

FINDING THE  
PIECES OF THE  
CULTURAL  
JIGSAW: A STUDY  
OF SIXTH FORM  
CULTURE WITHIN  
LAWRENCE  
SHERIFF SCHOOL

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# **FINDING THE PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: A STUDY OF SIXTH FORM CULTURE WITHIN LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL**

**Peter Kent**

## **ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to explore school culture through an examination of Sixth Form culture within a West Midlands secondary school. Problems in differentiating between the terms 'culture' and 'climate' are acknowledged, and the methodologies associated with each term are explored. Through this process the need to make use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in cultural analysis is identified. Exploration of earlier research also highlights the dangers of focusing upon the perceptions of teachers and disregarding the views of students. The study addresses these issues by making use of surveys, interviews, observation and documentary analysis to examine student perceptions of Sixth Form culture.

Examination of earlier research leads to the identification of the typology developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) as the model of cultural analysis that can be most easily operationalised within the school context. Chapter four of the study demonstrates that this model can be readily used to analyse the 'internal culture' of an institution. However, the chapter also makes it clear that even this model addresses only one aspect of school culture. For this reason, chapter five proposes a new model of cultural analysis, one that explores the remaining jigsaw pieces of school culture: subcultures, leadership and culture, culture and society and cultural change. The study argues that only when these five pieces are fitted together can school culture be fully understood.

The study concludes by highlighting the need for further research making use of this new model of cultural analysis. It also argues that current national educational policy is based upon assumptions about school culture that are not supported by the findings of this research.

## CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 THE FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH	1
1.2 ISSUES TO BE EXPLORED THROUGH THIS RESEARCH	2
1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE	4
1.4 CULTURE OR CLIMATE: THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION	6
1.5 THE PROBLEM OF MEASURING CULTURE	7
1.6 WHY SIXTH FORM CULTURE?	8
1.7 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RESEARCH	9
1.8 ENTERING THE 'BLACK HOLE' OF CULTURE	10
 CHAPTER TWO	 11
INTRODUCTION	11
2.1 THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION	12
2.1.1 DEFINING CULTURE	12
2.1.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLIMATE AND CULTURE	14
2.1.3 STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING CULTURE	17
2.1.4 WHOSE VIEW OF CULTURE?	21
2.2 THE FIRST PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW:	
INTERNAL CULTURE	23
2.2.1 ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	23
2.3 THE SECOND PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW:	
THE ROLE OF SUBCULTURES	26
2.3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF SUB CULTURES	26
2.4 THE THIRD PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW:	
LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE	31
2.4.1 THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE	31
2.5 THE FOURTH PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW:	
EXTERNAL CULTURE	33
2.5.1 CULTURE AND SOCIETY	33



	<u>PAGE</u>
2.6 THE FIFTH PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW:	
CULTURAL CHANGE	36
2.6.1 THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN MEASURING QUALITY AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	36
2.6.2 CAN CULTURE BE MANAGED AND CHANGED?	41
2.7 CONCLUSION	45
 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	 48
3.1 INTRODUCTION	48
3.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM	48
3.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	49
3.4 CASE STUDY	54
3.5 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CASE STUDIES	56
3.6 STUDENTS: A NEGLECTED CONSTITUENCY IN CASE STUDIES THAT EXPLORE CULTURE	58
3.7 TYPES OF CASE STUDY	59
3.8 THE FIRST STAGE OF CASE STUDY: DO SURVEYS HAVE A ROLE IN CULTURE RESEARCH?	61
3.9 USING SURVEYS MORE EFFECTIVELY IN CULTURE RESEARCH	63
3.10 OPERATIONAL ISSUES UNDERLYING THE SURVEY USED BY THIS RESEARCH STUDY	65
3.11 SURVEY DESIGN AND THE ISSUE OF SAMPLING	68
3.12 NON-PARAMETRIC ANALYSIS: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST	72
3.13 THE SECOND STAGE OF CASE STUDY: INTERVIEWS	74
3.14 THE THIRD TOOL OF CASE STUDY: OBSERVATION	80
3.15 THE FOURTH TOOL OF CASE STUDY: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	82
3.16 THE FIFTH TOOL OF CASE STUDY: ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHS	85
3.17 ETHICAL ISSUES	86

