Protestant schools (Cardus 2014, p.27). In addition, in all religious schools, graduates reported that their schools had prepared them well for the harder STEM subjects and a greater proportion of religious school graduates were employed within the science professions compared with their non-religious public school counterparts (Cardus 2014, pp.18-20).

Jeynes suggests that diligence is internalized as a learning habit within the lives of the students in religious schools:

“The difference in the learning habits between students in religious and non-religious schools suggests two possibilities. First, that religious schools instil certain work ethic values in children or, secondly, that these work ethic values are present in the children before they start school. That is, they emanate from a religious upbringing.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.161)

Writing in the context of the United States, Mentzer(1988), points out that religious people often maintain a strong work ethic. This is echoed by one of the founding fathers of Sociology, Max Weber (1904), in his seminal work “The Protestant ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.”

Jeynes summarises this tension of work ethic between the home and school succinctly:

“As a result, it is difficult to determine how much of the religious school student advantage is due to learning habits learned at school and how much may be due to a greater likelihood of these students having learned a religiously founded work ethic at home.” (Jeynes, 2003, p.161)

Uecker (2008) carried out research into the nature of the school effect by using data from the National Survey of Youth and Religion. Uecker compared the religious lives of pupils in 5 different types of school – both religious and non-religious. Uecker found that the religiosity of

parents played a significant part in the religious involvement of the adolescents and that was not mediated by school type. In essence, parents and peers had a greater impact on religiosity than the school. As we have noted, Jeynes counters this suggestion by noting that it is unreasonable, given the amount of time pupils spend in school, to suggest that there is no 'school effect' (see chapter 4 section VII part c and also chapter 7 section II part e).

Although this particular debate of home effect versus school effect would constitute a useful area of further research, it remains beyond the remit of this thesis. This thesis explores the relationship between ethos, learning habits and outcomes in English Church schools in whichever way that they are formed.

c) How does the data from this study support diligence as a contributory factor of positive education outcomes in schools with a Christian ethos

In my research at Bishop Pritchard School, there was a feeling from pupils, parents and staff that their (religious) school was markedly different in terms of diligence from the other (non-religious) schools in the town. The following comments are typical:

SG: "Are the exam results in this school good?"

L2M7: "I think it's because like we concentrate a lot on our subjects and we've got like not strict teachers but they are not always like really friendly so they would like, if you started talking then they would say, 'Get on with your work' and then they would like either separate you from the person you were talking to or like they'd give you like a warning, so like if you did it one more time then you would be separated from them. And I think that like helps you concentrate more."

L3F8: "It's just that most people in this school want to achieve, have good results, good jobs." (Group interview transcript, Ks3 pupils, 27/03/12)

With the exception of one, the pupils were only able to draw on their experience of their previous primary schools before transferring to secondary school. However, comments from a member of the support staff, who was also a parent, lent weight to this perception that the work ethic was fundamentally different at the Bishop Pritchard School compared with the non-Church schools in the town.

"..... it is a very strict school but again I don't know how the other schools work in comparison but all I can say is that when we have children come into this school that have come from other schools, you know, they see it as a prison camp almost because they're not used to the strictness that we have here compared to the other schools, you know with uniform with everything really, behaviour, it is strict compared to other schools and the children are made to

work hard with plenty of homework.” (Interview transcript, Parent/Support staff member SS, 15/05/12)

These sentiments were supported by many of the staff, for example the head of year 7:

“It’s a whole mind set. I also think that the parents make their children work harder and there is a kind of ‘rub-off’. There is a good work ethic in this school. The children seem to do as they are told and get on with hard work.” (Interview transcript, Head of Year 7 CP, 07/03/12).

Based on the data that I obtained from Bishop Pritchard School, I suggest that there may be something deeper to be found in the influence of the headteacher in creating the culture that was necessary to turn the school around. I suggest that the soul of the man can be found in the soul of the school. I maintain that there is some evidence of an ingrained culture amongst the longer serving members of staff concerning what was done to transform the school from potential closure to outstanding success. This story will have been passed on by the older members of staff and assimilated by successive generations of new staff and informs, in part, the current thinking and practice at the school. This story is, in significant part, the story of the energy, drive, hard work and diligence of the, now executive, headteacher, Trevor Brown and his leadership team (chapter 3 section II; chapter 8 section I part b).

The following comments from the head of geography and long serving member of staff are typical:

“Trevor and I both came to the school after the Acting Head had said that we have only 67 first choices for admission into year 7 and unless we turn the ship around we could well close. Given this background, we raised our game and since then have avoided resting on our laurels. Now we always look for further improvement. We’ve raised our game in terms of, you know, our expectations of students. And I think that you can see from the students’ performances that they have followed that lead; the lead of the headteacher and the staff.” (Interview transcript, Long serving member of staff JC, 07/03/12)

It is also significant that there was a perception that this new work ethic ‘rubbed off’ on the pupils. This change of ethos inspired by the newly appointed headteacher all those years ago was not only felt by the teaching staff but by the support staff as well:

“1996 was when Mr Brown came and it’s him who’s turned the school around..... He’s worked incredibly hard. He knows how to get the best out of his staff. They all work incredibly hard and he just won’t accept anything but the very best from people. So I think that just had the knock-on effect.” (Interview transcript, Support Staff GM, 08/05/12)

Diligence implies more than just working hard. It implies a desire to follow things up and see them through to completion. Again there was plenty of evidence to support this:

TB: “...so we developed those policies, we got the kids on board, lots of assemblies with the kids, lots of time for talking to the children about you know just where the school could be and the thing that I did all the time was communication, communication, communication. We started a weekly newsletter that went home to parents and I still am manic about making sure ... in every school I’ve had there’s a weekly newsletter INTOUCH (a pseudonym) that goes home to parents and it’s a manic PR tool really. It’s always saying we’ve got this letter in from someone who saw our children in the street and said how wonderful they were. The children started to believe in themselves. Does that make sense?”

SG: “Definitely.”

TB: “One of the things I’ve learnt is I always know the message I’m giving and everything fits that message. So nothing went in the paper without the message. Right? I was in the paper every week for months and months, well not almost every week, but at least once a month and anything to do with Bishop Pritchard always had my picture there, whether it was the knitting or whatever you know, I had to be in it. No picture went in without me because at that time there had to be a personal investment in this Harvey Jones figure, even though staff knew and I knew it wasn’t the case there had to be that association, ‘Oh yeh, that’s the guy who’s turning round that school’. You know what I mean?”

SG: “Yes.”

TB: “I know it sounds ... and it’s God that’s turned it around and everything and so we had this manic control that this had to be the way it developed. I know that you want to know what made the difference and for me it was simply hard work. I worked hard and the staff modelled that and the pupils then modelled that. I genuinely feel that the success of the school is down to creating this work ethic and following everything through diligently.” (Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 21/02/12)

Significantly, the feeling that God was behind it is mentioned and points once again to Trevor Brown’s sense of calling (see chapter 4 section III part d). I further maintain that my ability to empathise with this story stems from my own similar story at Canon Hall, from a school on the point of closure to one of the most improved schools in England. Again, at the heart of this transformation is the hard work and diligence of the headteacher, who also felt called by God, rubbing off on the staff and pupils (see chapter 3 section II).

I recall a comment from the head of year 11 at Canon Hall, someone who had been at the school for 25 years, about seeing things through. She said that she was discussing the recent ferry disaster off the Italian coast where the captain had left his vessel prematurely. It was the view of both her and her year group that this was poor behaviour and would never happen at Canon Hall as the Principal was always the last to leave the building almost every night of the year! Whether this diligence is mirrored in other Church schools amongst other headteachers and their staff and pupils is another question. In the light of my own experience, the results of the internet survey below and the outcomes of the group discussion with Church school headteachers, I would suggest that diligence may be a habit within the ethos of all successful Church schools.

In the internet survey to all Church of England headteachers in the sample, 36% felt that children from Church schools were more diligent and 23% disagreed with this and 32% weren't sure. When considering children from Church families as opposed to Church schools, the gap was wider. 45% felt that children from Church families were more diligent than children from non-Church families. 32% disagreed with this statement and 23% said that they weren't sure. The findings of this online survey would suggest that the perception of Church of England secondary school headteachers is that diligence was a factor within both Church families and Church schools. Although, it is acknowledged that the survey was only sent to 100 schools and there was only a 22% response rate. (Survey of headteachers' views, chapter 8 section III part a).

In the group interview with six serving headteachers of Church of England secondary schools, the term diligence did not feature prominently in the discussion; one notable exception was the following comment:

"I think they (the pupils) can see through a member of staff who's not putting the work in or showing the level of commitment that they expect from a Church school." (Group interview of headteachers, MR, 19/9/2013).

Although academic diligence may not have featured prominently, analysis of the transcript revealed a firm commitment to caring and to showing love towards the children and staff at the school. This may be termed as a diligent approach to caring. In this regard, the following comment captured the spirit of much that was said on pastoral care:

"We regard every pupil as unique and of infinite worth. We therefore keep going with them to turn them around when perhaps other schools would give up. In fact, we also do this with the staff." (Group interview of headteachers, SG, 19/9/2013).

In the internet survey of headteachers' views, one written comment offered was:

“XX is a Church school because it goes the extra mile in terms of providing opportunities for repentance and then forgiveness as a way of avoiding punishment.” (Survey of headteachers’ views, IAB, May 2013).

III. Resilience

a) Related words found in the data

A sense of hope, a purpose to life, a reason to keep going and the ability to cope with the ‘ups and downs’ of life, ability to keep going and cope with the ‘knocks’.

Can these words under the broad umbrella of resilience be said to be distinctively Christian and capable of emanating from the Christian ethos of a Church school? Again, in this thesis, I have argued that they can. For the Christian and the Church following mainstream Christian doctrine, the ultimate hope for humanity, and the whole of creation, is the return of Jesus Christ to restore what was lost at the time of the fall (Luke 19:10; Wright, 2007). This future hope has inspired millions of Christians since the birth of Christianity and continues to do so today.³² Quintessentially, whatever present set-back or hardship is endured, the belief in a better future without crying or pain (Revelation 21:4) can instil in an individual a greater ability to cope, and bounce back. In essence, a self-professed Christian with this hope can demonstrate greater resilience. In this study, this was the view expressed by both the school Chaplain and the deputy headteacher at the Bishop Pritchard school with reference to the data about the school. It was also the view expressed by the Church school headteachers in the group interview. Finally, it was the view articulated and modelled by the headteacher, Trevor Brown, in facing the innumerable challenges and set-backs that he faced on joining the school (see chapter 4 section III part d). All of this is covered in more detail in section c below.

b) Does existing research support resilience as a contributory factor to improved educational outcomes?

In researching 3 Church of England secondary schools, Reed et al. (2002, p.60), discovered that the key factor identified by the headteachers of the schools in bringing about their transformation was hope.

Francis and Robbins (2005) looked at the relationship between spiritual health and attendance at Church of England schools. All the schools were in an urban environment. Francis and

³² In the Bible, the word hope occurs 133 times in the Authorised King James Version and 174 times in the New International Version.

Robbins analysed spiritual health in four domains: personal, communal, environmental and transcendental. In the personal and communal domains pupils at Church of England secondary schools recorded signs of lower spiritual health. They were less likely to find life worth living and they were less confident in their relationships with others. For example, only 64% of pupils attending Church of England secondary schools found a purpose to life compared with 69% attending non-denominational schools. Some of these findings are counter-intuitive and go against the notion that pupils in schools with a Christian ethos have a greater sense of hope, purpose and resilience based on their faith. However, Francis believes that the lower signs of spiritual health are due to the fact that Church of England schools in an urban environment are more likely to be working with disadvantaged pupils. In this sense the fact that the gap was relatively small may be an indicator that Church of England schools were adding value to pupils' spiritual health and actually bringing hope and purpose to an otherwise less hopeful urban community.

More positive outcomes for resilience in Church schools were recorded by Francis and Penny (2013). In analysing 15 State-funded Anglican schools the researchers found a stronger belief in God and higher scores for questions on personal well-being amongst pupils from these Anglican schools compared with the responses from the pupils in non-denominational schools. However, it must be added that the difference was very marginal and in some aspects there was no difference at all. For example, 17% of pupils at Anglican schools reported that they did not feel worth much as a person which is exactly the same statistic as pupils from the non-denominational schools in the sample.

However an important comparison can be made between resilience in religious schools when considering other types of Christian school. In the same year as the first study above on Church of England schools within the State sector, Francis (2005b) researched schools which were part of the Independent Christian Schools movement. Here Francis found that fewer pupils reported feeling depressed or said that they had considered suicide compared with pupils at non-denominational schools. Crucially here, 75% of pupils said that they felt that they had a sense of purpose in life compared with 52% of pupils attending non-denominational schools. This research has been supported by Francis, Penny and Baker (2012) who noted the positive spiritual health and resilience found in the new Independent Christian Schools and, to a lesser extent, Church schools when compared with Community schools. Significantly this latter study also makes explicit links with the work of Jeynes in the United States. Like Jeynes, the authors suggest that faith schools can contribute to improved services in community schools through greater spiritual health and resilience.

Aside from Jeynes, there are further studies in North America noting the greater resilience of pupils found in faith-based schooling. Cardus (2011) found that Protestant Christian school graduates had a strong sense of direction in their lives and reported greater confidence in their abilities to navigate the challenges of life. Of all the different categories researched by the survey, the graduates of Protestant Christian schools showed the greatest general resilience.

The survey suggests that this may be due to an increased reliance on prayer and following scripture (ibid., p.24).

