

## Chapter 10

# Leadership in Full-Service Extended Schools: Communicating Across Cultures

### 10.1 The Move to Extended Schools

Educational reform tends to operate in cycles, whereby reforms are abandoned and replaced, in many cases to be revisited and revised at a later date, as prior reforms come to be seen as not fully having addressed the key educational issues they set out to remedy (Ravitch, 2000). In particular, the issue of social disadvantage and its relationship to educational outcomes is one that is almost permanently a matter of concern for policy makers, educators, and researchers. Various strategies exist that attempt to improve the educational opportunities of disadvantaged groups. School effectiveness and school improvement have traditionally focused on schools as largely single purpose institutions, devoted to educating children of a particular age and stage of learning, and have aimed to improve within school processes, in particular in those schools serving disadvantaged communities, to this effect (Muijs, 2006b). While many examples can be found in the literature of successful and effective schools serving disadvantaged communities, it is likewise the case that these efforts have not succeeded very well in overcoming social disadvantage, and have left the gap between social classes in terms of achievement largely unaffected (Levin, 2006; Harris, Chapman, Muijs, Russ, & Stoll, 2006). Alongside this emphasis on within-school change, there has for a long time also existed a movement towards strengthening links between schools and communities, that has seen schools as key actors in reaching out to, and collaborating with the community. In England, for example, the Community Schools movement of the 1970s was set up for this purpose (Cummings & Dyson, 2007). Likewise, however, initiatives in countries such as the Netherlands, the US, and Australia have emphasised schools as full-centers for their communities addressing the whole child (Dryfoos, 1995; van Veen, Day, & Walraven, 1998), while recently the English government has likewise moved in that direction with the Full-Service Extended Schools programme. This is seen as especially beneficial where schools are serving disadvantaged areas (Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

Three key premises which underlie this movement are:

- The need to address psychological, health, and social as well as educational issues if students from disadvantaged areas are to reach their full potential;
- The potential power of schools as organisations to reach out to their community; and
- The importance of stronger linkages with the community to improving parental involvement and, as a result of this, student performance (Hiatt-Michael, 2003).

This view is based upon the view that pupils are unlikely to perform to their potential if they suffer from health or social problems, and that therefore addressing these issues is a vital precursor to educational achievement as well as more generally enhancing pupils' life chances and well-being. Furthermore, it is often stated that engaging with other agencies will help the school become more central to the community, thus involving parents more strongly than is currently the case in many disadvantaged communities. This movement has received considerable support in some 'futures scenarios' (e.g. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001).

'Extended schools', or 'full-service' schools are therefore charged with offering or working closely with other agencies that offer, child care, social services, adult education, health services and other forms of provision to pupils and, increasingly, to the community as a whole, alongside their traditional educational role. Different models exist, but all share the fact that school facilities are used for delivering services in partnership with other agencies (Dryfoos, 1995).

The need for more joined-up collaboration between the different agencies working with children is another reason for the formation of extended schools. In England, the Victoria Climbié scandal highlighted the need for multiagency cooperation, and led to the government legislating for interagency work through the 'Every Child Matters' white paper. This was in fact not a freestanding or new policy, but rather the culmination of a move towards multiagency work seen as necessary to help achieve the government's social inclusion agenda, as evidenced in policies such as Sure Start, Education Action Zones, and Connexions, as well as in work outside of education in the areas of domestic violence and sex work, for example (Boynton & Cusick, 2006).

The research evidence for this type of interagency work is mixed. In what is probably the largest study to date, Cummings et al. (forthcoming) report that multiagency work has positive effects on the development of individual pupils and targeted 'at-risk groups' within schools, without necessarily changing the culture of the school or impacting more widely. Similar findings were reported by Cummings and Dyson (2007) in their case study of nine schools in North-East England, where small-scale impacts were found. These results also echo those of the evaluation of the Victorian Full-Service Schools programme in Australia, which was found to have some benefits for students unlikely to stay on at school, while not showing significant wider benefits (James, St Leger, & Ward, 2001).