	<u>PAGE</u>
3.18 THE ETHICS OF OBSERVATION	90
3.19 CONCLUSION	92
 CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA PART ONE	 94
4.1 AN ANALYTICAL MODEL THAT BUILD'S UPON DEAL AND KENNEDY'S RESEARCH	94
4.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ANALYSIS	100
4.3 THE FIRST PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: APPLYING DEAL'S MODEL TO INTERNAL CULTURE	103
4.3.1 SHARED BELIEFS AND VALUES	103
4.3.2 APPLYING THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST TO SURVEY DATA	114
4.3.3 INTERPRETING THE KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST	116
4.3.4 HEROES AND HEROINES	120
4.3.5 RITUAL AND CEREMONY	125
4.3.6 STORIES AND ANECDOTES	129
4.3.7 THE CULTURAL NETWORK	131
4.3.8 INTERNAL CULTURE: CONCLUSION	134
 CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA PART TWO- FINDING THE MISSING PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW	 137
5.1 INTRODUCTION	137
5.2 STAGE TWO OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF SUBCULTURES	138
5.3 STAGE THREE OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE	151
5.4 STAGE FOUR OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE IMPACT OF SOCIETY UPON CULTURE	155
5.5 STAGE FIVE OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL CHANGE	162
5.6 CONCLUSION	175

	<u>PAGE</u>
6. CONCLUSION	180
6.1 INTRODUCTION	169
6.2 THE INTERNAL CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL	181
6.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUBCULTURES	185
6.4 THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE	190
6.5 CULTURE AND SOCIETY	193
6.6 EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL CHANGE?	196
6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	202
6.8 CONCLUSION	203
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 209

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>TABLE 3.1:</u> INTERNAL CULTURE AND SURVEY QUESTIONS	66
<u>TABLE 3.2:</u> LIKERT SCALE SUMMARY	66
<u>TABLE 3.3:</u> INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THE PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW	75
<u>TABLE 3.4:</u> THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEAL AND KENNEDY'S MODEL AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	76
<u>TABLE 3.5:</u> THE USE MADE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH DR POGSON IN COMPLETING THE CULTURAL JIGSAW	78
<u>FIGURE 4.1:</u> THE PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW	99
<u>FIGURE 4.2:</u> THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'	115
<u>FIGURE 5.1:</u> A COMPARISON OF YEAR 13 AND 12 ANALYSIS OF THE FORCES THAT LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF SUBCULTURES	146
<u>FIGURE 5.2:</u> THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'	157/ 168
<u>FIGURE 5.3:</u> CHANGING CULTURAL MESSAGES BETWEEN THE 1997 AND 2001 VERSION OF THE PROSPECTUS	166

## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX C: TWO VERSIONS OF THE SCHOOL'S PROSPECTUS

APPENDIX D: SPSS CALCULATION OF KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST, WITH  
QUESTION 15 TAKEN AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

APPENDIX E: SURVEY RESPONSES BY YEAR GROUP

N.B: Full transcripts of interview responses are available on request

## INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA

	<u>PAGE</u>
<u>1997 PROSPECTUS</u>	
1.1	3
1.2	3
1.3	3
1.4	4
1.5	4
 <u>2001 PROSPECTUS</u>	
2.0	1
2.1	2
2.2	4
2.3	4
2.4	5
2.5	8
2.6	8
2.7	9
2.8	9
2.9	5
2.10	10

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH

This study aims to focus upon the complex area of school culture through a study of the changing manifestation of Sixth Form culture in a West Midlands secondary school. The study will explore this issue through a detailed study of the way in which Sixth Form culture has developed over a period of four years. It will identify the main factors that contribute to the shaping of school culture. In so doing a model of cultural analysis will be developed that can be readily operationalised within an educational environment. It will be argued that existing models of analysis either resist application to educational settings, or fail fully to explore the range of forces that combine to shape culture. A five stage model of cultural analysis that brings together each of the pieces of the 'cultural jigsaw' will be developed to provide a more comprehensive analysis of this complex topic.

The research study will employ a case study to explore a variety of issues related to culture, namely:

- Attitudes to academic study
- Relationships with and perceptions of other students
- Perceived values of the school
- Aspirations for the future

Chapter two will demonstrate that in addressing these issues the study shows a distinctive focus upon the views and perceptions of students, rather than other cultural stakeholders such as teachers who have formed the focus for earlier studies (such as that conducted by Hannay and Ross (1999) which used a self administered survey to explore the culture that existed within a range of middle managers). In chapters four and five, the survey responses of students in Years 12 and 13 will be analysed in order to assess the extent to which culture is changing and developing within the school. However, mindful of Prosser's comment that 'methodologies applied to the study of school culture are disappointingly impoverished' (1999, p6) the quantitative data produced by survey research will be balanced by a range of qualitative data. Firstly, some of the issues discussed in the survey will be explored through interviews with Sixth Form students, allowing them to discuss a range of issues in much greater depth. Their comments on school culture will be followed by an observation of students in the Sixth Form