The juxtaposition of all these studies raises interesting questions, once again, about the effect from home. With a higher proportion of pupils in the Independent Christian Schools in the UK and private religious schools in North America coming from Church families, it would be reasonable to deduce that this had an impact on these results. Moreover as a result of greater involvement from the Christian community of parents in the non-State schools, it is equally reasonable to suggest that the explicit Christian ethos of these schools is stronger. A similar conclusion can be reached about Catholic schools in England (chapter 4 section V). However these were all different studies with different samples of pupils in different contexts and with different socio-economic reference points. To identify the precise causes of the difference in resilience between the various types of school remains difficult.

According to Deakin Crick (2006) success in learning depends on developing 7 attributes (or 'dimensions') of learning power. Among these 7 dimensions is the dimension of resilience. Deakin-Crick and Jelfs (2011) build on this theory to analyse learning in a faith-based secondary school. Their conclusion is that success in learning may be due to nurturing spiritual development in addition to knowledge of the curriculum (ibid., p.212). This spiritual development will incorporate a sense of something 'greater than ourselves'. In the context of a Church school it will also link to a community and a tradition which will enable there to be a greater sense of purpose, hope and resilience. Although Deakin-Crick and Jelfs do not specifically link spiritual development and resilience to learning in Church schools, their choice of a Church school implies that they feel that such schools may be more open to spiritual development in the curriculum.

The spiritual nature of Church schools to develop resilience is also noted by Chadwick (2012):

"The presence of Church schools, as history has shown, can have an enormous impact. The pressure is always there for education to be solely driven by economic and utilitarian pressures, but the unapologetic presence of Church schools can be an appropriate counterpoise. Their accent on spiritual and moral flourishing builds social and emotional capital contributing to community and individual well-being and resilience." (Chadwick, 2012, p.9)

c) How does the data from this study support resilience as a contributory factor

As already noted, the concepts of hope and resilience in the face of adversity were key factors that caused the (now) executive headteacher to stay at the school in the early days when the Bishop Pritchard School was struggling. This story of resilience from the newly appointed headteacher became the story of the Bishop Pritchard School from which future generations of staff and pupils could draw inspiration (chapter 4 section III part d).

From my own experience I recall one of the opinion leaders at Canon Hall school saying how impressed she was that I had taken on such a challenging school following in the footsteps of 6 headteachers in the space of 4 years, and how I approached it with such positivity. According to her, and many others, the other key factor in the school's transformation was my first assembly when I stood at the front of the whole school and said that I would be staying for at least 7 years; that was over 10 years ago now!

With regard to the pupils at the Bishop Pritchard School, the stakeholders frequently mentioned or alluded to the theme of resilience in explaining their success in learning. There was often a link made between hope and aspirations within the data. The Chaplain articulated this feeling with the following words:

“... whereas I guess it's not necessarily the case but people who are in a Church background know they've got supportit's about aspirations that I think people who belong to a Church have hope and can, even if life's difficult now, know that life can get better or that they can come through that and say, 'However difficult it is now they can be encouraged that they've got a hope to aim for. I think that makes a difference because a lot of what I see in children is that there are many children who haven't got aspirations and I suppose their expectation of life is not that they will achieve a great deal and I think that's something a Christian background does give them.” (Interview transcript, School Chaplain VF, 28/02/12).

This view was supported by the deputy headteacher at the school:

“Church families have more resilience through their faith structures perhaps at home..... In terms of the Church families that does often correlate. That family, that love, that sense of hope is massively important and that's linked to aspiration and it's no coincidence that all our kids go up to college and do something. Our NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures are incredibly low, less than 3%, and that's to do with the fact that we think, partly the home environment.” (Interview transcript, Deputy Headteacher MT, 06/12/12).

This sense of resilience based on parental support is noted in other faith school traditions. For example, parents of children in Catholic secondary schools are noted for their involvement in their child's education (Morris, 2010), indeed this is one of the suggested reasons given for the success of Catholic schools (see chapter 4 section V).

Interestingly, the survey of 100 Church of England secondary school headteachers did not support the view that children from Church homes or Church schools were more resilient than those from non-religious homes and schools. Indeed only 18% of respondents felt that children from Church homes were more resilient than those from non-Church homes with 45% disagreeing with this statement. Of the four learning habits, or virtues, listed in the internet

survey of heads, the perception by the headteachers was that this habit was the weakest amongst children from Church families and children in Church schools. However, as already discussed, it is possible that there was a misinterpretation as to the meaning of this term in the questionnaire (chapter 8 section III part b).

It was therefore surprising that, in the discussion with the six Church of England headteachers, this quality was mentioned relatively frequently:

“A Church school is a community where we all share together based on a common narrative and we draw emotional resilience from that and from each other. Our staff learn it from us and the kids learn it from the staff.” (Group interview of heads, NT, 19/9/2013).

In the internet survey one headteacher expressed his views in words as well as tick boxes. Basing his words on the work of Tom Wright, and his book ‘Surprised by Hope’, the headteacher commented:

“God is at work in His world. We are God’s agents and co-creators. We can make a difference. More people buy into hope than anything else. That is why we became teachers in the first place.” (Survey of headteachers views, AW, May 2013).

IV. Compliance (or cooperation)

a) Related words

Submitting to a higher authority, following the rules and not challenging authority.

Can compliance be viewed as a distinctively Christian learning habit which comes from the Christian ethos of a Church school? In this thesis, I have argued that it can, mainly if it is viewed from the perspective of submission to a higher authority. Within a Reformed Protestant Christian worldview a sense of compliance may be viewed as necessary following the fall (Genesis 3:15-19). According to Carson (2008) all men and women are now under God’s judgement and are not considered naturally good. They will therefore need rules and compliance to these rules for their own protection and safety. In the New Testament, Jesus, the ‘Perfect Man’ lived in submission to his Father’s will. Indeed, the incarnation, passion and crucifixion are acts of submission and compliance. While many non-Christians may view Christianity as stifling freedom, this may be an overly simplistic view. Jesus earned the reputation in his earthly ministry from being radically different and the free-thinker of his day. By submission to Him, the Christian can also align herself / himself to that freedom. More

fundamentally, mainstream Christian teaching would stress that only through Jesus Christ can we be forgiven. In this sense, submission to His Lordship over our lives enables the Christian to be set free from sin and restored to perfection. In this sense the Christian can be set free from the past, from feelings of guilt, from feelings of regret and feelings of worry. Ironically therefore, this submission can be liberating (John 8:36). In this study, I suggest that following the rules may have had unintended educational benefits for the pupils in terms of exam results whilst, at the same time, not inhibiting their propensity to speak their mind in class. In the internet survey, Church school headteachers agreed that pupils in Church schools and from Church families were generally compliant. This seemed to be a necessary quality to 'turn a failing school around'. This assertion was supported by both Trevor Brown and myself. In effect, when the school faces an uncertain future, no compliance could mean no Church school.

b) Does existing research support compliance as a contributory factor?

As already noted, Green (2009a) discovered in her research of Emmanuel College, that the Bible-based ethos was not always accepted by the pupils in the way that the senior management team envisioned (chapter 4, section VI). A similar finding was made by Collier and Dowson (2007) in their study of St Paul's school in Sydney, Australia. The management of St Paul's, like Emmanuel College, sought to provide an explicitly Christian education where all the teachers were required to articulate their Christian faith within the teaching of their subject. On interviewing the pupils when they left, the school found that there was a great deal of hostility, boredom and dissent amongst the pupils to this confessional approach to Christianity. In both schools it would appear that requiring all the pupils to comply with the Christian ethos of the schools, as envisioned, was not successful. Indeed this approach to communicating Christianity to impressionable young people by teachers in a position of trust may be regarded as morally indefensible. The counter argument to this is that the Christian school to which the parents have chosen to send their child(ren) could be perceived to be promoting 'neutrality' in the same way as a non-Christian school, which the parents have rejected, would.

Cooling (2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2013) has articulated a 'middle ground' where it is possible to have Christian education which is not neutral but neither is it based on enforced compliance. Cooling (2010a) suggests that the failure of the ethos at both Emmanuel College and St Paul's to connect with the pupils is because of the wrong approach chosen to Christian education. He suggests that the approach at both schools was based on apologetics as opposed to hermeneutics. He goes on to say that, despite the challenges, a hermeneutical approach might be the best way to turn a distinctively Christian school from wishful thinking into practical reality because the real treasure of education is "not transmission but ownership." (Cooling 2010a, p.7). In the case of St Paul's, the school management, realising that the pupils were unhappy, decided to make the Christian ethos of the school less didactic and more interactive. In this way they hoped to engage the pupils in reflecting on their own personal journey of faith. The

results were powerful with pupil dissatisfaction over school ethos falling from 70% to 30% on leaving (Collier and Dowson, 2007, pp.27-36).

Based on this research it is tempting to think that compliance is not a feature of the experienced ethos of these two Christian schools in the way that the school leadership had intended. However, this may be a superficial conclusion. The authors of the two studies above do not suggest that the pupils are opposed to the Christian ethos; nor are they opposed to the teachings of Jesus about submission to a greater authority and the need to comply. Indeed this notion of compliance may be ingrained in the two school cultures in a positive way. The opposition from the pupils arose from the fact that the school leaders chose to transmit this ethos in an inappropriate way. Or, in the modern idiom, 'kept going on about it', (see, for example chapter 7 section II part h).

The notion that pupils in Church schools may indeed be more compliant was suggested by more recent research in England. Research by Francis and Penny (2013), records that a minority of pupils in Church schools take a significantly more conservative view on sexual morality and substance (mis)-use than their non-denominational counterparts. In addition, pupils from Church schools reported more environmentally-friendly behaviours. However, as the authors are swift to point out, this is only a minority and, in general, the collective worldview of pupils from Church schools is not greatly different from the collective worldview of pupils attending comparable schools with no religious character. Nonetheless, in the sphere of compliance, the data suggests that Church schools are (at least slightly) different.

Whether compliance in a strict sense is a virtuous learning habit is a more contested debate. The General Secretary of the National Society, Nigel Genders, would suggest that it is not (see, for example Genders, 2014). Whether the General Secretary would be more amenable to the habit of 'submitting to a higher authority' is a matter of conjecture. What is clear is that such a debate about the virtues or otherwise of these learning habits is outside the scope of this study. This debate has, however, been addressed for Church schools overseas.

In North America, the Cardus Education Survey, Cardus (2011), revealed some interesting findings with regard to compliance and authority within private religious schools. The survey found that amongst Protestant Christian school graduates there was a "consistent distaste for going against the established constructs of society." (Cardus 2011, p.27). It is significant that, in one of the few criticisms of private schooling in North America within the whole report, the authors note:

"While it might be argued that the apparent compliance of Protestant Christian school graduates can be a benefit to communities, we also question if such orientations unintentionally contribute to a reduction in the potential of these graduates to interface with culture in positive ways.....If this unquestioning, non-confrontational way of life is distinctive of Protestant Christian school graduates, we wonder how these schools can possibly achieve the goal of developing the

next generation of leaders who will influence culture, as is the claim of many such schools.” (ibid.)

On a more positive note, Reed et al. (2002) provides a different insight into the leadership of Church schools based on compliance to the authority of God. The suggestion is that such submission can result in empowerment. Headteachers surveyed reported that they found it helpful to reflect on Christ’s submission and to draw strength from that. The leadership model that was frequently adopted was one of servant leadership where headteachers were keen to adopt leadership styles that were not autocratic because they felt that was the Christian model (ibid., p.31). Collegiality borne out of compliance to the will of God might appear, on the surface, to be a contradiction in terms. This might serve as an attractive area for further research for anyone interested in models of Christian leadership.

In summary, the literature would suggest that compliance to the school’s (Christian) ethos can be regarded both negatively and positively. Recent research studies would suggest that pupils may be more supportive of models of school leadership where the emphasis was based on interpretation as opposed to continual attempts to persuade. The extent to which compliance restricts or empowers remains a question of debate and interpretation.

c) How does the data from this study support compliance as a contributory factor?

In talking to key stakeholders at the Bishop Pritchard School, comments were made about a particular year group that had the highest proportion of Church going families in it. On the basis of the admission criteria, this year group had 50% of the intake receiving references from a Church leader. The remarks by the deputy headteacher corroborated my suggestion of compliance affecting performance:

“They [year X] are our year group with the least behaviour instances and they are our highest achieving year group. It kinds of fits in with what you were saying.” (Interview transcript, Deputy Headteacher MT, 06/12/12)

The following comments about this year group may reflect a form of compliance:

“... I think generally, they seem, my impression is when I hear staff talk about them, they were more co-operative generally speaking and more receptive I think so...It took them longer to get out of primary school mode, the head of year 6 said that she was quite concerned about them because they are not like other year groups, they are not streetwise and they don’t need to be told off!... I guess it will vary from class to class and from teacher to teacher so, and there are always children in every year who kind of buck the trend, but generally, and

going and walking around the school, you know, there's that sense they're are not particularly troublesome." (Interview transcript, School Chaplain VF, 28/02/12)

In chapter 7 section II part e, I noted the conflict between the management of the school and the staff with regard to pedagogy. While the deputy headteacher was keen to promote more of pupil-centred approach to learning (chapter 5 section IV part b) it was not always the lived reality within the school as the teachers often relied on whole class teaching and compliance.

"...here you just need to walk down the corridors; there's very good order, very controlled, very purposeful environment, lots of progress going on in lessons, but most of the classrooms are in rows, most of the teachers are doing the talking, whilst that's not the case across the school I would say that if you went and did a snapshot that's what you would see." (Interview transcript, Deputy Headteacher MT, 06/12/12).