In an earlier study by Atkinson, Halsey, Kinder, and Wilkin (2002), positive impacts were found in terms of delivering a wider range of services and leading staff

involved to have a broader perspective on their work, though increased demands and pressures were also mentioned. Competing priorities and resourcing were mentioned as problems associated with multiagency work. Communication between agency staff was seen as a key challenge. Common aims, commitment, and clear structures needed to be in place for the work to be successful. In particular, agencies and staff needed to want to be involved and be committed to multiagency work, rather than be coerced into it. In a review on the literature on supporting children in special circumstances, Statham (2004) found multiagency work that addressed the whole child rather than compartmentalising services to be characteristic of the most promising approaches, as were links between adult and children's services. Similar findings were reported by Dryfoos (1995) in an earlier US study. Warmington (2004) warn of a lack of fit between traditional structures and cultures and models of inter-agency work, and highlight the need for professional learning to take place before multiagency work can be effective.

One aspect of extended schools that has not been frequently studied is leadership, even though it is on occasion mentioned as a key factor to effective collaboration (e.g. Raham, 1998). Specific research on leadership in extended schools is rare, though there is some evidence of the leadership challenges in extant literature, such as the need for careful planning and preparation for setting up the necessary collaborative arrangements (Dryfoos, 1995), as well as the emphasis on common aims, which would point us to the role of leaders, instrumental as they are in goal-setting in schools (Leithwood, 1992). Another challenge that arises where different agencies collaborate is that of power and influence. School heads will sometimes assume that the power they enjoyed within their own school will be extended to other agencies, which is understandably not necessarily the perception of workers in these agencies (Abrams & Gibbs, 2000). Interaction and communication skills are needed to interact with staff from other agencies (Dryfoos, 1995), while stable leadership, both in the schools as in collaborating agencies is seen as key to the maintenance of effective collaboration according to McMahan, Ward, Pruett, Davidson, and Griffith et al. (2000). Cummings et al. (2009) report a wide range of different leadership arrangements in Full-Service Extended Schools, from distributed approaches, where heads would actively involve others in leadership as the perceived complexity of interagency work made it, in their view, impossible to handle on their own, while in others the model was more one of parallel strands, with the head retaining strong overall control while delegating leadership task to a schools-based coordinator. The National College for School Leadership and Demos organised a number of seminars on leadership in extended schools in early 2005. Findings from this seminar suggest that leaders focussed on building capacity across the school and were motivated by a commitment to making a difference in their locality. They also felt a need to allow more freedom for local solutions within the school, which they felt was necessitated by the increased complexity of extended schooling (Craig, 2005).

While, therefore, there is an emerging evidence base concerning multiagency work involving education, the evidence base on the leadership implications for school managers resulting from extended schools is still limited. This would appear

to be a key issue, in the sense that both the background of school leaders, as school practitioners and their leadership development will not necessarily have prepared them to take on the challenges of working collaboratively with a range of non-school agencies.

## 10.2 Methodology

This study aimed to explore interagency work carried out in extended schools from a leadership perspective. In particular, the perceived advantages, disadvantages and barriers to multiagency work in schools were explored, as were the leadership implications, relations to school leadership, and implications for leadership development.

Qualitative case studies were carried out in eight schools in the North-East of England that had been designated Leading Edge schools in this area, and were known for their pioneering of multiagency work. All served socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Most were in small to mid size post-industrial towns and cities, with one being in a former mining village and the other in a large urban conurbation. Of the eight case study schools, five were secondary and three were primary schools. The sample was therefore a purposive one of schools at the leading edge of practice with regard to extended schooling and multiagency work. Therefore, rather than being generalisable, the data from this study can serve as an illustration of the issues that schools that are only starting to embark on multiagency collaboration are likely to face in terms of leadership.