Centre. Historical context will be provided by an interview with the school's retired headteacher, in order to explore his view of the prevailing Sixth Form culture during his time at the school. The study will then conduct an analysis of a range of photographic evidence drawn from the school's prospectus, discussing the developing view of school culture which emerges from this data. Finally, an analysis of the school's prospectus will be completed, considering the messages that emerge about Sixth Form culture. These insights will then be drawn together in the concluding chapter of the study to demonstrate the ways in which the study has developed a new model of cultural analysis that addresses the full range of influences that seek to shape culture within a school environment.

## 1.2 ISSUES TO BE EXPLORED THROUGH THIS RESEARCH

This study seeks to develop a methodology which can be employed to analyse culture in its manifestation in the 'real life' situation of a West Midlands Sixth Form. In order to do this the research will examine five jigsaw pieces which when placed together provide an overall picture of Sixth Form culture. Firstly the study will explore what can be termed the 'internal culture' of the school Sixth Form, that is the values and ideals that make up the prevailing culture within the school. A particular feature of this analysis will be an exploration of the way in which culture is perceived by students within the school. Previous studies have tended to focus upon the views of teachers, producing a cultural perspective that reflects the attitudes and opinions of teachers. However, Bate (1994) points out that it is naïve to think that there is one culture within an organisation. The diversity of the human beings who make up the organisation leads to a variety of different cultures being established in any one school:

Changing cultures is all about changing meanings, but ... such meanings cannot simply be imposed; people will always end up producing their own meanings (Bate 1994, p223).

Hence this study challenges the assumption that the teacher perception of culture is the one that is necessarily correct. By focusing this research upon surveys and interviews with Year 12 and Year 13 students the study seeks to give particular prominence to the views of students, since in the past their perceptions of school culture have often been neglected. Chapter four will explore internal culture using the typology developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988), showing that whilst this model adequately analyses internal culture, it fails to explore the wider range of issues that shape 'overall' culture.



The second part of the jigsaw is the significance of subcultures. It is misleading to suggest that any one institution merely has one culture. Instead culture can be seen as being made up of 'a mosaic of organisational realities' (Morgan, 1997, p137). This study seeks to explore the mosaic of subcultures, examining the forces that lead to the formation of subcultures and the relationship that develops between the central, prevailing culture and those which diverge from it. As part of this process, chapter five considers whether subcultures exist in every organisation or whether a particular set of forces come together to lead to their formation. The study will also consider the work of the Chicago school of sociologists, and their analysis of the different motivations that may lead to the emergence of a subgroup. Chapter five will also consider whether membership of a subculture is a statement of rebellion, or a positive affirmation of a distinct set of beliefs and values.

The third element of the cultural jigsaw is the relationship between leadership and culture. The study seeks to explore the accuracy of the widely held assumption that leaders are able to shape and mould culture within their organisations. Hence chapter five explores the accuracy of Evans' (2001) comment that:

True leaders will never allow the excuse that they are simply managing someone else's agenda to deflect them from achieving their vision. I am talking about a shift in mindset at every level that requires cultural change on a huge scale (Evans, 2001, p47)

The research carried out for this study explores whether leaders are able to produce the 'cultural change on a huge scale' of which Evans (2001) thinks them capable. In the process chapter five seeks to establish whether the process of forming and influencing culture is more complex than she assumes.

The study also explores the influence of 'external culture', analysing the ways in which society outside the school influences the development and formation of culture within the school. This point is illustrated by Bernstein (1974) who suggests that the way in which pupils respond to the culture of the school is likely to depend upon the experiences offered to them by the community that they live in:

One child, through his socialization, is already sensitive to the symbolic orders of the school, whereas the second child is much less sensitive to the universalistic orders of the school. (Bernstein, 1974, p64).

Hence chapter five seeks to investigate the relationship between internal and external culture, discussing the ways in which cultural behaviours demonstrated within the school Sixth Form are in fact a manifestation of the values formed by the society that exists outside the school.

The final part of the cultural jigsaw is a consideration of the impact of cultural change. Chapter five seeks to assess whether there is evidence of cultural change within the school Sixth Form and, if so, what influences have led to this change. The importance of studying these processes is recognised by Fullan (1999) when he coins the word 'reculturing' in order to describe 'the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms' (cited in Stoll, 1999, p46). Chapter five will explore whether the prescriptions for 'reculturing' have been based upon hypothesis and assertion, rather than evidence, discussing whether reculturing can actually take place within an organisation. The chapter also seeks to establish whether it is possible to change culture as part of a planned programme, analysing which pieces of the cultural jigsaw need to be in place before any such changes can take place.