The argument from those who advocate 'whole class' teaching is that excessive group work causes the pace of learning to slow as a result of a decline in the opportunities for absorbing new knowledge together with the use of a more restricted vocabulary. It is held that able pupils are capable of processing a lot of information quickly using an extended vocabulary. Such a model of learning lends itself to a didactic approach within the context of whole class teaching (Phillips, 1996; Boutonnet, 2003; Yandell, 2003). The fact that Ofsted no longer wish to criticise didactic teaching lends further support to this possibility (Ofsted, 2014; 2015). In researching Emmanuel CTC in the North East, Green noted that the school leadership of this high achieving school were very sceptical about pupil-centred learning (Green, 2009a, p.235). This is a huge and controversial area which, however fascinating, is beyond the remit of this research. Nonetheless, it remains a possibility that, perhaps inadvertently, the traditional teaching methods, including pupil compliance, at the Bishop Pritchard School were contributing, at least in part, to the high examination results (see also Arthur and Godfrey, 2005, p.5, covered in chapter 4 section IV part b).

To support this, in observations of classes, I found the children compliant with the requests of the teachers. In this sense my findings supported the findings from Cardus (2011) mentioned earlier. There were few incidences of litter around the building (chapter 7 section II part j) and only a few incidences of bad language. In reporting this finding of compliant behaviour I am aware of what McLaren (1993) refers to as the 'student state' whereby pupils appear passive in familiar settings and adopt the "gestures, dispositions, attitudes and work habits expected of 'being a student'." (ibid., p.91). However, a further support of compliant behaviour came from the last two inspection reports of the school from Ofsted. The following comments are typical:

"Pupils' behaviour is good, as reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and involvement in all the school offers.....Pupils contribute very responsibly to the

life of the school.” (Ofsted inspection report of Bishop Pritchard School, May 2010, p.5).

And:

“Students are mostly polite, tolerant and respectful. Most show willingness to listen and learn in lessons.” (Ofsted inspection report of Bishop Pritchard School, November 2012, p.5).

Although the pupils were respectful of the teacher and the Church tradition of the school, they were, nonetheless confident to air their views which were critical of Christianity and authority in general. The comments from three boys in a year 9 class shown below give a flavour of this:

“I think that Christianity is hypocritical because it says God loves everybody but manifestly, by reading Leviticus and Corinthians the Bible doesn't love homosexuals!”

Another pupil says can I have a rant “Obama says that he is in favour of civil partnerships but has left it 100% for each state to decide so has, in effect, not made any practical commitment whatsoever.”

One pupil says “If Jesus were to come back today, I don't think that he would have the same views because the social climate has really changed.” (Lesson observation field notes, year 9 set 2 and 3 male pupils, 09/07/12).

In using this evidence, I am aware that, according to Freathy (2006), being male and in year 9 were factors associated with the least positive attitudes towards the Bible (Freathy, 2006, p.327).

While the deputy headteacher of the school and others involved with (Church) schools may be reluctant to use the word 'compliance' because of its de-humanising undertones (chapter 8 section II part b), as we have noted above, compliance in Church schools need not always be viewed in a negative light (see, for example Reed et al., 2002). The deputy headteacher preferred the term co-operation although he acknowledged that many of the pupils and some staff understood the school systems to be based more on compliance than co-operation.

However, once again, I wonder whether there was something deeper about the concept of compliance which was found within the specific context of the Bishop Pritchard School. This stemmed from the early days of the school when there was perceived to be chaos before Trevor Brown arrived. This situation of perceived bad behaviour would have been etched on the minds of the long serving members of staff who would, as a result, believe that compliance was a good thing and one of the keys to the success of their school. Stories and legends take shape following times of adversity and I suggest that, at the Bishop Pritchard School, the story of the need for compliance had become part of the culture not only for longer serving members of staff but newer staff as well. The reasons are clear; if the school hadn't developed an ethos of

compliance in those days, there would be no school today. The words from James Cartwright (a pseudonym) are apposite:

“And Trevor was appointed and I think straightaway his focus was a change of ethos, culture and habits amongst the pupils. You know, the uniform policy, making sure there was a code for lessons, a corridor code, just looking at all aspects of behaviour here.” (Interview transcript, Long serving member of staff JC, 07/03/12).

The (now executive) headteacher’s perception of the early days was very similar:

“Once we had basic policies we had to make sure that all the pupils followed them without questioning them. Key to this was getting the staff on board and they were really good actually. We got all the policies on behaviour, toilets, uniform, corridors enforced consistently and staff began to see the difference quickly. It was very interesting.” (Interview transcript, Executive Headteacher TB, 21/02/12).

From my own personal experience I can see many parallels with Canon Hall School. On arriving at the school 10 years ago, behaviour was perceived to be a significant problem. My response was to introduce a series of ‘quality standards’³³ for every aspect of school life and to put these in the staff handbook for all staff to apply consistently. Many years afterwards, one of the longest serving members of staff, now retired, informed me that it was these quality standards that marked the turning point for Canon Hall school.

With regard to the willingness to comply by submitting to a higher authority, I have already mentioned the tension between league table position and ‘doing the right thing’ (chapter 3 section I part d). Church schools must be about something other than viewing the pupils as raw materials to be turned into profit. As I stand at the school gates each afternoon and watch 700 pupils leave the site I often reflect on the purpose of schooling. I know each pupil by name and, like many headteachers, I also know the likelihood of each one securing the Government benchmark target of 5 or more GCSEs including English and Mathematics. As this thought flashes through my mind, I castigate myself and say to myself that a Church school education should be about so much more than this. Compliance to a higher ideal and to God’s rule is surely essential for all leaders, staff and hopefully children in Church schools. What do other headteachers think?

Headteachers who were surveyed strongly subscribed to the view that children from Church families were more compliant and cooperative than children from non-Church families. 50% of respondents felt that children from Church families were more compliant than children from non-Church families. It naturally follows that children from Church schools are likely to be more

³³ The ‘quality standard’ was a list of criteria that had to be met in order for the activity undertaken to meet the minimum quality required within the institution. There were quality standards on everything ranging from setting homework to teaching literacy.

compliant than children from non-Church schools. Again, it depends on the composition of the Church school and the extent that there is a shared culture. 36% of headteachers felt that children from Church schools were more compliant than children from non-Church schools with only 18% disagreeing with this statement.

Of the three learning habits or virtues researched with headteachers, the learning habit which was felt to be most reflective of Church families and Church schools was the learning habit of compliance or, more precisely, cooperation.

While the word compliance would seldom appear in the literature about Church schools or, indeed, in the rhetoric of headteachers of Church schools, it is nonetheless a commonly held view that, in the perception of Church of England secondary school headteachers, compliance is a trait of the children from both Church families and Church schools. This is very significant and a key finding of this thesis.

Compliance was also an underlying theme in the group interview of the six headteachers. The following quotes capture the sentiments of the headteachers represented:

“In this (Church) school there is a calmer atmosphere. Everyone wants to do well, it’s ok to do well, it’s ok to succeed, it’s ok for people to pat you on the back and say well done. In other academies that I have worked in people try and hide their success, people deliberately under-perform in tests because they don’t want to be seen as the school’s ‘boff’.” (Group interview with heads, MR, 19/9/2013).

And:

“We’re now behaving like a Christian school because there is no longer any absence and the kids are interacting well together. We got the parents on our side as well because the way that we deal with parents as well as the kids.” (Group interview with heads, PN, 19/9/2013).

V. Summary

In this chapter I have explored whether the three learning habits (or performance character virtues) suggested by the stakeholders of a specific Church school are supported by the data from this research and also the wider literature. I have also examined whether the specific learning habits identified can justifiably be labelled as distinctively Christian. The next logical question to ask is how does this happen? That is, how precisely does a Church school create a distinctively Christian ethos which inculcates certain habits (or performance virtues) into the pupils in order to support successful educational outcomes?

In this thesis I have used one Church school with a claimed Christian ethos as a case-study. I maintain that the ethos emerging from the school can legitimately be labelled as a distinctively Christian ethos because the key stakeholders are self-professing Christians and the vast majority of the remaining stakeholders who were surveyed reported that the school was based on Christian values. In researching the perceptions of members of the school community, it is their view that this Christian ethos has internalized certain learning habits into the pupils which have, together, accounted for the school's success. The three dominant learning habits identified were diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation. Furthermore, these three learning habits can legitimately be labelled as distinctively Christian because they emanate from a distinctively Christian ethos and do not contradict mainstream Christian doctrine. Indeed, there is significant Christian teaching to suggest that each of them is entirely consistent with Christian theology once they are interpreted in the correct context of a Church of England secondary school.

10. Summary, Conclusions and Implications

“Of course, we have that extra dimension in our school.” (IB, former headteacher, 1994)

I. Rationale for the writing of this thesis

This thesis was inspired by a comment made in 1994 by my former headteacher that a Church school has an ‘extra dimension’. Although the comment intrigued me at the time, it wasn’t until 2010 that I had the opportunity to probe more deeply into it. At this time my interest was fuelled by an awareness of the growing opposition to Church schools and the perceived need, amongst most Christian educators, to justify their continued existence. By 2010 the ‘extra dimension’ of Church schools was generally taken to mean ‘Christian ethos’ (Dearing, 2001). There was a belief emanating from the National Society, the Archbishops’ Council Education Division and Church school headteachers that the distinctive ethos of Church schools contributed to their success and popularity (Chadwick, 2012; Roberts, 2012; Peers, 2012; Archbishops’ Council, 2013).

Whilst, within the Church of England, there was almost hegemonic belief that a Church school’s Christian ethos contributed to its educational outcomes there seemed to be a lack of empirical evidence to justify linking these two factors. This was all the more surprising given that there is now more data available on schools to the general public than ever before. In particular, every Church school is subject to both a diocesan and Ofsted inspection at regular intervals with the outcomes of these inspections readily available on the internet. If the diocesan inspection reported on the Christian ethos of the school and the Ofsted inspection reported on its educational outcomes, it seemed a logical next step to analyse these reports to see if any link could be drawn between the two. Despite this, there was no evidence within the published literature on Church schools of such an exercise being undertaken.

Further, if a statistically significant correlation could be made between ethos and outcomes, as measured by this process, the next sensible question would be: what might be the factors contributing to this? This is a very important question given the greater involvement by the Church of England in sponsoring schools since the Academies Act (2011) which is a key element of the Government’s strategy to raise standards. As already noted, Gwynne (2012) highlighted the change in attitude to Church schools by the Government once they realised the key part they could play in raising standards. However at a time when the rhetoric from the Government has been in favour of Church schools (chapter 2 section III) there has also been growing opposition to them from, amongst others, the BHA who argue that there is no ‘faith school effect’ (or extra dimension) and that the alleged success of Church schools is down to

the privileged intake resulting from discriminatory admissions policies (chapter 2 section IV). This assertion is contested by others who claim that Church schools outperform community schools even when socio-economic status is factored in (Arthur and Godfrey, 2005; Godfrey and Morris, 2008).

Although the debate remains unresolved (Schagen and Schagen, 2005a; 2005b; Pritchard, 2013), it is a debate which opponents to Church schools are likely to successfully defend if:

1. There is no evidence that ethos and standards are linked;
2. There is no understanding of how they may be linked.

This study finds its purpose in addressing these two points. Given the sterile nature of the debate over whether Church schools outcomes are, or are not, dependent on social privilege, research by Jeynes (2003) was highly significant. Jeynes researched both religious and non-religious schools in the United States and discovered that religious schools outperformed non-religious schools as a result of better learning habits. Similar research has not been undertaken for Church schools in this country and, as a result, an opportunity was provided to fill a gap in the literature. This study has sought to throw light on the question of whether stakeholders in a sample of Church schools in England (and one Church school in particular) perceive that the Christian ethos in their schools promote certain learning habits which contribute to the successful outcomes of their respective schools.

In order for these questions to be answered a methodological framework was chosen which made use of a range of research methods and instruments. One of the recurring analogies for methodology that has been used throughout this thesis is the concept of shining different lights on the problem. Whilst the analysis of inspection reports suggested a quantitative approach, I acknowledged the limitations of using this approach in obtaining a full understanding of concepts as 'slippery'³⁴ as ethos and educational outcomes (chapter 4 section II). The results from the statistical analysis were therefore triangulated by using a case-study with ethnographic elements of one Church school, a survey of 100 Church school headteachers and also a group interview with a small number of Church school headteachers. I also incorporated my own personal experiences into the narrative where appropriate. Through all these ways, I sought to add greater analytical depth to the results of the statistical analysis through greater illumination of the issues.

Accordingly, this thesis has addressed three distinct but related questions:

1. To what extent does the correlation between SIAS and Ofsted inspection grades support the view that ethos contributes to educational outcomes in Church schools?

³⁴ The notion that ethos is 'slippery' was first used by Forster (1997). It has served as a useful metaphor throughout this thesis.

2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders in one Church school and the headteachers of a sample of Church schools as to the connection between the ethos and the outcomes in their respective schools?
3. What contribution does the research on learning habits by Jeynes (op.cit.) in the United States make to explaining, understanding and interpreting the perception of these stakeholders about ethos and outcomes in Church schools within England?

II. Critical summary of the findings of the research project

a) Conclusions from the literature review

In 1811 the National Society outlined 4 aims for Church schools: firstly, to lend support for the poor; secondly, to establish a nationwide system for mass education; thirdly, to improve basic literacy and numeracy of the nation and, finally, to provide for the personal, social, moral and spiritual development and well-being of children by nurturing them in the principles of the 'Established Church'. It might be argued that the fact that the State later assumed responsibility for the first three was due, in large part, to the National Society and this alone may be its greatest achievement (Wright, 2013, p.196). Today Church schools are mainly concerned only with the fourth aim, albeit in a very different way to the one conceived at a time when the nation was considered Christian. Since Dearing (2001), the Church of England has commonly used the concept of Christian ethos to define how its schools are different and, in its broadest sense this ethos (chapter 4 sections I - III) can be applied to most aspects of the fourth aim. Given this situation it is not surprising to find that there has been a good deal of research carried out and literature published on the ethos of Church schools.