Two-day visits were undertaken to the schools. In each school interviews were undertaken with the head, a member of the Senior Management Team, a Middle Manager, a Classroom Teacher, and a member of staff of a non-education agency with which the school was working (referred to for ease as 'multiagency workers' in the rest of this paper). Documentary evidence, including Ofsted reports, plans, and minutes were collected as well.

Staff from non-school agencies interviewed had a variety of roles, including behaviour support, speech and language therapy and social services, and typically worked across more than one schools.

Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview schedules. A cross-site analysis of the data was conducted in relation to the overall research questions. The data was analysed using the constant comparative method which involves anticipation, immersion, validation, interpretation, and analysis (Becker, 1958). This four-stage analytical strategy, based on the conventions of sociological fieldwork, has been used in a wide range of studies. In further strengthening claims, particularly in respect to the relationship between practices and outcomes, we took guidance from Schon (1991). Using the ideas of Karl Popper, he argued that the fundamental test for validity is through 'competitive resistance to refutation'. This involves juxtaposing alternate plausible accounts of the phenomenon in question. Schon notes: 'In the absence of an alternate hypothesis, one is likely to be overwhelmed by the obviousness of what one already knows'. Taking account of this challenge,

we discussed our interpretations of the data with three colleagues and three practitioners.

## 10.3 Results

### 10.3.1 Views on Multiagency Work

Interagency work helps schools avoid isolation and is useful for benchmarking. It extends expertise in the school by growing the knowledge base staff have access to, according to heads:

*We now have much more expertise, much more experience (middle manager).*

Some respondents felt that interagency work led to the school being more open to the outside, with a greater opportunity for the community to go into the school.

One head felt that interagency involvement made the school 'a nicer place', and allowed staff to broaden their experience, another felt it made his school more 'vibrant'.

The ability to share practice was seen as a major advantage by several interviewees. As one head said

*The key is, sitting in a multiagency group, someone who has the expertise can tell you, this is just not right.*

A respondent from a primary school described this as a 'mutual learning process', which, however, can only occur where there is trust on both sides. The head of a large secondary school felt that this process allowed him to influence decision making in partner organisations in a way that would not otherwise have been possible. Furthermore, parents feel they get a better and more joined up service.

Schools had often received additional funding to engage in multiagency work, and in three schools this was seen as the main advantage thereof.

Staff directly involved in interagency work tend to be the most positive about it. In the most positive cases, the collaboration with external agencies was described as *enriching and reassuring* (head of department, secondary school). According to a teacher working closely with multiagency staff, *it stops little empires being built, and people are less able to play one off against the other*, while a classroom assistant commented that *It benefited the children, the work with other agencies I've done. I would like to work with more outside agencies.*

Some differences appear in responses depending on the type of agency the respondent worked with. Government agencies, such as social services, tend to be seen as more bureaucratic and difficult to work with than private companies, such as football clubs. One interviewee specifically contrasted his experiences in this way:

*The work with the local Premiership football club was great, but when we were on the Active City working party with the council there was just talk, but nothing happened.*

On the other hand, the head of one school saw the advantage of multiagency work lying in the ability to get fast targeted support without the bureaucracy that existed before.

Reasons to take on interagency work were varied, and could be distinguished as being more or less instrumental, ranging from *the money was there* (head, secondary school) through *we thought it would enrich the school and extend networks* (head, secondary school), who sees this as a vital part of network development in preparation for a future without LEAs, to statements regarding the need to help all children.