### 1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE

The significance of the cultural jigsaw described in the previous section appears to have been neglected in the policy debate that has taken place over the past decade. Political reforms within education over the past ten years have often been based upon the idea that schools need a set of standard tools and solutions which they can make use of to raise standards, regardless of their environment or the students they are working with. David Blunkett, the then Secretary of State for Education, commented that:

Over the next year our proposals will become widely accepted at every level because they will prove to be fair, practical and beneficial in raising standards (DFEE, 2000, p13)

This confidence that one set of proposals will fit all situations appears to ignore the significance of school culture. Commenting on this 'one size fits all' approach, Stoll (1998) suggests that national policymakers base their initiatives on a set of :

empirical-rational change strategies. These are based on the fundamental assumption that schools are rational places and that people within them will adapt proposed changes if it has been shown that it will benefit them (Stoll, 1998, p 4)

She goes on to suggest that a key consideration when discussing change is, 'the complex nature of the school as a social system' (1998, p5). A supporting comment upon cultural change is provided by House (1974):

Different innovations will be more or less useful under widely different specific circumstances of their application. There is no Golden Fleece (cited in Stoll, 1998, p5).

This conclusion is further supported by Louis and Miles (1992) in their work on 'Improving the urban high school' where they found that:

Internal conditions of the school ...exerted a powerful effect- both positive and negative- upon reform (Louis and Miles, 1992, p171)

Hence if an attempt to raise standards within schools is to be effective it is essential to understand the culture within those schools. Furthermore, if a leader aspires to go beyond 'administration', seeking to provide vision and direction to an organisation it is unlikely that he or she will be successful unless they understand the cultural barriers to the direction in which they are seeking to lead the organisation. In a study of leaders who had completed more than one headship, Reeves, Moos and Forrest (1998) reported that:

contextual factors meant that transfer of learning from one situation to another was not necessarily straightforward or helpful ... context was highly significant and the same person, they argued, placed in different contexts acts differently because of different opportunities and constraints (Reeves, Moos and Forrest, 1998, p46)

Not all writers on the theme of culture share this assessment of its importance.

Writing in 1995, Hargreaves argued that:

No school or teacher culture can be shown to have a direct impact on student learning and achievement and claims to that end are vacuous (Hargreaves, 1995, p23)

Although Hargreaves later revised this view, his stark statement of 1995 can be contrasted with Dalin's insistence that 'standard solutions are doomed to fail' (1993, p5) if they take no notice of the culture that exists within a school. Over recent years Dalin's perspective has come to be more widely accepted. Hence when Reynolds worked in 1996 with two 'ineffective' schools he concluded that the culture within each of the schools was actively working against school improvement. Barriers that he noted within one school included:

Grossly dysfunctional relationships. The presence of numerous personality clashes, personal agendas and fractured interpersonal relationships within the staff group, which operated to make rational decision making a very difficult process (Reynolds, 1996, p154)

In the light of these observations school culture begins to emerge as a key issue facing any school manager. A clear understanding of culture would appear to be essential if a leader is to accurately understand his or her own school. Similarly attempts to manage change or even to effectively manage the school on a day-by-day basis appear to demand a detailed understanding of the cultural context within which the school is placed. The apt image of schools being like an iceberg is offered by Stoll (1998), with 'the organisation, structures, roles and responsibilities' appearing on the surface, whilst beneath the surface can be found 'the real essence of school culture – people's beliefs, values and the norms that will influence how they react' (Stoll, 1998, p5). This research aims to delve into the hidden layers of the 'cultural iceberg' by exploring the changing culture of one particular school.

#### 1.4 CULTURE OR CLIMATE: THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

Before piecing together the cultural jigsaw, it is first necessary to establish an accurate understanding of what is and what is not culture. Within his authoritative survey of school culture research over the past forty years, Prosser (1999) observes that 'culture is a useful if intricate and elusive notion' (1999, p5). He goes on to point out the problems of definition that surround the 'loose set of assumptions that constitute a collectively agreed phenomenon I have termed 'school culture'' (1999, p6). He suggests that the terms 'culture' and 'climate' broadly refer to the same phenomenon, and that the differing terms indicate the methodological stance of the researcher:

climate is the preferred term of quantitative researchers whereas qualitative workers prefer to use 'culture' 'ethos' 'atmosphere' or 'tone' (Prosser, 1999, p6)

Whilst the importance of school culture has generally been accepted, Prosser argues that there has often been confusion when seeking to discuss and define the term:

it is not surprising that there is no agreement on the definition or meanings of the terms school culture, climate, ethos, character and tone, used to evoke what is too often assumed to be a common phenomenon that needs little explanation (Prosser, 1999, p5)

This in turn has led to extremely vague definitions of the concept by organisations such as The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED):

To rest on the assumption that climate (or culture) is something 'felt' as many did, is a wilful lack of precision that limits our understanding and neglects its full constituency (Prosser, 1999, p5).