While this literature has attempted to define, explore and understand Christian ethos, it is possible to identify two broad strands. The first broad strand concerns how schools with a Christian ethos perform in public examinations (chapter 4 section IV). This strand uses statistical tools of analysis to examine whether Church schools with a Christian ethos perform better than community schools. The second broad strand of research into schools with a Christian ethos concerns character formation (chapter 4 sections V – VIII). However, within the literature, there are very few attempts to explore precisely how exam results, and other outcomes are improved through adopting a Christian ethos; that is, how the two strands mentioned above can be joined. I therefore conclude in this thesis that an understanding of the relationship between a Christian ethos and the resulting educational outcomes is an under researched area of study.

There have been a small number of studies on newly opened non-denominational academies in the North of England which have an explicit Christian ethos commensurate with high academic performance. Once again the mechanics of this process of how the strong Christian ethos translates into outcomes is not covered. The reticence within the literature to explore this link

stems, in part, from the difficulties in defining and measuring ethos. However, I conclude that this difficulty should not, of itself, deter us but rather spur us on to find a way through (Green, 2013, p.14). I conclude that individual case-studies of schools where an explicit Christian ethos coexists with high academic performance can contribute positively to a better understanding of this field by providing extra pieces of the jig-saw. This is particularly important in the prevailing educational climate where local education authorities are being dismantled and schools have been forced to fend for themselves in raising standards.

In the light of the current performativity agenda operating within education systems in most OECD countries with the publication and widespread use of PISA³⁵ league tables, I therefore suggest that a greater understanding of the contribution ethos makes to outcomes would be beneficial. In the case of Church schools, I conclude that there is no clear guidance within the literature produced by the Church of England as to how its schools can enhance their educational outcomes by developing their respective Christian ethos. Given the rising opposition to Church schools within an increasingly secular society (chapter 2 sections III and IV), I conclude that there is a growing political imperative for the Church of England to justify the continued existence of its schools in terms of educational outcomes through recourse to empirical evidence concerning the link between their distinctive Christian ethos and their success. While Church schools do well in terms of Ofsted grades, there is no convincing explanation of why this is so. While notions of Christian ethos are used to explain their success, this justification is under developed in terms of empirical evidence from research. In this thesis, I maintain that such an empirical justification is not yet in place. Furthermore in this thesis I also argue that a sole focus on examination results to the detriment of a Christian ethos may ultimately be self-defeating.

Given the sterile debate between the opponents of Church schools and their advocates concerning social privilege, I suggest that there is a lack of literature on alternative explanations for the success, or otherwise of Church schools. One notable exception is the work of Jeynes in the United States and, to a lesser extent, Deakin-Crick in this country. I conclude that research on learning habits provides a useful insight into a better understanding of both Church schools and community schools. In the case of Church schools I conclude that there is a need to further explore the link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes within this country by drawing upon case-studies from different schools. Once again, this is not addressed by the current literature.

³⁵ The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in OECD countries has involved dozens of countries, like the UK, testing their 15 year olds' skills and knowledge in comparison with others. This has become a very important rationale for curriculum and assessment intervention by the present Conservative Government in the UK.

b) Conclusions to Research Question 1

In response to the concern about a lack of empirical evidence and, in particular, a limited use of inspection reports to support the view of Church school leaders that there was a relationship between Christian ethos and outcomes, research question 1 was posed. This analysis is explained in chapter 6 section II, and the results are presented in chapter 7 section I.

The correlation coefficient, R , obtained from the data was 0.68 and R^2 was 0.4102. In social science this value of R^2 is deemed to be significant (Frost, 2013). Therefore, I conclude that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between a measure of Christian ethos and a measure of educational outcomes as defined and measured by the process outlined at the start of chapter 7. Perversely, the value of this statistic is not what it shows but rather what it rules out. It cannot, of itself, show that ethos affects outcomes but it does rule out the argument that, using this statistic, they are definitely unrelated. I therefore conclude from this aspect of my research that there may be at least one way of showing a relationship between ethos and outcomes, such as this one, which is defensible on empirical grounds.

I acknowledge the limitations of this aspect of my research including the small sample size which make the confidence intervals larger and further weaken the already small positive correlation suggested by R^2 . However I argue that this statistical analysis fulfils more than one purpose. It also serves as a useful framework for further research in this field. In particular it signposts all those schools where there is a strong match suggested by the SIAS and Ofsted scores. Such schools would serve as a useful starting point for further, more individualised research into this field. Indeed this exercise served as an entrée for research questions 2 and 3 in this thesis by identifying a suitable case-study school, the Bishop Pritchard School. I also maintain that while the research methods and instruments used to address research questions 2 and 3 shed light on the 'why' and the 'how', the statistical analysis used for research question 1 addresses the 'what'. Therefore, I conclude that, taken together with further questions and further research, the statistical analysis used to address research question 1 as outlined in chapters 6 and 7 was a valuable first step to understanding not only the first research question but also the others as well. There may yet be an 'extra dimension' to Church schools.

c) Conclusions to Research Question 2

Based on my research findings at the case-study school, I conclude that there was a distinct ethos at the school which may justifiably be labelled as a Christian ethos because the ethos bearers were self-professing Christians and the stakeholders reported that the values of the school were based on faith, hope and love (chapter 8 section I part b). These values are prominent in New Testament teaching and appropriately define a Christian community and ethos (1 Corinthians 13:13). Further, I conclude that this ethos was perceived to be broader than the school management and included the whole school community, including parents. Finally, it was felt that, within the school community by virtue of being together, staff and pupils developed this ethos amongst themselves in a symbiotic manner (chapter 8 section II part a).

In judging the perception of key stakeholders at the case-study school concerning the connection between ethos and outcomes, my findings would suggest that there was a dichotomy of views. One group, which comprised mainly pupils and staff who were not self-professing Christians, found it difficult to link the Christian ethos of the school with the core curriculum provision and therefore examination results. The second group, comprising mainly the ethos bearers and a few pupils, could see how they were linked (chapter 8 section II part a numbers 6 to 9). The extent to which ethos affected outcomes varied in the responses as did the reasons why this might be so. There was reference to the concept of Christian care and commitment together with the notion of 'going the extra mile' but these terms were often used inconsistently. Therefore, based on my research findings from the case-study school I conclude that many stakeholders did perceive that the ethos of their school did contribute towards its success but they were unable to articulate a consistent set of reasons to explain this.

With regard to the small sample of headteachers interviewed, there was, unsurprisingly, a unanimous view held that ethos had an impact on outcomes. Many headteachers in the group spoke with passion and conviction on this topic and illustrated their views by using short anecdotes. However, when asked to explain the reasons why ethos affected outcomes the headteachers were less forthcoming and less articulate. This situation mirrored the findings from other research (chapter 4 section III part c). However, when probed, the consensus response revolved around the Christian concept of love; love for the pupils and love for the staff which enabled both staff and pupils to perform at their best.

Based on my research findings at the case-study school and amongst the headteachers, I conclude that the majority of stakeholders surveyed did perceive that ethos had an impact on educational outcomes. There were, however, a number of stakeholders at the case-study school who did not believe that there was such a link. In the case of those who did, there was, however, no consensus on what the causal relationship was. This was even the case with those who spoke most passionately about the importance of ethos. In addition to the broad themes of faith, hope and love, the language most frequently used in coding the proformas included ideas of compassion, commitment, care and 'going the extra mile'. Taken together all these notions may best be summarised by Christian love, which was precisely the word that was used by the small sample of headteachers. However, it is difficult to see how these loose notions identified could, of themselves, directly impact on school performance. Therefore, I conclude that it may be worthwhile to explore how a school's Christian ethos could influence learning habits. This was the basis of research question 3.

d) Conclusions to Research Question 3

When invited to reflect on the causes of the success of Church schools like their own, most respondents mentioned, as noted above, ideas of commitment, care and love. Very few people mentioned learning habits. However when offered learning habits as a suggestion, virtually all stakeholders concurred that they were relevant.

In analysing all the data from the case-study school, three learning habits in particular were perceived to be significant in explaining the success of the school. Stakeholders believed that the habits of diligence, resilience and compliance were internalized by the pupils as a result of the pervading ethos within the school (chapter 8 section II part a). In terms of reflexivity and issues of researcher bias, I was pleased to be surprised by these findings. In discussion with the school, they felt that the word co-operation was more apt than compliance (chapter 8 section II part b). Therefore, I concluded that the three learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance/co-operation were worthy of further research and investigation within the wider context of the family of Church schools.

Central to the notion that Christian ethos has an impact on educational outcomes through learning habits is the argument that these three learning habits can be viewed as emanating from a distinctively Christian ethos as opposed to a purely secular one. In this thesis, I conclude that diligence, resilience and compliance can legitimately be regarded as products of an authentic Christian school community. Diligence borne out of the Christian calling to serve others; resilience borne out of the Christian hope, and compliance borne out of a submission to a higher authority have all been shown to be consistent with mainstream Christian teaching.

One of the key findings of this research concerns the influence of the headteacher on the Christian ethos and associated learning habits of a school. In this thesis I argue that the executive headteacher at Bishop Pritchard School created an ethos where diligence, resilience and compliance were valued. Further, I argue that as a result of his theology, charisma and energy when he was appointed, these attributes soon became embedded in the school culture to such an extent that they were still talked about by staff 16 years later. In arriving at this finding, I conclude that without an auto/biographical approach to research this conclusion would not have emerged so quickly.

In surveying the views of a sample of 100 headteachers, I noted that their views were broadly in agreement with these suggestions of diligence, resilience and compliance. Using a Likert type scale (Likert, 1932), the headteachers felt that pupils in their school were cooperative, compliant and diligent. There was less support for the habit of resilience although, as noted, this may have stemmed from a misunderstanding of the use of the word in the internet survey. Indeed, when discussing this at group interview, there was more support for the concept of resilience (chapter 8 section III part a; b).

Based on my personal experience (chapters 3 and 9), the survey of Church school headteachers (chapter 8 section III part a) and the group interview (chapter 8 section III part b), I argue that an ethos, shaped by the headteacher, which promotes these learning habits is not unique to Bishop Pritchard School but may be generic for all successful Church schools. Therefore, I conclude that there is scope for further research at both individual school level and across all Church schools to explore the habits of diligence, resilience and compliance/co-operation in terms of their impact on educational outcomes.

What is particularly significant about this research is the perception amongst stakeholders concerning the habit of compliance. The research findings suggest that while the notion of compliance does not appear in the literature about Church schools, nor within the public rhetoric of headteachers, it is nonetheless a commonly held view that, in the perception of Church school headteachers, compliance is a trait of the children from both Church families and in Church schools. This, I conclude, is a key finding of this research.

However, it is also important to note that I do not suggest that Church schools should actively seek to make all the pupils compliant as a means to getting better results for the school. As has already been noted (chapter 8 section II part b) this may be met with understandable opposition from many headteachers, teachers, parents and pupils in Church schools. For a self-professing Christian, a better way to understand compliance may be in terms of 'submission to a higher authority'.

III. Limitations to the research

I acknowledge 4 key limitations with regard to this study. The first is the limited amount of time that I spent in the case-study school. The second limitation is the inability to divorce the 'school effect' from the 'home effect'. The third is the inability to hear all the different groups of voices comprising key stakeholders of Church schools. The final limitation concerns issues of reflexivity and the ever-present danger of finding what I already believed to be the case.

I spent a total of 12 days at the case-study school. This cannot be deemed to be an 'ethnography' as I did not have sufficient time to immerse myself in the life of the school and although there were a small number of both preliminary and follow up interviews and conversations, the overall engagement in the life of the school was restricted. In response to this limitation I argue that the time in the case-study school was only part of the whole thesis and I do not claim this work as an immersive ethnography but rather a case-study with ethnographic elements. In addition, I argue that, as a result of my personal biography and understanding of Church schools, I was able to obtain rich and meaningful data quickly and therefore, within 12 days, was able to obtain the same quantity and quality of data that I would have obtained from researching an unfamiliar topic over a considerably longer period of time (chapter 6 section III part b).

The next limitation was the inability to divorce the 'school effect' from the 'home effect'. Throughout the study there is an inherent assumption that the school was inculcating values in the pupils which accounted for their successful outcomes. The alternative suggestion is that the pupils were learning these values from the home and merely bringing them into school. In response to this limitation, I would suggest, along with Jaynes, that it is unrealistic to argue that, given the amount of time that pupils spend at school, there is no significant school effect

(Jeynes, 2003:165). I therefore maintain that while both are important and mutually reinforcing, the school effect is significant.