Respondents differed by school in the extent to which they mentioned students. In three schools respondents did not mention benefits to students at all. In the other schools, however, benefits to students were often seen as key. One respondent in a primary school specifically mentioned the ability it fostered to put students and their needs at the heart of the school, while the head of a secondary school mentioned better provision for pupils with significant problems as a key advantage of interagency work. In particular, he had found that they were able to get speedier support thanks to collaboration between schools and social services. This head felt strongly that this allowed the whole child to be addressed and that these services were most effective when locally controlled and school based, provided they were integrated into the daily work of the school, and were *readily available and accessible*, a view shared by respondents in other schools as well. According to the head of a primary school:

*Children don't just need education, they need caring for overall, so the more people you have feeding in, the more holistic it becomes and the more you can address the whole child, and the more both children and parents benefit.*

The fact that pupils may feel safer and more supported in school was also seen as a major benefit for some pupils.

For multiagency staff interagency work is seen as vital: *I don't see how I could do it without an interagency approach* was one typical comment. The need for collaboration was seen as particularly important in view of the number of professionals that can be involved with one family.

### **10.3.2 Barriers and Facilitators**

The amount of work involved in multiagency work was seen as a key barrier to success by some respondents. According to one head, for example, interagency work takes a lot of effort with little positive feedback if other organisations don't put the same effort in. He commented that with interagency work *we don't always get out of it what we put in*. The time-consuming nature of this type of collaboration was also stressed by a senior manager in another school: *it can be really slow and time hungry, and cuts across teaching time*. Time needs to be made in order to make the collaboration effective *bolt on at the end of the day just doesn't work, everyone is tired and just wants to go home* (head, primary school).

There is also a perceived danger of the effort involved in multiagency work leading to the school's work and capacities to be spread too thinly, and in that way actually being detrimental to the school. Finding the right *balance between the needs of the organisation, your time and the needs of their organisation* was seen as key by one head of department, for example. Lack of time is a common complaint, and one interviewee claimed that multiagency work *can be overwhelming due to the effort it takes* (head, primary school). A lack of distributed leadership may be a contributing factor in some schools, with one head complaining that time was an additional pressure for her due to her staff's inability to take initiative. Not all interviewees saw this as a problem, however. One senior manager commenting that *while time can be an issue, the rewards are so great that it really isn't a problem. I don't see it as a cost*. Slow decision making and compromise were seen as problems by agency staff as well.

An issue that many respondents commented on was the lack of cultural fit between the organisations involved, leading, according to the one head, to a *lack of mutual respect and commitment*, a *clash of priorities* and a clash of cultures leading to problems in properly connecting the different agencies. One head of department described the problem as encountering a *social worker type approach*, which she described as being less concerned with standards and overly concerned with risk. A lack of pace and expectations among social services staff was a common complaint from school staff. Another head of department described agency staff as having *lower standards of professionalism than ourselves*, leading to a conflict of interest as the agency staff were seen as less likely to challenge pupils. According to one interviewee *they (in this case social workers and the police) don't understand the working processes and realities of schools* (deputy head, secondary school). Trust is seen as key here, but is impeded by the cultural differences and different ethos of the organisations involved, the long-term view of many agencies contrasting with the shorter-term performance driven culture of the schools. The extent to which this is mentioned as a problem does differ between schools, with interviewees in one school, for example, stressing respect between partners as a strength of the collaboration: *it works here, because we really value and respect each other* (classroom teacher, primary school). The head of this school felt that *people work together in ways that are compatible with school culture*.

Trying to improve coherence between the different organisations was seen as a key leadership task in interagency work for many interviewees. One complaint was that while when people working on the ground were very enthusiastic when they came together, when they went back to their organisation there could be suspicion of organisations taking each others' resources. Ego clashes were mentioned as a specific problem in one secondary school, where the question of who takes the credit arose, according to the head. The head of another secondary mentioned experiencing some resentment from school staff who see multiagency work as easy:

*They just come into school from time to time, that is sometimes the impression. They just work with two children, why aren't they making more impact?.*

Agency staff also see cultural differences as a barrier: *we do have very different perspectives sometimes*, and mention the National Curriculum and timetabling as specific constraints to successful interagency working.