In the light of the problems of definition highlighted by Prosser, this study will begin by carefully exploring the ways in which culture can be defined, before moving on to explore ways in which methodologies derived from both culture and climate research can be employed within the study.

### 1.5 THE PROBLEM OF MEASURING CULTURE

Researchers such as Scheerens (1990) have argued that these problems of definition and measurement can be relatively easily overcome. This confidence has come to be particularly associated with those who approach culture from a quantitative perspective, using questionnaires to establish a series of scales for culture. Climate, he argues, can be: 'operationalized in terms of relatively uncomplicated scales or questionnaire items' (1990, p67). An only slightly more guarded stance is adopted by Finlayson (1973):

The existence of these scales now makes it possible for a considerable amount of quantitative information to be obtained about many aspects of schools (Finlayson, 1973, p24)

However writing fourteen years later and partly commenting upon his own earlier attempts to measure culture using 'uncomplicated scales', Finlayson (1987) suggests that simple attempts to measure or define culture can be compared to hunting a phoenix. Such researchers are:

like blind people fumbling about the elephant they call organisational climate and dutifully reporting the warts, the trunks, the knees and the tail, each of them confidently asserting that they have discovered the true nature of the beast (Finlayson, 1987, p167)

The argument advanced by Finlayson points to the complex nature of school culture, a complexity which can often make precise definition extremely difficult. Hence Prosser (1999) points out that external forces can shape and change culture, observing that 'schools do not exist in a vacuum and national and local cultures are impregnated into and are part of all schools' (Prosser, 1999, p7). A response to this complexity is to recognise the limitations of employing a purely quantitative approach when analysing school culture. For this reason Striven (1985) suggests a 'qualitative' approach needs to be employed, allowing researchers to employ 'the skills of the ethnographer' in exploring the more elusive elements of the atmosphere within a school.

Problems of measurement are not confined to the research methods employed when exploring culture. A common assumption is that culture or climate can be

diagnosed purely through the perceptions of teachers. Cullingford (1991) reports with some exasperation the way in which the views of teachers are seen to be the ones that matter:

Schools belong to teachers rather than children. This is the way they have been designed and this is the way that both parents and governments see them (Cullingford, 1991, p181).

Whilst members of staff clearly play a critical role in establishing and maintaining culture, the importance of other stakeholders, particularly students must not be forgotten. Studies such as *Life in School: The Sociology of Pupil Culture* (Hammersley and Woods, 1984) have demonstrated very clearly the ways in which the culture of a school can be defined by its pupils, as well as the strategies that can be employed to develop a student culture that runs counter to the culture desired by the school. Within this study, Willis (1984) uses school uniform as an interesting example of this phenomenon:

It is no accident that much of the conflict between staff and students at the moment should take place over dress ... it is one of the current forms of a fight between cultures (Willis, 1984, p66)

A similar point can also be made about the range of subcultures that exist within a school. There is not simply one teacher culture and one pupil culture. There is not one school culture but rather 'a multiplicity of voices' and for this reason 'different groups within one school experience various cultures' (Higgins-Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p566). This point is summarised by Abercrombie et al (1994) who suggest that 'organisations may contain various subcultures based on different groups, rather than a single organisational culture' (1994, p297). Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath (1997) describe the way in which the existence of subcultures may lead to variable scores within a questionnaire designed to measure the culture of a particular group:

groups or cultures within a school may respond differently... results may indicate that older pupils want much more from their schools or that they have become more cynical about school (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p563)

## 1.6 WHY SIXTH FORM CULTURE?

In the view of Wheeler (2000) 'much recent work has centred on teacher cultures' whilst students are 'all too often overlooked' (2000, p3). One can easily see how this might happen. Teachers are articulate and offer a ready source of data to researchers. It is easy to assume that teachers have a definitive view of the culture that prevails within any particular part of the school. However, Wheeler goes on

to point out that 'the truth about an organisation will always be an aggregate of individual perspectives' (2000, p3). This study seeks to focus upon the 'individual perspective' provided by students themselves. Rather than using teacher generated data to describe the culture of students, it seemed more sensible to base the research upon the views of the students themselves. Whilst the expectation of headteachers are 'pivotal in building a vision and direction for the school' (1999, p60) Moos, Mahoney and Reeves (1999) note that those expectations are often based upon assumptions and guesswork. By concentrating upon the student perspective, this study seeks to remove some of the guesswork that surrounds views of culture within the school. An interview will be conducted with a former headteacher of the school, but his views will be used to provide triangulation through historical perspective, balancing the perspectives of students and providing evidence of the broader social context within which the school operates.