The third broad limitation was my inability to hear all the voices of the stakeholders of Church schools. In my time at the case-study school I was only able to interview one parent and one governor. With regard to the pupils, I was unable to spend more than a few minutes with individual pupils during break and lesson times (chapter 8 section II part c). In widening the research to capture the views of other Church schools, I only canvassed the views of headteachers through an internet survey and a group interview. There were understandable practical reasons for all these shortcomings. For example, there was no PTA at the case-study school and there were no governing body meetings on the days when I was at the school. With regard to the pupils, there were safeguarding implications of being alone with pupils (chapter 6 section III part e) and a shortage of both time and space in a busy and oversubscribed secondary school. In terms of the group interview with the headteachers, this took place when they were all in one place at their annual conference. In order to get round some of these problems, I could have set up an on-line survey for parents, governors and a sample of pupils; perhaps one year group. I chose not to do this as I didn't want to burden the office staff, the clerk to the governors and the tutors with extra work and so exhaust the goodwill that had already been shown to me. To hear 'dissenting' voices, I could have 'targeted' those members of staff who were not self-professing Christians. Again, I was uneasy about this, both because of the extra administration required by the school, and also the ethical challenges associated with such an enquiry. A further difficulty emerges from the assumption that the dissenting voices were all homogeneous. To explore all aspects of dissent may have been unmanageable. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the possibility that the research is skewed towards performativity and a philosophy of Church schools borne out of hierarchical management structures involving Church school leaders where the opposing voices are not heard and a fully democratic answer is not reached. I suggest that this situation may be the subject of further research (chapter 10 section IV part b).

The final limitation of this study concerned the issue of reflexivity and, given my personal biography, whether the findings could also be considered objective. I was continually seeing the research through the lens of a headteacher in post. Throughout this thesis, I have addressed this criticism by arguing that my personal biography, far from being a hindrance, could rather be used as a vehicle to obtain deeper, richer data (chapter 3 section II and chapter 5 section IV part a). I argue that my ability to empathise with many of the actors within the Church school system and particularly the executive headteacher of the Bishop Pritchard School enabled me to unearth and reveal some very deep and insightful data. I argue that it is probable that a researcher who was not a self-professing Christian and who was not able to develop this rapport would not have been able to obtain the same results. In terms of process, this is one of the major findings of my research.

Nonetheless, I do concede that there is an inherent tension (chapter 5 section IV part d). However, I also argue that I have been honest about my position with the stakeholders, and ethical and consistent in handling the data. In terms of data collection, I have avoided the temptation to construct interview questions but rather have relied on respondents telling their stories within an auto/biographical framework (chapter 5 section V part b). Finally, in accordance with my critical realist epistemology, I would question whether pure objectivity is possible (chapter 5 section VI).

Perhaps the greatest defence of all the 4 limitations stated above is the methodological framework employed and the process of reaching conclusions. The integral inquiry approach allowed me to employ a plurality of research methods and to triangulate the outcomes both in terms of methods and also sources. The internet survey triangulated the results from the case study school and, in turn, the group interview triangulated the results from the internet survey. This, I argue, is a strong defence against allegations of a lack of validity in the research findings (chapter 5 section VI).

IV. Where next?

“And yet, people surprise me. I met an ex-pupil recently. She said “What RE at the Bishop Pritchard School has taught me is that there is another point of view; so I no longer argue as much with my dad. I know that he has a different point of view which I need to respect. I now try and see his point of view.” (Field notes, informal talk with Head of Religious Education RR, 09/07/12).

a) Implications for leaders of Church schools

Jeynes (2003) argued that educators in the US concerned about pupil outcomes should look to religious schools as a model. This was also the sentiment expressed by David Blunkett when Secretary of State for Education between 1997 and 2001. In this study, I am reluctant to make such bold claims. I am equally hesitant about viewing this study as providing a robust defence against opponents of Church schools, such as the BHA. The reason is because this thesis is a small-scale piece of research which revolves around a short case study of one Church school. By its very nature, it makes limited claims for generalizability. That is not its purpose. Its purpose is more about trying to illuminate possibilities than establish certainties.

However, I maintain that there is a gap in the literature with regard to the reasons why the ethos of Church schools might contribute to their perceived success. For example, despite the wide availability of data on Church schools, including inspection reports on their distinctive ethos, there is a lack of empirical studies in this particular field. In addition, there is a paucity of research on the impact that a Church school ethos might have on learning habits and how these, in turn, would influence its educational outcomes. There is therefore scope for the

Church of England to engage more fully in this aspect of its schools' ministry and this thesis has sought to contribute to a better understanding of all these areas.

In this light, leaders of Church schools, supported by DBEs³⁶ and the Church of England, are invited to reflect on and engage with the following questions (chapter 1 section II):

1. Is there evidence from inspection reports on ethos and outcomes of Church schools which can assist schools like ours in developing our educational provision by strengthening our Christian ethos?
 - i. Can we use the database of Church schools showing their SIAS and Ofsted scores to identify schools which both have a strong match between the two and are also similar to us?
 - ii. Once we have identified such schools, how can we work with them to improve our own Christian ethos?
 - iii. Can AASSH or the National Society assist our school in this exercise?
2. How would the stakeholders in our school describe its distinctive Christian ethos and how do they perceive this to impact upon our own educational outcomes?
 - i. Is there any consensus amongst the stakeholders of our school as to what our distinct ethos is?
 - ii. Is there any consensus as to how this ethos impacts on our educational outcomes?
3. How does the ethos of our school shape learning habits in our school?
 - i. Is there anything that our school can learn from the work of Jeynes which would help our school to be more successful?
 - ii. To what extent can the notions of diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation be used to explain the learning habits prevalent in our school?
 - iii. How can we further support the headteacher and Senior Management Team in the creation of a Christian ethos that promotes the appropriate learning habits?
4. How can this knowledge of the suggested relationship between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes inform policy making and school development planning in our school?
 - i. Do we need to be more explicit in cultivating learning habits as a vehicle to improved exam results?
 - ii. How would we define, measure and monitor ethos and learning habits? To what extent is this actually possible?
 - iii. How do we ensure that the hegemonic and relentless pursuit of high exam performance doesn't detract from building a Christian ethos that develops the learning habits to make sustained examination success possible in the first place?

In the light of Michael Gove's³⁷ decision to reduce vocational qualifications, coursework and early GCSE entry within the secondary curriculum, the onus will fall on schools to prepare pupils

³⁶ Diocesan Boards of Education. See Glossary.

for a greater quantity of linear terminal examinations. This fact, coupled with the current hegemonic emphasis on performativity within OECD countries will, I suggest, raise the importance of developing the learning habits of pupils in order to succeed in a culture of increased testing. The significance of good learning habits and an ethos within which to develop them will, I maintain, become even more important for Church school leaders in the future.

b) Areas for future research

Inevitably the limitations of the study together with the implications for Church school leaders will provide a framework for suggestions for further research in this field. Researchers might consider:

1. Using the Church school database of Ofsted and SIAS grades to identify other individual schools and groups of schools within which to conduct a more immersive ethnography into the area of ethos and outcomes. This might:
 - i. Facilitate comparison between different types of school: rural/urban; large/small; popular/under-subscribed;
 - ii. Test the notions of diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation as contributory factors to an understanding of the relationship between ethos and outcomes;
 - iii. Make greater use of the 'voice' of parents, governors and pupils through, for example, more in-depth conversations with pupils to capture a more democratic ethos and avoid a narrow leadership perspective based on models of hierarchical management structures;
 - iv. Explore the impact of the 'home effect' versus the 'school effect' on ethos by virtue of an in-depth study on the values, attitudes and beliefs of the parents as well as the school;
 - v. Investigate amongst stakeholders the significance of school leadership in creating an ethos which is conducive to favourable outcomes. This is notoriously difficult and may best be served by a study which has another focus which is sufficiently, but not explicitly, linked, as in this study here. Although this is one of the key findings of this piece of research, I acknowledge the complexity of researching the effectiveness of leadership amongst school stakeholders. Due to power relations and ethical issues there is a danger that, unless handled sensitively, such research could end up by being at best meaningless or, at worst, divisive.
2. Analysing the comments made in Ofsted reports for a large sample of both Church schools and community schools in order to identify if any different patterns emerge with regard to the frequency with which ethos is mentioned in the respective types of school. This might:

³⁷ Michael Gove was Secretary of State for Education from 2010 to 2014 before being replaced by Nicky Morgan on 15th July.

- i. Examine whether, in general, Church schools are perceived to have an ethos which is more conducive to learning than Community schools;
 - ii. Explore the contributory factors to ethos in the two types of school;
 - iii. Test the frequency with which the notions of diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation occur in the two types of school.
3. Replicating the work of Jeynes, or parts of it, within the English context of Church schools and community schools. This might:
 - i. Involve a longitudinal study of up to 18,000 English students attending Church schools and community schools involving a self-assessment questionnaire and the same 9 learning habits identified in the original study;
 - ii. Identify if any specific learning habit predominates in Church schools compared with community schools;
 - iii. Combine the information from ii. above with data on school outcomes. Then investigate whether the different learning habits between the two types of school can account for differences in performance between the two types of school;
 - iv. Adopt an alternative, more simplified study including, for example, the learning habits of diligence, resilience and compliance / cooperation which builds on this research as opposed to the greater number of learning habits suggested by Jeynes.
4. Replicating the work of Cardus on character formation, ethos and outcomes within the English context.

Given the increased role afforded to the Church of England as education provider in a mixed economy of education provision (chapter 2 section 1 part c) coupled with the continued emphasis on performativity within English schools, the whole field of ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes in Church schools could become a significant area of future research. It is an area with which the Church of England should engage. In this regard it is vital that Church schools do not focus solely on short-term performance and ignore the positive impact that a Christian ethos can bring to learning habits and ultimately long-term performance as well.

V. Reflections and Closing thoughts

“I often point out to students that they come to a university not to learn the answers , but to discover the right questions.” (Wright, 2011:4).

Two of the underlying threads running through this thesis have been the (academic) performance of Church schools and the need for the performance of Church schools to be justified within a political environment which may become increasingly hostile (chapter 2 sections III and IV). It is against this background that this study is brought into sharp focus and finds its purpose. Many leaders of Church schools suggest that there is a relationship between a Church school ethos and its performance outcomes although they offer a paucity of evidence to demonstrate this and even less to explain it. In this thesis, I suggest that it is possible to use numerical data to draw a connection between the ethos of a Church school and its educational outcomes (chapter 7 section I). My case-study, with ethnographic elements, of a Church school in the South of England sought to explore behind the scenes of one specific school which experienced a strong relationship between its SIAS and Ofsted grades.

In terms of learning habits à la Jeynes (2003), the stakeholders of this school perceived that three, in particular, contributed to the schools transition from failing school to one of outstanding success in Ofsted terms. The three learning habits explicit in the stakeholders’ discourse which I identified as emanating from the Christian ethos of the school were diligence, resilience and compliance (or co-operation). Perhaps one of the more surprising findings of my research was the notion that pupil compliance is perceived to contribute, at least in part, to the success of Church schools. Reference to the other learning habits of diligence and resilience is more readily found in the literature on the ethos of Church schools (chapter 4).

However it is acknowledged that these three habits identified by the school were in some senses context specific given the journey that the school had taken from its days where it faced possible closure before a new headteacher, Trevor Brown, was appointed. I would argue that one of the key findings of this research is that the values and learning habits identified in the success of the school by the stakeholders were precisely the values and habits identified, espoused and ‘lived’ by the headteacher following his appointment. The fact that these values and habits were still being talked about 16 years later suggest that his character had profoundly influenced the school in a deep and long-term fashion. For example, there is evidence to suggest that the learning habits adopted by the staff and pupils reflected something of the character of the headteacher. His emphasis on hard work, hope and the need for rules find a strong echo in the comments from the stakeholders about diligence, resilience and compliance.

Whether the character traits brought by the headteacher to his role were moulded by him to the specific needs of his school or whether they were general character traits stemming from a mainstream theological understanding of leadership adopted by him is difficult to discern. The

fact that these traits of diligence, resilience and compliance / co-operation found resonance amongst other successful Church school headteachers would suggest that these characteristics were generic to the running of any successful Church school based on a distinct (Christian) ethos. My own personal biography would also support this. As the narrative of the Bishop Pritchard School unfolded, I became increasingly aware that it was a similar narrative to St Ainsworth's and Canon Hall. In this thesis I have been able to illustrate through biography and anecdote the traits of diligence, resilience and compliance in both schools in which I have worked. Drawing on all of the above, I argue that these three learning habits are likely to be generic to all successful Church schools.

Based on this, I suggest that if Church schools and their headteachers want to maintain generally good outcomes they might reflect on whether these three learning habits can inform school policy making and development planning. As already noted in section II of this chapter, the purpose of this thesis is not to suggest that Church schools should, for example, plan to make all their pupils more compliant in order to improve their league table position but, rather, to provide insights into stakeholders views of factors that might contribute to more fruitful outcomes. The specific implications for school leaders and potential areas for future research have already been covered in the previous section.

In addition to the 'product' findings of this research, as mentioned above, I suggest that there was also a significant 'process' finding. One of the features of this research, stated at the outset, was its use of diverse methodologies to shine different lights on the topic. One means of illumination was my own story. In this thesis I have argued that research of Church schools conducted by a self-professing Christian who is also a serving headteacher may not be a disadvantage. On first sight, it could be argued that there would be problems with regard to objectivity as the researcher would only find what they already believed to be the case. In this thesis, I argue that, through careful research design with the wide use of auto/biographical conversations, another Church school headteacher can elicit deep and rich data which may go untapped by another researcher without such a background. This unique insight stems, I suggest, from a deep empathy borne out of a shared theology, understanding and experience. In writing this thesis I quickly became aware that the story of Trevor Brown and Bishop Pritchard School was very similar to the story of Stephen Green and Canon Hall School – and doubtless hundreds of other Church school headteachers and Church schools throughout England. For these reasons I argue that the soul of the headteacher can, and often will, be found in the soul of the school.