*It's sometimes hard to fit in work with an individual child, because of the curriculum, in the sixth form, where they don't have the national curriculum, I think that makes it easier (social worker).*

They don't always feel fully included in the work of the school, one interviewee describing herself as *although I'm based at the school, I think I'm seen more as a familiar visitor*. This is seen as problematic in terms of their relationship with the school:

*I think because you are working for another agency, this can be a problem for heads, because they feel they don't have full control over you.*

Shared goals and targets appear to be key if interagency work is to be successful. Targets, goals and their evaluation need to be shared. This factor was mentioned by all interviewees. Both sides need to see benefits *it needs to be a win-win situation* (head of department, secondary school)

In order for interagency work to be successful it needs to be high on the school's list of priorities. Staff at all levels of the organisation need to be involved in the networks and activities. Communication is key: *Name to name communication is essential for it to work* (head of year secondary school) *You've got to get to know people's backgrounds to get to work together* (classroom teacher, primary school). However, communication needs to be based on a real understanding:

*If you're not careful, the different terminology used by the different agencies will harm communication, the same thing can mean different things, and that is something that needs to be gotten out of the way at the start* (classroom teacher, primary school).

The importance of communication is also stressed by all interviewed agency staff. Building relationships is an important part of this *It's about both, having the formal elements of communication, but also the relationships*. Communication is seen as problematic in some schools, however: *teachers will wonder, why haven't I got information on that kid back yet* (Head of Year, secondary school). However, while open communication is stressed, confidentiality of information is seen as an issue by some interviewees. *Information has to be on a need to know basis, you have to think, sometimes, they really don't need to know that* (middle manager, secondary school).

School structures are generally not seen as problematic for interagency work by either school or agency staff, and there is a clear sense that culture rather than structures determine the success of interagency work. However, where good practice was described shared collaborative planning and easy access to school staff were mentioned.

The success of multiagency work was seen by some interviewees as linked to making clear choices on what agencies to work with. According one head, interagency work was mainly successful if you worked specifically with those who wanted to work with you, and quickly cut off relationships with those who didn't. This was



view was shared by one of the other heads: *Occasionally, you'll get someone who really doesn't want to be here, cos [sic] while in terms of helping children it's great, as far as your career in the health service goes it's not exactly the best thing since sliced bread.* This problem can be exacerbated if meetings are held where people are just invited without having any knowledge or interest in the area: *I have sometimes been asked just to fill a seat* (head, primary school).

In making multiagency work effective, prior experience of school-to-school collaboration was seen as a major help. One of the secondary schools, for example, worked with other schools through its leading edge partnerships, as well as being closely involved in collaboration through the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. This was seen as providing a good basis for interagency work, though the head commented that it was easier to work with other schools as the benefits were seen to be equal, as was the status of the organisations involved. A history of extensive collaboration with other schools in the area was seen as a useful opportunity to develop these skills in the primary schools involved.

The need for flexibility and regular contact in order to help improve trust and relationships came up in several discussions as key to successful collaboration *You need sensitive approaches, in which sharing occurs firstly in small groups where people have learnt to trust one another* (head of department, secondary school).

Unsurprisingly, additional funding and staff release were generally seen to be desirable in all schools studied.

### **10.3.3 What Does Success Look Like?**

An issue in extended schools is how to judge the success of multiagency collaboration, as multiagency work cannot very easily be judged by the traditional school outcome measures in terms of academic achievement.

The lack of hard targets for much interagency work was seen as problematic by some interviewees, though some solutions, such as surveys of staff on the effectiveness of the work were proposed, and other interviewees, such as the head of one secondary school, argued that in the end interagency work should also lead to higher standards of achievement. The head of a primary school sees *seeing real change* as the measure of success. *Targets mean nothing to me.* Teachers and middle managers interviewed in the school feel that milestones monitored in meetings are the key measure. *Being asked for advice* was mentioned by one interviewee (middle manager, secondary school). In the largest secondary school in the sample efforts were evaluated regularly, and the success of interventions is discussed. Less exclusions were seen as one measure of success, as were changes in pupil attitudes. Having extensive relationships was seen as an indicator of success in itself by one interviewee: *People still want to keep working with you and they are still there at the end of the year* (secondary head). The quality of relations established was also seen as important.