### 1.7 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RESEARCH

The study presents significant ethical issues that will need to be considered carefully as the research develops. It is clear that there are particular problems facing a researcher who wishes to work within his own institution. Evaluation by Peter Foster (1999) of research commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency and involving serving teachers makes it clear that it is not always easy for a serving teacher to become a researcher in their own institution:

Another source of confusion in some reports is that the research claims are mixed with the author's views about the nature of good practice. This seems to occur most commonly in those projects where the teacher doing the study is also a subject of the research (Foster, 1999, p387)

Arguably these dangers are amplified by the author's position as headteacher of the school whose Sixth Form culture is being researched. For this reason the methodology chapter of this study will contain a detailed discussion of the ethical problems associated with the research and the ways in which they have been addressed. However, it is also worthy of note that the author's position as headteacher did not only offer disadvantages. His role made it much easier to gain access to data and to establish opportunities for collecting data from students. It also offered significantly greater opportunities to negotiate interviews with former members of staff whilst re-assuring them that the research would be conducted in an appropriate manner.

### 1.8 ENTERING THE 'BLACK HOLE' OF CULTURE

This introductory discussion of the challenges facing a research study into school culture highlights some of the problems associated with tackling such a complex area of investigation. In the light of this it is not surprising that Stoll (1999) compared the process of researching school culture to entering a black hole. However, her essay offers hope by suggesting that the 'black hole' can be turned into a 'fertile garden'. In order to do this it is vital to clarify the conceptual and methodological issues raised in this introduction through an exploration of the literature surrounding school culture. The issue of how culture can be defined now needs closer exploration, as does the range of strategies available for the measurement for culture. Linked to this point is a need to explore the literature for a discussion of the nature of organisational culture and the role played by subcultures. Having resolved to draw on methodologies associated with culture and climate research, there is now a need to clarify research aims and methodology through a study of the strategies employed by a range of practitioners engaged in both qualitative and quantitative research. Culture also needs to be placed within a social context, examining the extent to which culture is formed by environment and the ways in which influences such as gender and ethnicity can impact upon culture. The influence of leaders upon school culture needs to be examined, alongside the varying perceptions of the ability of leaders to influence the culture they find themselves within. Since the research is centred upon cultural change there is also a need to explore the extent to which culture can be managed and consciously altered, as well as examining the extent to which perceptions of culture depend upon the role in the organisation of the person carrying out the research. Within this exploration of the literature surrounding the topic, the next chapter will also highlight the distinctive contribution that this research study will make to the study of school culture.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore the literature surrounding research into school culture. The first section will explore the problems associated with defining culture, examining both the problems associated with defining the term 'culture' and the complex distinction between culture and climate. The section will go on to explore how these problems of definition can be overcome in the measuring and assessing of culture, before concluding with a discussion of how cultural definitions are affected by the perspectives of a range of different stake-holders. The section will make clear how this study will overcome these problems of definition and the ways in which the distinctive perspective of students will be used to bring a fresh clarity to the exploration of school culture. Having considered issues surrounding the definition of culture, the next part of the chapter will then explore the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw outlined in the previous chapter.

Section 2.2 will explore the literature relating to the internal culture of organisations, examining a wide range of organisational cultures. Section 2.3 will examine subcultures. Recent discussions of culture have shown an increasing focus upon subcultures and having explored the general literature in this area, the chapter will discuss the way in which this research study offers the potential to examine the impact of Sixth Form subculture in a fresh manner. The next section examines the relationship between leadership and culture. Literature examining the impact of leaders upon their schools will be discussed, emphasising the ways in which this research seeks to explore the relationship between leadership and culture in ways not addressed by earlier studies. The section will emphasise the dangers of highlighting the influence of leaders upon culture whilst ignoring the impact of other stakeholders. The fourth piece of the cultural jigsaw, the relationship between society and school culture, will then be explored. It will be demonstrated how this study will explore this relatively neglected aspect of school culture research. The final piece of the jigsaw will then be addressed through a discussion of the literature surrounding cultural change. The section will discuss the potential role of culture as a measure of both school improvement and overall quality, before discussing the difficulties involved in any attempt to change culture in any one pre-defined manner.