Moreover the research has the opportunity to be transformational for those being researched and the researcher himself. For example, together with the macro objectives of this thesis striving to be of service to leaders of Church schools, this study has also had a more micro objective in being a personal journey to explore the statement of my former headteacher, 20 years ago. How has this research changed me as a serving headteacher of a Church of England school with 15 years' experience at both St Ainsworth's and Canon Hall? I have

developed a greater understanding of Church schools and also the Christian ethos within them. Some of this knowledge confirmed my previous understanding and some of it challenged my long held views. As a Church school leader, I will work with the stakeholders at Canon Hall in engaging with points 1 to 4 outlined above in chapter 10 section IV part a. As such, I will strengthen the position of ethos and learning habits within policy making and school development planning at the Canon Hall School.

The writing of this Ph.D. has also influenced me in a broader sense. Along with all those who work with and for Church schools, I acknowledge that I am part of a bigger picture which started over 200 years ago and which has influenced millions of people in this country (chapter 2 section I part c). I concur with the sentiment of the Church of England that its schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation (Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012). As a Christian, I believe that God is using Church schools, and people within them, to transform both individual communities and society as a whole. At the same time I am aware of greater questioning amongst the public about the expansion of Church schools. The high attendance at my debate with the Chief Executive of the BHA in November 2014 was an example of the popular interest in this discussion.

Has my question been answered? Have I found out what my former headteacher meant in 1994? The exact relationship between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes is a complex question to answer in precise terms. However, this situation, in itself, should not deter us from striving to find answers. This thesis has started me on a journey of greater understanding with some good answers and some better questions for future research. I hope that it inspires some who read it to carry on with further research into this important field which will grow increasingly significant.

“Of course, we have that extra dimension in our school.” (IB, former headteacher, 1994).

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APPENDIX A – Introductory letter to the executive headteacher / headteacher

Dear NAME OF (EXECUTIVE) HEADTEACHER

Canterbury Christ Church University MPhil/PhD research

I am the headteacher of an 11-18 Voluntary Aided Church of England Secondary school in Surrey. My governing body have financed me to study for a part-time MPhil / Ph.D. on the link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes in Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools. Your school has been selected as one where the match between ethos (according to the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) and educational outcomes (according to Ofsted) is unusually high. I am therefore writing to you to ask if you would be willing to contribute to this project by allowing me to carry out research in your school for no more than 2 days a week for between 10 and 20 weeks. The proposed itinerary is enclosed with this letter (see **appendix B**).

The purpose of my research is to uncover how and why the Christian ethos of a school is related to educational outcomes and the part that learning habits play in this. At the end of the research, it is hoped that the final thesis will contribute to a better understanding of the link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes in Church schools. As such, it will be available to policy makers to use in a way that better serves the particular nature of both denominational and non-denominational schools in England.

Please be assured that all the legal, moral and ethical protocols governing such research in a school will be observed. These are covered in the consent form which is also attached to this letter (**appendix C**). Ethics approval has been obtained from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University. If you are able to approve this research I will need to interview a selection of staff and pupils as detailed in appendix B. I will, of course, seek their consent as well. All participants have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason. All data will be anonymised and kept securely by myself in accordance with UK law. The final published MPhil / PhD thesis will be available, free of charge, to all participants.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the research including the proposed itinerary and the consent form, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Otherwise I would be very grateful if you could sign and return the enclosed consent form. I very much look forward to meeting you and working with you.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Green

MPhil / PhD postgraduate student

APPENDIX B – Proposed itinerary

The itinerary below was submitted to the school at the start of the research so that the school was fully aware of my research design and research intentions. As is frequently the case with research in the field, the actual journey I took was quite different to the one proposed below. Nonetheless, I have kept it as an historical record of my initial ideas.

Week	Day and Date	Proposed Activity
1	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 9.30am until 2pm	Interview with Head teacher (30-45 minutes) Interview with Head of RE (30-45 minutes) Observe an RE lesson and / or PSHCE lesson Observe pupils at break and lunch times
2	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Observe an Assembly or Tutor time Observe an RE lesson and / or PSHCE lesson Group interview with Ks5 (sixth form) pupils (25 mins)
3	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Interview with a Foundation Governor (30 minutes) Interview with a parent (30 minutes) Group interview with Ks3 pupils (25 mins) Observe pupils at break and lunch times
4	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Observe Tutor Time or an Assembly Lesson observation of a core subject (other than RE) Interview with a long serving member of staff with no management responsibility (30 mins)
5	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Observe an Assembly or Tutor time Group interview with Ks4 pupils (25 minutes) Lesson observation of a foundation subject Interview with the Chaplain (30-45 minutes)
6	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 3.30pm	Pupil pursuit – all day of a girl in Key Stage 3
7	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 3.30pm	Pupil pursuit – all day of a boy in Key Stage 4
8	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 3.30pm	Work as a supply teacher for the day (unpaid). Research notes only made at break time, lunch time and after school so the pupils get the best teaching
9	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Re-visit to fill any gaps or follow-up on any interesting lines of enquiry (may or may not be necessary)
10	Either Wednesday DATE and/or Friday DATE from 8.30am until 2pm	Re-visit to fill any gaps or follow-up on any interesting lines of enquiry (may or may not be necessary)

It is expected that the weeks will flow sequentially so that the natural 'rhythm' of the school is picked up over the course of 10 consecutive weeks in one term. However, this is not essential if such a scenario does not fit in with the school. Therefore, in total, there could be **up to 20 days in the school**. If necessary, schools could be revisited several times and so, conceivably, the actual number of days in each school could rise further and span between 10 and 20 weeks

APPENDIX C – Guidelines for executive headteacher / headteacher consent

A guide to professional behaviour including protocols and ethics from myself, as researcher:

1. At all times to show courtesy and respect towards every member of the school community – staff and pupils (governors and parents) and to recognise that I am a guest in their school
2. As such, it is not my place to make and express any judgements about the quality of teaching, the quality of learning or the quality of the school. I will only be focused on the link between ethos and outcomes and the contribution of learning habits
3. To be open and honest with all stakeholders about who I am and what I am doing
4. The final project will be shown to the headteacher of the school before it is submitted, to ensure that nothing is inaccurate
5. Whatever I am told by the headteacher, staff, children, parents or governors will be kept confidential and staff names will be anonymised using pseudonyms as I build up a picture of the link between ethos and outcomes in that school
6. If there is a specific quote which I would like to use in my final project, I will seek permission from that person before using it. Again, the source will be anonymised.
7. The style of the final project will be written in an academic manner for an academic audience (academics in education). The thesis may also be read by a small number of like-minded people as they carry out their own research into this field of enquiry
8. With regard to minors (children under the age of 18), there will be no interaction without a member of staff at the school being present in the room
9. Interviews with adults will be at a time and place of their choosing and will typically last 30 minutes to 1 hour
10. Interviews with the children will be group interviews with a member of staff present. No pictures (still or video) will be taken of any children at any time
11. No children's names will be used in the final project
12. All data, written and electronic will be stored in my study at home and on my personal computer
13. All data, written and electronic will be destroyed after 5 years unless the participants wish to keep a copy of what they said to me
14. The final report will be available to everyone involved in the research – if they wish to have a copy

Signed

Stephen Green (Researcher)

1. I give my consent to staff and pupils of the school taking part in this research project as outlined in the letter and itinerary, and in accordance with the protocols listed above

Signed

Head teacher

APPENDIX D – Letter to Deputy Headteacher, Head of RE, Chaplain, Head of Year, Parent, Long serving member of staff with no management responsibility, Governor, member of the support staff and a newly qualified teacher

Dear NAME OF MEMBER OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY (NAME INDIVIDUALLY PERSONALISED)

Canterbury Christ Church University MPhil/PhD research

I am the headteacher of an 11-18 Voluntary Aided Church of England Secondary school in Surrey. My governing body have financed me to study for a part-time Ph.D. on the link between Christian ethos and educational outcomes in Voluntary Aided Secondary Schools with a particular focus on learning habits. Your school has been selected as one where the match between ethos (according to the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) and educational outcomes (according to Ofsted) is unusually high. Your headteacher has kindly allowed me to carry out this research in your school. I am therefore writing to you to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed for between 30 minutes and 1 hour at a mutually convenient time.

The purpose of my research is to uncover how and why the Christian ethos of a school is linked to educational outcomes and what contribution is made by learning habits. At the end of the research, it is hoped that the final thesis will contribute to a better understanding of the link between Christian ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes in Church schools. As such, it will be available to policy makers to use in a way that better serves the particular nature of both denominational and non-denominational schools in England.

Please be assured that all the legal, moral and ethical protocols governing such research in a school will be observed. These are covered in the consent form which is also attached to this letter (**appendix E**). Ethics approval has been obtained from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at Canterbury Christ Church University. Along with all participants at the school, you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason. All data will be anonymised and kept securely by myself in accordance with UK law. The final published Ph.D. dissertation will be available, free of charge, to yourself and all participants.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the research including the consent form, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Otherwise I would be very grateful if you could sign and return the enclosed consent form. I very much look forward to meeting you and learning from you.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Green

MPhil / PhD postgraduate student

APPENDIX E – Letter to Deputy Headteacher, Head of RE, Chaplain, Head of Year, Parent, Long serving member of staff with no management responsibility, Governor, member of the support staff and a newly qualified teacher

Research project on the link between ethos, learning habits and educational outcomes at The Bishop Pritchard School

1. I have read and understood the letter above
2. I agree to the material on tape and transcript being used for research purposes as part of the above project and subject to the conditions specified in the letter
3. I understand that access to the data is restricted to Stephen Green, unless specific, additional agreement is obtained
4. I request that my anonymity is preserved in the use of material via the use of pseudonyms etc.

Signed: -----

Name (Please print): -----

Date: -----

APPENDIX F – Guidance notes to participants for the biographical interviews –

Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year, Head of RE, Chaplain, Staff Governor and long serving member of staff without any management experience (chapter 6 section III part c).

Opening brief:

Thank you for giving up your time so generously and thank you for allowing me to record this conversation with a tape recorder. This conversation should last for between 30 minutes and 1 hour. I would like to explore your experiences of the ethos of The Bishop Pritchard School and how you see this ethos impacting on the educational outcomes of the school in terms of attendance, behaviour and exam results of the children

1st phase: “Tell me about your personal experience of the ethos in this school”

2nd phase (if necessary) “Tell me how you feel this ethos affects educational outcomes”

3rd phase (if necessary)

Questions are asked about, among other things:

- Christian distinctiveness of the school
- Learning habits
- Worship life of the school
- Christian leadership of the school
- Ethos in the past
- Management’s perception of ethos
- Other staff perceptions of ethos
- Learner perceptions of ethos
- Parental perceptions of ethos
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Exam results
- The future of the school

Thank you again for your time. I found your comments most helpful. There may be other topics that I would like to discuss with you more fully. If this were the case, would you mind if I contacted you again for another conversation?

APPENDIX G – Semi-structured interview questions to a Newly Qualified

Teacher, a member of the support staff and also a parent (opportunistic sampling used)

It is intended that the questions will represent a framework for a dialogue with the stakeholders. The order of the questions will vary dependent on the direction that the interview will take. However, in order to get the interview 'back on track' and cover all the topics the interview schedule below will serve as something of an 'aide memoire'.

If any of the questions below were met with a closed response, spontaneous supplementary questions may be added

Opening brief:

Thank you for giving up your time so generously and thank you for allowing me to record this interview on a tape recorder. This interview should last for between 30 minutes and 1 hour. I would like to explore your experiences of the ethos [*if asked what ethos is, I used the definition given in chapter 1 section III of this thesis*] of The Bishop Pritchard School and how you see this ethos impacting on the educational outcomes of the school in terms of attendance, behaviour and exam results of the children.

Generic questions (which may not necessarily follow the order given below):

1. What do you understand by the term ethos?
2. How would you describe the ethos of The Bishop Pritchard School?
3. To what extent do you think that this ethos is explicitly Christian?
4. To what extent would you say that this ethos is broadly Anglican?
5. What do you understand by the term 'learning habits'?
6. Does the school promote any specific learning habits?
7. How would you describe the distinctive Christian character of the school?
8. How important is a daily act of worship to you?
9. How important is the subject of RE to you?
10. How important do you feel that RE is to the pupils?
11. In what other ways does the school leadership promote the (Christian) ethos of the school?
12. Would you say that a Christian ethos influences the way that the community views the school?
13. What is the impact of Chaplaincy on the school?
14. Why do you think that most parents (pupils) choose this school?
15. How would you describe pupil behaviour in the school?
16. How is the Christian dimension and distinctiveness of the school recorded in the school prospectus?
17. Does the admissions policy reflect the Christian nature of the school?
18. Is there a Christian union?
19. Are the staff at the school welcoming when you visit?
20. Are you aware whether many of the staff attend Church regularly or not?

Specifically for the parent (which may not necessarily follow the order given below):

1. What made you choose this school for your child(ren)?
2. How would the (other) parents describe the distinctive Christian character of the school?
3. Are you aware of any bullying at the school?
4. If so, how is bullying dealt with?
5. Would the children say that the school is caring?
6. Is there separate worship provision for parents? Is there a parent prayer group? Tell us about these
7. How would you judge the amount of litter, graffiti and use of bad language when you have had occasion to visit the school?
8. Do parents get consulted with regard to school policy?
9. How much homework do the children receive?
10. Do you feel that the teachers encourage your son / daughter to work hard and achieve their best?
11. If you have a complaint or concern which you have shared with the school, how is it dealt with?
12. What is the reputation of the school in the community in which you live?
13. As a parent, do you feel valued by the school?

In planning my research, I had intended to interview a foundation governor. Unfortunately this was not possible but I have retained the supplementary questions that were targeted at a foundation governor of the school.