While the above views point to a focus on either school-level outcomes or relationships, in some schools the focus was very much more on the individual pupil. In

some schools the focus was very much on the personal and social development of pupils. Success is seen as: *Young people's confidence, their ability to manage themselves and their ability to see themselves as valued and valuable* (head, primary school). Similar views were expressed in one of the secondary schools: *If it makes a difference to one pupil it's worthwhile* (head of department).

### 10.3.4 Leadership

It has recently been argued that collaboration between schools is correlated to more distributed forms of leadership, both enabling these and being enabled by them due to the opportunities for leadership available in these collaborations (West & Muijs, 2006). Therefore, the question can be asked as to whether the same is true for schools collaborating with other agencies.

Leadership styles differed significantly between Heads in the schools studied here, and distributed leadership was not present in all the schools studied. The head of a large secondary school, for example, described his leadership as hands-on, and claimed he could be both autocratic and distributed depending on circumstances and on whether he trusted the individual involved. Overall, though the head indicated that distributed leadership was not the norm in this school *power without responsibility won't work* The head felt that only a minority of staff wanted to take part in leadership, and that heads of department didn't necessarily know how to share leadership, a view confirmed by one head of department who claimed: *I don't know how to delegate or share leadership enough*. An extended leadership team was employed in this school consisting of three deputies and three assistant heads. There is consultation with staff and pupils, though there does not appear to be a great deal of involvement of non-school staff. High standards and high expectations were seen as characteristic of the school by several interviewees.

Similarly, distributed leadership was not common in the smallest of the secondary schools involved, where leadership is largely done by the SMT and the heads of year. The head believed that staff didn't generally want to participate in leadership. *They were offered the opportunity, but most bypassed this* According to him, there were *not enough leaders around*. This view was shared by a member of the SMT, who likewise mentioned the quality of staff as a problem in distributing leadership. Therefore, instead of distributing leadership, an extended SMT was created with 15 members. This situation was improving, however, thanks to the *improved quality of intake from PGCE*, which has meant teachers taking on responsibility at a younger age. The head of this school described his leadership as maverick and unconventional. Several other heads complained of the difficulty of distributing leadership:

*I kind of assumed that when we discussed something, and a decision was taken, they would go out and implement it, but in practice, for some people, that was wrong* (head, primary school).

This was not necessarily seen as a problem, however. According to the head some staff want to get involved in leadership, but others *come to work, and just do the*

*job and complete their hours. They do a good job, so we need people like that as well.*

In other schools leadership is much more distributed. In another secondary school, which was characterised by a large leadership team, the headteacher was described by staff as ‘visionary’, while the deputy head exercises the day-to-day management of the school. In this school distributed leadership was encouraged, at least among middle management. As one middle manager commented: *We are fully involved*. Staff were encouraged to take the lead on small projects, and were often singled out for this, in preparation for taking on larger leadership roles. This distribution of leadership was deliberately increased over time. The head had initially lead through strong central control, but had progressively distributed leadership as he felt capacity in the school increase.

A mixed model is represented by an urban secondary school, described by one middle manager as *very much a top-down bottom-up school*, that mixed strong central vision with opportunities for all staff to get involved. A number of teams existed through which the leadership of the school was formalised, including an operational team, a curriculum team, a head of departments team, a heads of year team, and a research and development team alongside the senior management team. These structures were seen as enabling the distribution of leadership within the school. Staff received training and inset to develop their leadership capacities, though not all were involved. As one respondent said: *There is no point to watering the stones, we need to play to the strengths of individuals* (senior manager). The school also had a strong student council. A mixed approach was also seen to be present in one of the primary schools, where the head claimed to use a wide range of leadership styles, and practices consultation widely, while also using wide-ranging executive powers, a view confirmed by other interviewees. A shared view on leadership in the school was not present in all schools studied. In one example, leadership was described as distributive by some interviewees, though others claimed decisions were taken by the SMT alone.