## 2.1 THE PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

### 2.1.1 DEFINING CULTURE

School culture is a notoriously difficult concept to define, a point illustrated by the work of Schein (1997). He describes his experience of discussing culture with school managers and finding that they either ascribed completely different meanings to the term or denied any involvement with it (without being able to say what the 'it' was). This point is echoed by Sparkes (1991) who observes that:

essentially it is a contested concept, that is a concept about which the very definition, and therefore application of, is surrounded by acute controversy (Sparkes, 1991, p4)

The controversy surrounding the definition of culture may well be linked to its abstract nature: 'When we try to understand the cultural world we are dealing with interpretations and interpretations of interpretations' (Rainbow and Sullivan in Greenfield, 1984, p262). These problems of definition have created huge problems for researchers, with an inverse relation between:

coherence and in-depth knowledge. As we get closer and closer to understanding the culture of a social group, the anatomy of an institution, we recognise the inevitable inconsistencies and dissonant themes (Lightfoot, 1983, p19)

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998) observe that these problems have allowed some researchers in the field to avoid precise definitions, choosing instead to weave:

intricate theories from detailed field studies, using colourful vocabulary to label some rather vague concepts (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998).

However, once the complexities of definition have been faced, several researchers in the field have attempted a definition of culture. Perhaps the most crisp and easily remembered is 'the way we do things around here' (Deal and Kennedy, 1988). This statement is amplified by Stoll and Fink (1996) who suggest that:

culture describes how things are and acts as a screen or lens through which the world is viewed. It defines reality for those within a social organisation (Stoll and Fink, 1996, p82)

These definitions are developed by Schein (1997), who focuses upon the way in which personalities interact in order to create an institutional culture:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1997, p12)

The importance of 'group' understandings is explored further by Erickson (1987) who introduces a general definition used by anthropologists. In this definition culture is seen as

a system of ordinary, taken-for-granted meanings and symbols with both explicit and implicit content that is, deliberately and non-deliberately, learned and shared among members of a naturally bounded social group (Erickson, 1987, p.12)

This argument is developed by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998) who argue that culture is rooted in shared understandings: 'Culture is the shared meaning that people create over time, through socialising together and working together' (1998). Whilst supporting this interpretation, Prosser (1999) also points out that such an analysis is likely to lead to a wide range of different cultures that are all 'situationally unique':

Culture is a useful if intricate and elusive notion. In its broadest sense it is a way of constructing reality and different cultures are simply alternative constructions of reality (Prosser, 1999, pxii).

The range of views discussed in this chapter are usefully drawn together by Preskill (1995) in his definition of culture:

The elements of school culture interact with each other to produce a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Preskill, 1995, p191)

A helpful summative definition is also offered by Dimmock (2000), who describes culture as the 'enduring sets of beliefs, values and ideologies underpinning structures, processes and practices' (Dimmock, 2000, p.43).

Hence the challenge facing any researcher is the need to draw together the different pieces that make up the 'whole' of school culture, before operationalising these 'pieces' within a research design. This study takes up Preskill's suggestion that it is necessary to understand the different elements of school culture that form 'a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts' (Preskill, 1995, p191). The introductory chapter has already outlined the five pieces of the 'jigsaw' of school culture which this study uses to analyse the elements that make up the 'whole' of school culture. Chapters four and five analyse each of these separate pieces before examining the way in which they fit together to form the 'overall' culture of the school. Section 2.1.4 of this chapter also examines the way in which this study seeks to use the views of students to explore the 'pattern of shared basic assumptions' that Schein (1997) argues makes up institutional culture. Through this focus upon the responses of students the study is also able to explore the aspects of Sixth Form culture that are, in Prosser's words,

‘situationally unique’, that is aspects of culture that are formed by the unique circumstances within the institution that is being researched. One part of the ‘contested concept’ of school culture has been the distinction between research into culture and research into climate. The next section explores differing views of how culture and climate can be delineated, before going on to briefly outline the ways in which this study will make use of research derived from both concepts.

### 2.1.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLIMATE AND CULTURE

As discussed in the introductory chapter, a particular problem of definition relates to the distinction between ‘culture’ and ‘climate’, as well as other terms such ‘ethos’ and ‘tone’. The interchangeable use of the two terms is a source of frustration to writers such as Prosser (1999):

Clearly ‘climate’ and similarly ‘ethos’ ‘atmosphere’ ‘character’ ‘culture’ and ‘tone’ were meaningful to researchers, but their meanings varied considerably (Prosser, 1999, p5).