1. How would you describe the link between the local Churches and the school?
2. What sort of topics are covered at governing body meetings?
3. How effectively do you feel that the school development plan: (a) reflects and (b) develops the ethos of the school?
4. Which governing body committee considers the ethos of the school?
5. Are learning habits ever discussed at full governing body meetings or at committee meetings?
6. Do the governors have a policy of appointing Christians, where possible, to senior management positions?
7. How much priority and status is given to RE at the school in terms of staffing, curriculum time and other resources?

APPENDIX H

Follow up survey to Head Teachers and 2 (typical) responses from the headteachers. Pseudonyms have been used for both the names of the two schools and the names of the staff

(a) The Archbishop Williams school:

Dear Stephen,

Please see below a message from Mr Jones, Headteacher at Archbishop Williams School.

Many thanks,

Robert Smith

Headteacher's Personal Assistant

8th May 2013

Dear Mr Green,

Thank you for your recent email in which you enquired about the completion of a research survey.

I receive a large number of requests such as your request to complete a research survey. Unfortunately, and out of fairness to everyone, I always say no.

I wish you all the very best in your search for research participants.

With all good wishes

Yours sincerely,

Jacob Jones

Headteacher

-----Original Message-----

From: survey-noreply@smo.surveymonkey.com [mailto:survey-noreply@smo.surveymonkey.com] On Behalf Of sgreen@canonhall.surrey.sch.uk via surveymonkey.com

Sent: 03 May 2013 10:30

To: Robert Smith

Subject: Research on the link between ethos and outcomes of Church schools

Dear Headteacher / Principal

I am writing to you to ask a small favour. I am the headteacher of a Church of England secondary school in Surrey and I am doing research on the link between ethos and outcomes of Church schools. Would you be so kind as to spare 5 minutes of your time by answering 8 questions within the attached survey monkey link.

Please click the answer that most corresponds to your 'gut feeling' as a Church school leader.

Here is a link to the survey:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ygB0CQLPYocpzFyZ6vBFJA_3d_3d

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Green

(b) The Archbishop Welby school

An email received from Jessica Smith on 16th May 2013

Thank you for your email asking for our help with some research/survey. I regret that we will not be able to take part. To protect staff who are under enormous pressure the Headteacher has decided that at The Archbishop Welby school we will only complete compulsory surveys required by the DfE.

Ms Jessica Smith

School Administrator

The Archbishop Welby school

APPENDIX I – Guidance notes to participants for the group interview for the follow-up to the internet survey with a group of six Church of England Secondary School Head Teachers / Principals at their annual conference in York in September 2013.

Opening brief:

Thank you for giving up your time so generously and thank you for allowing me to record this conversation with a tape recorder. This conversation should last no longer than 45 minutes. I would like to explore your experiences of the link between the Christian ethos of your schools and the educational outcomes in your schools.

[If probed further, educational outcomes would be defined in terms of behaviour, attendance and achievement. Christian ethos would be defined using McLaughlin's (2005) definition given in chapter 1 section III. In terms of an attempt at quantification of Christian ethos, it would be what the SIA(M)S report looks at.]

1st phase: "Tell me about your understanding of the link between the Christian ethos of your schools and the educational outcomes in your schools"

2nd phase: What role, if any, do learning habits play in this do you think?

3rd phase (if necessary) "Do the words diligence, resilience and compliance of the pupils/students resonate with your views?"

Thank you again for your time. I found your comments most helpful. There may be other topics that I would like to discuss with you more fully. If this were the case, would you mind if I contacted you again for another conversation?

APPENDIX J – An exemplar proforma used in coding the biographical interview

data based on a conversation with the deputy headteacher and using the style of West (Merrill and West, 2009: 137-140)

Auto/Biographical Interview Proforma

The intention behind this proforma is to develop a way of recording and reflexively considering key issues in interviews, in relation to a particular person, in a more standardised format (without jeopardising the flexibility of the whole process i.e. more open-ended forms of interviewing and bringing different and diverse interpretations into play, including our differing perceptions of material). It is crucial to immerse ourselves in the material and to allow it to work on us and we on it. The basic idea is to explore, iteratively, key themes, and any interpretative and conceptual issues raised, alongside bringing into play relevant literatures, and auto/biographical resonances. Research diary material can also be woven into the text. Issues not understood and needing to be explored further should also be included. The point is to be inclusive and to use the document as an evolving, living text, seeking to create understanding of the material as a whole and the potential inter-relationship between different parts of the narrative.

The focus is on four main aspects:

- The themes, which seem important, such as key moments in a biography and the life of the school, to date and in detail. Explorations with all aspects of being in the school, formal and informal, and how these are being or have been experienced; processes of managing transitions and changing identities; the interplay of the socio-cultural and psychological in lives; the interplay of past and present as well as future; the role of significant others etc etc. This section could include a summary of any themes to be explored further with the participant in the next cycle of interviews. It might include reflections on how the narrative is structured (is there a sense of drawing on some larger narrative e.g. the heroic figure of adult learning; or to what extent is there evidence of being storied as against storying a life, or a sense of agency in a life, born out of particular experiences?)
- The second aspect has to do with the process of the interview and observations about the nature of the interaction, including issues of power and possible unconscious processes. What is not being said, and how can this be understood? It includes any reflections on the quality and richness of the narrative material. It is important to include any auto/biographical resonance, and to document any thoughts and feelings as they arise, even from dream material or free association.
- The third, thinking more ethnographically, is about the circumstances of the interview, including interruptions, and general impressions of the setting and what might have been happening around it.

- The fourth is concerned with any sense of a gestalt or overall form and patterning in the material: might there be an emerging theme around the meaning of participation, or to do with the resources a person is drawing on, connecting past with present and possible futures? This is to be done tentatively, more a play of ideas and potential interconnections, as a basis for shared reflection

Please cut and paste relevant (and brief) extracts into the proforma and add any thoughts on content, process, context and 'gestalt'. And weave into the text reference to wider reading and insights from the literature. At an appropriate stage, produce a pen portrait of the person, in a new section before the themes, which acts as a kind of introduction while the themes will provide, over time, a way of structuring the refinement of a case study.

Participant's Name Michael Thatcher (Pseudonym for Deputy Headteacher)

Address, phone number and email: The Bishop Pritchard School

Interview 2 Wednesday 6th December 2012 in the Interview room at the front of the school

(Reference: MT2)

Name of interviewer: Stephen Green

Background

This was the second interview with the deputy headteacher on the topic of the effect the ethos of the school has on outcomes. The first interview, 11 months earlier, had been an introduction to the ethos at the Bishop Pritchard School. This interview took place after I shared my initial finding with the SMT (Senior Management team) of which Michael was a part. Indeed, as deputy headteacher (pastoral) he had the key role in the school for ethos and behaviour. The bulk of the interview / conversation revolved around issues of compliance versus cooperation as a means to understanding the ethos at the Bishop Pritchard School.

Pen portrait

This was a fairly complicated and technical discussion with a deputy headteacher who appeared to have thought deeply about the issues affecting ethos at his school. Part of the reason for this may be a journey for him as he sought to articulate the sort of school that he wanted to end up being the headteacher of. It would appear that he had a vision of the Bishop Pritchard School based on cooperative relationships but he acknowledged that this may not be where the school was at the time and, indeed, that not all the staff may have shared his vision. Crucially, in terms of line management, he was confident that both the executive headteacher and the headteacher did share his vision for the Bishop Pritchard School. Within the interview/conversation there are glimpses of equality issues. For example, he referred to the fact that there was an under representation of women on the SMT and he also spoke about modelling formality – the issue of wearing suits. Underneath the technical language there comes across a sense of love although this is seldom mentioned in the narrative (why is this so difficult?).

Themes

Causes of ethos – caring relationships, love and worships?

I was toying with that, and that was quite a hard concept to get my head through and as a Deputy here I often think what's more important is the day-to-day reality of the relationships and the way we are, the way we model to students say a Christian stance on things, how we help others first, how we care for each other, how each other's welfare matters and Ofsted picks up on every report that we get, it's about those really distinct relationships between, you know positive relationships between staff and pupils and that is a feature of the school and that's a feature of the caring staff that we have rather than the worships. I think the worships are a factor but if you ask the pupils they might say it's the worships but if you ask the staff, maybe with a more mature ... (the phone's ringing!), they would probably say it's more than the worships, worships are an aspect. I was sort of looking down that road. It's a hard one but it probably goes to the heart of your thesis....ethos was based on, inter alia, respect, love, hard work, high expectations etcetera and I wondered how you evidenced that. And then I read through the whole report and I began to see it come out in the later sections. I also reflected quite hard on the things we do, like worships and mission statements and the people we are and that it was more holistic or integral.....

Compliance

They [year X] are our year group with the least behaviour instances and they are our highest achieving year group. It kinds of fits in with what you were saying....here you just need to walk down the corridors; there's very good order, very controlled, very purposeful environment, lots of progress going on in lessons, but most of the classrooms are in rows, most of the teachers are doing the talking, whilst that's not the case across the school I would say that if you went and did a snapshot that's what you would see.

Is it cooperation rather than compliance?

Now, it's really interesting that you have teased that out [compliance], and what we are trying to work towards is cooperation rather than compliance.... And that idea of co-operation rather than compliance for me is a much more Christian way of doing it. It's much more fair, it's communicative, it's a sense of giving people a chance to repent and not to do it again if you see what I mean rather than just saying, 'This is the way it is, don't do it!' So co-operation was one thing I just thought. I was just wondering, even before Ofsted changed their framework and put co-operation as an outstanding judgement for behaviour, before that we'd looked at, and I think I was reading a book on how to raise boys, interesting because I've got two boys and I was reading it. It talks about the importance of co-operation rather than compliance. That's it. That's one of the missing links for us here is that we need to develop that co-operation, how the children see why we are asking them to pick up the litter and really get why it is important to the school rather than, 'It's a request from SMT.' I was going to ask whether you think we've got compliance or there is cooperation?.....I don't think change it, it is something that we will need to work on in our pastoral care

Resilience

Church families have more resilience through their faith structures perhaps at home..... In terms of the church families that does often correlate. That family, that love, that sense of hope is massively important and that's linked to aspiration and it's no coincidence that all our kids go up to college and do something. Our NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures are incredibly low, less than 3%, and that's to do with the fact that we think, partly the home environment.

Change of culture from compliance to cooperation

..., and Trevor Brown (Pseudonym), the executive headteacher, would say this, when he was ... behaviour some time ago it was about just trying to turn the culture round and there was a time and a place where they just needed some black and white rules. It needed to be, 'This is the Bishop Pritchard way, you do as you're told.' But that's stuck and ... and he recognises the need for change and brought me in as a Deputy and given me the opportunity to have the review and been non-defensive about that, that's been really helpful. So his systems are now developed and a lot of when I came in, I thought well actually a lot of it needs stripping away because it's so complicated, and you may have seen this trying to get your head around it. But it works and actually sometimes you don't need to change the systems you just need to change the way you approach those systems, and the way that you help staff be with the children and the relationships and the co-operation that helping them to see why the right conversations the reward being greater than the sanction. All of that culture change takes time and I think we can really feel that we turned a corner some time ago.

But battles still to fight to move away from compliance

Yeh, it's here isn't it. The ethos is a whole but there are pockets where it's not as you would want. So there are pockets of compliance depending on the inter-relationships of the students and staff, and you'll always get staff who have very old fashioned ways or perhaps anti the ethos way and it's that consistency, just as you'll have groups of pupils that may really believe that there's compliance, but actually they're got a negative experience. So I suppose you've got to take it on the majority to make a judgement and you've got to look at the significant majority and really think about what do they say about the Christian ethos, which is what you've done haven't you?

Issues of gender and management

And that's interesting. I think what Trevor (executive headteacher) and Nicholas (headteacher) have done has resisted putting a woman in place when there hasn't been a right woman. But I think that is true and I think we've extended the team, we've got probably sixteen, fourteen in the SMT but not in this sort of head, executive, deputy – they're all male. And I would completely agree with that, and I think it becomes a slight wedge for some people seeing the same, we're not prototypes of each other, but you know seeing the same sort of approach, not so much approach as a sort of presence.

Suits and their meaning: the functions of schools/education

... I think one of the things for me in it wearing a suit is about modelling to pupils not about to staff necessarily. I would want my staff to model to the pupils, be smart business like appearance, but that's the only reason. The formality is about your culture that you have with you in your school as a headteacher, no-one else, it's about how you create that and I've seen lots of different models and I know which one I would, when I become a head, which I'm going to do. It's got to be right for you and if it's not right for you, you've got to do what's right for you. That's an interesting point and I think the morning briefings still are a little bit chalk and talky and some of them are briefings and some of them are sharing good practice and it's slightly schizophrenia in terms of for staff, okay if it's a briefing, sharing good practice and what's taken out of that is the personal touch sometimes, whereas I would perhaps look for a model of we share good practice one day but we touch base on a Monday, how's everyone, what they've done this weekend and just have a much more informal, 'Can we talk about some kids today?' And I think it's that balance that helps create the right ethos or culture.

Process

This 'interview' often took the form of a professional dialogue with latent assumptions about understanding and therefore technical, complex language was frequently used. Although the narrative suggests tensions and struggles inherent in the deputy headteacher's words, his body language and delivery was assured and confident.

Ethnographics

The interview took place during the school day. Inevitably the deputy headteacher who is responsible for behaviour at the school will have to be available if any significant events take place within the school. During this interview, this scenario did occur. As a result, the second half of the interview was slightly rushed and, perhaps accordingly, was slightly more formal than might otherwise have been the case. Nonetheless, as a result of the rapport established over the preceding months, I felt that for the first part of the interview at least, Michael was able to open up with what he really felt and was able, for example, to share the fact that he was reading books about boys because he had two sons.