Schools also differ in how interagency was managed. The Senior Management Team was strongly involved in three of the schools. Management of interagency work was largely done by deputy heads in one, while the SMT as a whole was also seen as crucial in the largest secondary school, with elements such as expertise and providing a line of support for other staff being key aspects of their role in supporting multiagency work. Their support was seen as vital if the difficulties of interagency working are to be overcome. The senior leadership team had a less direct role in some of the other schools, in many cases seen as setting out the strategic direction, but not necessarily being that involved with the day-to-day work. The speech therapist working with this school felt that strong leadership and a strong commitment from leadership to interagency working were vital, and distinguished this school from other schools she worked with. *I’ve worked with schools where leadership was weaker, and that is harder going. Also the same is true in schools where leadership is strong, but there is not really a commitment to interagency work.*

Working with other agencies within an extended school context was seen as requiring some specific additional skills, such as the ability to negotiate, collaborate,

and engage with different ways of working. An open-mindedness and ability to take on board different perspectives therefore seemed key, along with the interpersonal skills necessary for this.

*Leaders need to be less arrogant, more open to the ideas and ways of others* (head, primary school).

*You've got to realise that agencies work in different ways. I had a tendency to think in the beginning: I could sort you out, make you work more efficiently, but over time I've come to realise, yes, that's fine too* (head, secondary school).

Patience was seen as a second key of the interviewed heads, again pointing to some tension in the work between agencies. Emotional intelligence, awareness of each others' strengths, and weaknesses, and flexibility were mentioned additionally by some interviewees, while one head of this school stressed tact, humility and diplomacy. The head of one of the primary schools felt that a key problem in interagency work was that of leadership style. She claimed that her style was not to everybody's liking, and that in particular the fact that she based her leadership on values while others' based theirs on targets was an issue. *I think those styles get in the way.* Interagency work and collaboration need to be part of the vision of the leadership team, according to the one Head. Stressing the moral purpose of schools, she claimed that education needs to be geared to *the common good, rather than just what's good for our school.*

Time management was seen as another management challenge in interagency working. *You end up spending more and more time, when you do this, and the question is how to cope with that* (head, secondary school). Leaders also need to make sure that multiagency work is seen as an important part of the school's activities. *It's getting everybody to see its right, really, that could be a problem* (middle manager).

In all schools SMT members and most middle managers have taken part in some form of leadership development, such as NPQH or Leading from the Middle, as well as other courses developed by local Leadership centres. Some agency staff had also had some leadership development, for example through Health Service programmes. This was not universal, however. None had received leadership development specifically tailored for leadership in multiagency contexts.

Most respondents, while feeling that multiagency work requires a specific skill set, did not feel that more formal leadership training was the answer to upskilling them in this area. The exception to this widely held view was one primary Head, who felt that some specialist courses mixed with a portfolio approach and hands-on mentoring would be helpful. Many respondents felt that participation in the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPGH) had been helpful in preparing them for leading in multiagency contexts, in that some of the learning she experienced there could be transferred to interagency work. One secondary head felt that NPQH had helped him to be less insular and therefore better prepared for multiagency work. Most respondents, however, did not feel that existing training prepared them well for multiagency work. In one school, the introduction of a required management certificate was seen by the head as actually damaging

leadership in the school, by focussing mainly on management and *telling people they were doing everything wrong*.

Hands-on mentoring and coaching arrangements were seen as most likely to be useful, and this was reflected in views on leadership development respondents had already participated in. NPQH for example, was rated differentially by respondents, some commenting that it was insufficiently practical with regard to skills such as law and finance needed in school management. Use of role models and shadowing was frequently mentioned.