Gestalt

School as a site of struggle: over the meaning of Christianity as well as of education? Schools and their function in an unequal society; and given the dominance of the moral fecklessness discourse

References

Deakin Crick (2002a; 2002b; 2011)

Other Proformas: MT1; TB1; TB2; NJ; SS; KS3; VF; LO; ICS; IPW; SB

APPENDIX K – An exemplar proforma used in coding the biographical interview data based on an autobiographical interview with the Executive Headteacher

Participant's Name Trevor Brown (pseudonym for the Executive Headteacher)

Address: The Bishop Pritchard School

Interview 2 Wednesday 21st February 2012 from 11.00am until 12.00noon in the Headteacher's office at the school (Reference: TB2)

Name of interviewer: Stephen Green

Background to the interview

As a colleague headteacher and member of AASSH, I already knew Trevor before the interview, although I did not know him well. The purpose of the interview was to let him tell the story of how he came to be at the Bishop Pritchard School, what it was like in the early days and what factors can be attributed to its changed fortunes from a school that was about to be closed into one that is oversubscribed and judged by Ofsted, and the wider education world, to be outstanding. This was the second of three (auto) biographical conversations with Trevor.

Pen Portrait

Trevor was, at the time of this interview, an experienced and successful headteacher who took over the Bishop Pritchard School in the 1990s. The dramatic turnaround in the fortunes of the school in the subsequent years resulted in Trevor becoming something of a hero in the local educational community. As a result, shortly before I arrived at the Bishop Pritchard School, Trevor had been asked to take over other failing schools in the town so that he could 'turn them round' in the same way. The irony is that, as a Christian, Trevor would ascribe any 'turning around' to be the result of what God was doing not him. In the interview a number of themes emerge. There is certainly a 'faith' dimension and a sense of calling and equipping which Trevor perceives as significant. In addition there is his 'street wise' approach to PR and the handling of the media (local newspaper). Throughout his narrative it is also possible to detect a sense of social stigmatisation towards the school and the local community within the town. On the topic of the reasons for transformation there appears to be an underlying theme of sheer hard work and a determination to see things through to the end coupled with a sense of Christian hope. These twin themes of resilience and, perhaps more particularly, diligence are key to interpreting Trevor's perception of the change of fortunes at the Bishop Pritchard School.

Themes

A sense of calling

the school advertised for a head and interestingly for me they advertised for a Christian. When I say it looked quite interesting, it was my wife who spotted it, she spotted the advert and she said, 'I think you should look at this'. And she saw it and they were very honest. When I looked

at it, looked at the school and thought no thank you. I said 'I'm not sure we should go for this darling' and she said 'Perhaps we should pray about it'. So we did pray about it; I agreed to get the pack, the pack looked awful, they put all the stuff in, the governors were very honest. Still wasn't sure but we prayed about it and I agreed to apply and made an agreement with God that if I was offered the job, I'd take it, which is something you should never do really. And came down here and was offered the job and took it. And it was very interesting because there had been a prayer group, a number of prayer groups praying for this school for years and they really ... they had been given a picture of this school being a beacon but they couldn't believe it. But they had been praying for the head, they prayed for me which was really good and this is part of the story...

Resilience – Christian faith and hope in the face of adversity

It was quite difficult and my first three weeks I really thought, 'Why am I here and have you brought me to close the school?' And we had all sorts – we'd had knife attacks, we'd have people driving through the front of the school, we had all sorts of bizarre things going on. Very interestingly I got two letters in my first three months, two letters from two different prayer groups, both prayer groups independently said we think God has given us a word for you and it was the same verse from each of them and it was Joshua 1.9, which was really quite exciting. So that really encouraged me and I thought: actually I know I am here for a purpose

Setting the scene – Bishop Hell

.....it used to be called Bishop Hell in the area really. People wouldn't come here. It was in the paper with bad stories every week and it was quite a tricky set up. The Church was thinking of pulling out, in fact a number of clergy said they didn't want to be associated with the school and things like that, which was tricky, and behind the scenes there was a movement going on in the sort of north of the town which isn't very far away from us really to ask for a new school to be built, really with the view the local MP was backing up because he wanted, they really wanted to close this really and open another one. So that was all quite interesting and the local paper was full of it. The school was Ofsteded in 19XX, November, by the local county inspection team interestingly and I think if it had been inspected by anyone else ... it was in special measures as it was, it was serious weaknesses. But it was probably worse than that if I am honest.

Working in a tough area; a context of class, and social division

... It was a tough school in a tough area. It's a secondary mod and this part of the town was the worst part of the town, in the papers every week and things and it was quite a difficult area. So no-one nice wanted to send their children here really, and that included, to be honest, a lot of Anglicans, even though a Church school, who thought it was a rough area, we don't want to go really. And we are totally on the wrong side of the town. The west of the town is a posh area, independent schools and primary schools that have nice youngsters, Church youngsters, nice youngsters, who then end up going to the nice secondary schools on that side of town. And someone once said it's amazing how many parents and children are Christian when their children are five and definitely not when their children were eleven. Quite interesting.

Leadership problems and burn out: crises of recruitment

Unfortunately, the other part of the problem was leadership really, if I'm honest, and the head before me had probably had a breakdown in his first year and stayed for another nine years, and really was struggling, really struggling. I really believe he came with a passion to do something. I think probably his appointment was the result of there being not a lot of heads and not a lot of heads that wanted to come to this sort of school. And he had had a track record messing things up a bit in the past, if that makes sense and he came here and it was really, if I'm honest, was too much for him and he resorted to blame the world really...It had a very interesting leadership and unfortunately the previous head who started before him, who started really well had been at the school for twelve years about nine years in who also had a bit of a breakdown. So the school had sort of had twelve years of indifferent leadership and really difficult leadership, and that meant that it was.... They avoided the issue. But it still didn't tackle the head problem but the head helped that situation by refusing to release the Ofsted report to the paper, and the paper had to wait till May to get hold of the Ofsted report, and when it eventually did it was front page news and the head resigned and the deputy head resigned.

Page 3 boy, and Harvey Jones – faith and signs of hope

But, again, Jane [reporter from local paper], I was very honest to her face. I told the story of how I come here and everything, and Jane just thought this was a great story and also partly as well we were on a bit of a winner because there was a bit of a backlash because it was felt that the newspaper had got rid of the head and the deputy and they were feeling a little bit guilty. So she wrote an article, a fantastic article, a double page spread in the Herald, about page 3 or maybe page 5, you know across the two. It was headed, 'A call of faith he could not ignore' and it was all about the calling and it really actually hit a chord with people out in the community and stuff, and of course because then the Herald (pseudonym for local paper), which is the county paper saw that, they then came in, they did a much less detailed article but then they were calling me the Harvey Jones of the education world. Suddenly this little thing started ... and of course I've learnt to use PR now.

Diligence – Putting in systems and monitoring to death

Behaviour was off the wall, no great structures worked really and the children would tell me much less polite words that the area's rubbish, the school's rubbish and they're rubbish and actually that I'm rubbish, which I thought was awful. So what I had to do was to somehow get these youngsters and the staff to see the vision of what could be and also build a Church school out of this. Does that make sense?...And a lot of that was personal to staff if I am really honest. The first thing I did was – I got the toilets sorted and monitored to death, just made sure systems worked. Kept putting systems in, kept making sure things were actually happening ... I also threw out every policy in the school the first week I came. The governors sort of said, 'What?' I said, 'Well, we are not following any of these policies. If Ofsted come in and ... I'd rather say to Ofsted, 'We're not following any of those and we've got three policies we're developing. We developed a Behaviour Policy, a Rewards System and something else, I can't

remember what it was now as it was 16 years ago. But three key policies we developed early on.

Diligence – Seeing things through, manic control and hard work

....so we developed those policies, we got the kids on board, lots of assemblies with the kids, lots of time for talking to the children about you know just where the school could be and the thing that I did all the time was communication, communication, communication. We started a weekly newsletter that went home to parents and I still am manic about making sure ... in every school I've had there's a weekly newsletter that goes home to parents and it's a manic PR tool really. It's always saying we've got this letter in from someone who saw our children in the street and said how wonderful they were. The children started to believe in themselves. Does that make sense?...One of the things I've learnt is I always know the message I'm giving and everything fits that message. So nothing went in the paper without the message....Right? I was in the paper every week for months and months, well not almost every week, but at least once a month and anything to do with Bishop Pritchard always had my picture there, whether it was the knitting or whatever you know, I had to be in it. No picture went in without me because at that time there had to be a personal investment in this Harvey Jones figure, even though staff knew and I knew it wasn't the case there had to be that association, 'Oh yeh, that's the guy who's turning round that school'. You know what I mean?...I know it sounds ... and it's God that's turned it around and everything and so we had this manic control that this had to be the way it developed. I know that you want to know what made the difference and for me it was simply hard work. I worked hard and the staff modelled that and the pupils then modelled that. I genuinely feel that the success of the school is down to creating this work ethic and following everything through diligently.

Compliance – Getting the pupils and staff to follow the rules

"Once we had basic policies we had to make sure that all the pupils followed them without questioning them. Key to this was getting the staff on board and they were really good actually. We got all the policies on behaviour, toilets, uniform, corridors enforced consistently and staff began to see the difference quickly. It was very interesting."

Process

The interaction was very natural, frank and honest. There was a willingness by Trevor to be very open with me, possibly because of our shared background and Christian worldview (chapter 3 sections I and II). This desire to tell the whole story 'warts and all' was apparent not only in how Trevor spoke and related to me but also in what he said: *I won't sanitize it, I'll say you might need to sanitize it when you come to read my stuff.* In addition, Trevor was very much at ease in talking about his Christian faith and his calling by God to this role and the subsequent justification by God in terms of the two prayer groups. Again, it is not clear whether he would have shared this with someone who did not share his faith background. The concern is that any conversation between two headteachers, both successful in transforming schools in working class communities, will influence the telling of the redemptive story.

On a positive note, Trevor did not need to elaborate on the feelings, emotions and latent messages woven into the journey with the result that the full story could be told in one go. Perhaps because of this, the narrative material was particularly rich, meaningful and helpful in addressing my three research questions.

Ethnographics

Although Trevor was generous with his time on an INSET day (no pupils at Bishop Pritchard on that day) there was still a sense that this was a particular slot in the day and there were other important things to do and deadlines to meet: *shall we stop now and come back because I do need to move now?* This comment was made almost part way through what he was saying. Perhaps there was something at the partner school (which didn't have an INSET day that day) that this executive headteacher had to urgently attend to. This was perhaps due to the fact that even after earning a reputation as an outstanding headteacher, his work ethic and diligence still dominated his working life. Perhaps his professional duties were no less manic now. I can only conjecture.

Gestalt

One of the underlying themes of the interview revolved around social class and the need to recruit *nice Anglican children*. Trevor perceived there to be a social divide within the town and for the Bishop Pritchard School to be in the *'wrong' part of the town* in terms of perceived educational aspiration. The sense of a social class divide looms large in Trevor's understanding. There is also a strong faith element running through the narrative. It is perhaps these two dominant factors, changed intake as a result of changed perceptions and God's provision that, for Trevor, explain the story of the Bishop Pritchard School.

References:

Weber (1904/2005); Jeynes (2003); Francis (2005a; 2005b); Uecker (2008)

Autobiography in chapter 3

Personal experiences in taking over St Ainsworth's and also Canon Hall

Other proformas: TB1; TB3; NJ; MT1; MT2; SB; GIAH; GM; JC; ICS; IPW

APPENDIX M – List of coded proformas. Please note that all names used are pseudonyms

No.	Who/What	Type	Date(s)	Code
1	Trevor Brown (Executive Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	22/09/2011	TB1
2	Trevor Brown (Executive Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	21/02/2012	TB2 (also appendix K)
3	Trevor Brown (Executive Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	25/09/2014	TB3
4	Mark Thatcher (Deputy Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	31/01/2012	MT1
5	Mark Thatcher (Deputy Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	06/12/2012	MT2 (also appendix J)
6	Victoria Flynn (Chaplain)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	28/02/2012	VF
7	James Cartwright (Long-Serving Staff Member)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	07/03/2012	JC
8	Rachel Rafferty (Head of RE)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	28/02/2012	RR
9	Nicholas Johnston (Head)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	31/01/2012	NJ
10	Catherine Pratt (Head of Year)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	07/03/2012	CP1
11	Catherine Pratt (School Governor)	Auto/Biographical conversation (Appendix F)	22/05/2012	CP2
12	Gaynor Mansfield (Support Staff)	Semi / Un-structured interview (Appendix G)	08/05/2012	GM
13	Sheila Smith (Parent)	Semi / Un-structured interview (Appendix G)	15/05/2012	SS
14	Susan Bright (NQT)	Semi / Un-structured interview (Appendix G)	10/07/2012	SB
15	Stratified sample of pupils from year 7 and year 8	Group interview with pupils	27/03/2012	KS3
16	Parent Newsletter INTOUCH Prospectus / Web-site	Documentary Analysis	Dec 2011-May 2012	IPW
17	Lesson Observations and break-times	Non-Participant Observations	Feb 2012-July 2012	LO
18	Tutor times and Assembly	Non-Participant Observations	July 2012	T&A
19	Informal conversations with other pupils	Unplanned / Opportunistic data collection	Jan-July 2012	ICP
20	Informal conversations with other staff	Unplanned / Opportunistic data collection	Jan-July 2012	ICS
21	Inspection Reports (Ofsted/SIAS/Investors in People)	Documentary Analysis	Jan-July 2012	IR
22	Group Interview with Anglican Headteachers	Un-structured interview (Appendix I)	19/09/2013	GIAH