The head of one urban secondary school felt strongly that leadership development needs a stronger focus on philosophy, values, and moral purpose, as well as needing to look at systems that can foster collaboration better. He sees case studies as potentially most useful to this approach. Some theoretical base is seen as important by many interviewees, as is joint training of staff from the school and different agencies.

## 10.4 Conclusion

Multiagency work has recently been promoted as key to helping schools address the multiple needs of their pupils, especially in disadvantaged contexts, and there is some evidence from this study that this approach may be fruitful. As was found by Cummings et al. (2009), there is evidence that individual pupils can be helped by multiagency work, but also that some impact on the school as an organisation may occur. A broader perspective, widened expertise, and mutual learning were all mentioned in this regard.

However, it is also clear that multiagency work is complex and challenging, and in many cases has stretched the management capability of schools. A culture clash between agencies and schools is very much in evidence, with the performance-based culture schools in England are compelled to work within not sitting comfortably with what is perceived as both a more bureaucratic and a longer-term approach taken by agency staff. A clear conflict is in evidence between the focus on academic achievement of schools and the focus on affective and social outcomes of agency staff, which evidences itself in complaints about lower standards from some school staff. Clear shared aims and strong and personal communication are essential if the relationship is to be effective, but more attention to what would be successful outcomes is also necessary. The confusion regarding what a successful outcome of multiagency work might be that was evident among interviewees may lead to schools not seeing the value of the work, and falling back on the default position of attention to academic achievement at the expense of other outcomes, thus exacerbating the cultural differences found here. A broader range of outcomes need to be measured officially for this problem to be fully overcome. What is also required is sensitive leadership at the school level, that is prepared to listen and learn, and values different perspectives brought to the table by different actors. Shadowing successful practice and mentoring arrangements are seen as most likely to help develop the additional skills needed to be successful in multiagency work.

An interesting finding from this study concerns the differences between schools in attitudes towards multiagency work. While all were selected on the basis of their strong engagement in multiagency work, it was clear that they differed substantially with regard to approaches, leadership, and the extent to which they saw multiagency work as a boon or a burden to the school. These differences were not related to school phase or size, or indeed to the type of pupils served, but seemed to be linked to two key leadership factors: focus and distribution.

Focus refers to the perceived purposes of multiagency work. As mentioned above these differed strongly, and varied from very instrumental goals focussed on material benefits to the school, to goals based around moral purpose with regard to helping the whole child. Distribution refers to the extent to which leadership in the school was distributed or largely the preserve of the Senior Management Team. It would appear from this, admittedly limited, sample that where both strong moral purpose around multiagency work and distributed leadership occurred, perceptions of multiagency work were more positive. The former is not surprising, in that, in view of the heavy demands of managing multiagency schools, the additional motivation provided by moral purpose around the activity would be essential to putting in place the additional effort involved for example in putting in place strong communication around the value of multiagency work, understanding different ways of working and dealing with the bureaucratic requirements involved. The second factor, distributed leadership, may be important for similar reasons. It is probably not possible for senior managers to take on the many additional tasks that may result from multiagency work without distributing leadership. Getting agency and school staff to take on leadership in their own collaborations may lead to greater understanding across the school, and practically help individual pupils. Furthermore, the finding that staff most closely involved with multiagency work are most enthused by it suggests that by involving them in leadership it is more likely that their enthusiasm is translated to other school staff, and indeed to the Senior Management Team.

Finally, it is clear that while multiagency work can be beneficial in serving at-risk pupils, it is by no means a panacea (or any more so than other initiatives), and that to be successful it does require a lot of work to acculturate both agency staff and schools. If extended schools are to become an effective part, of, or even the mainstay of, our education system, policy makers and practitioners will have to reform systems and accountability mechanisms to ensure greater congruence in values and goals. Multiple and conflicting targets couples with limited accountability mechanisms certainly do not make this easier.