Indeed, such is the extent of Prosser’s frustration that he suggests that the use of a particular term may depend not upon differences in meaning, but rather upon educational philosophy or even geographical location:

Generally speaking, ‘climate’ is used by school effectiveness researchers ‘culture’ by school improvement researchers... To add to this confusion terms used are influenced by geographical location- in the USA ‘school climate’ is preferred whilst in Scotland ‘ethos’ is used (Prosser, 1999, p5).

It is certainly easy to sympathise with Prosser’s frustration at the ‘wilful lack of precision’ (1999, p5) shown by writers who discuss climate and culture. Some critics have actually argued that culture is a sub-section of climate:

school culture has emerged as an aspect of school climate that is manipulable and especially important to the performance of students at risk (Shann, 1999, p390).

This point is further illustrated by Anderson (1982) who argues that culture is one of the four elements which make up climate, with the other three being ecology (physical and material aspects); milieu (presence of persons and groups) and social systems (patterns of interacting and operating). However, Heck and Marcoulides (1996) offer a strongly argued case that the reverse is true and that climate merely describes one aspect of the broader ‘shared assumptions’ which make up school culture:

Climate, therefore, is used in a more narrow sense to describe teachers’ perceptions of ‘how things are’ on a day-to-day basis. Climate may change more readily- depending for example, on the actions of administrators – than the entire system of variables comprising the school’s culture (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996, p83)

An example of the way in which definitions of an 'effective' culture can tell us more about the writer's preconceptions than the actual culture within the organisation is provided by Fleming (2000):

When you enter a school and feel a positive ethos and sense a real culture of cooperation and achievement you can be sure that this does not exist by accident. It is likely to be the result of a vision shared by all staff, good selection and training procedures and effective policies (Fleming, 2000, p31)

The assumptions that culture can be 'felt', that leaders can shape culture, that all staff are likely to share a culture and that it is policies which are likely to shape a culture, are all questioned by researchers in the field. It is interesting to compare Fleming's 'effective' culture with Friedberg's (1999) definition of a 'winning' climate:

supportive and stimulating environment, student-centred orientation, positive expectations, feedback, rewards, sense of family, closeness to parents and community, communication, achievement and trust (Friedberg, 1999, p125)

Whilst supposedly discussing two different concepts, each uses terms such as 'positive', 'achievement', 'cooperation' and 'trust'. Both make the assumption that one set of values or beliefs can be seen as more 'effective' than another, a viewpoint that is derived from the work of the school effectiveness movement.

The arguments presented by Prosser (1999) may appear to suggest that culture and climate are essentially the same concept. The evidence presented above certainly suggests that in the minds of many writers in the field the two concepts appear to be almost interchangeable. However, a number of writers have tried to demonstrate that precise differences exist between the two terms. Hence Shann (1999) cites the work of Hoy and Clover (1986) in defining climate as 'a set of measurable priorities of the work environment of teachers and administrators based on their collective perceptions' (1999, p391). This definition offers a clear and precise definition of the term, which Friedberg (1999) seeks to develop:

School climate is a term used to describe people's perceptions of their school. It combines beliefs, values and attitudes of students, teachers, administrators, parents, office personnel, custodians, cafeteria workers, business partners, community members and those who play important roles in the life of the school (Friedberg, 1999, p124)

A focus upon the broad range of indicators that can be included within school climate is also provided by Ellis (1988), who defines the concept as 'an aggregate of indicators, both subjective and objective, that conveys the overall feeling or

impression that one gets about a school' (cited in Friedberg, 1999, p125). The debate is taken a stage further by Owens (2001) who offers a definition of the differences between culture and climate:

Culture refers to the behavioural norms, assumptions, and beliefs of an organization, whereas climate refers to perceptions of persons in the organization that reflect those norms, assumptions and beliefs (Owens, 2001, p.145).

This precise definition of the differences between the two terms does not appear to be shared by other researchers such as Anderson (1982). Deal and Kennedy's famous definition of culture as 'the way we do things around here' (1982) refers to a view of culture that is based entirely upon the 'perceptions of persons in the organisation' which Owens (2001) claims belongs to climate and not culture. For this reason it would seem fair to argue that it is extremely difficult to arrive at a precise distinction between culture and climate that does not merely reflect the effects of educational philosophy and geographical location noted earlier by Prosser (1999). In this respect Prosser (1999) may be making an unreasonable charge when referring to 'wilful lack of precision' shown by researchers who discuss the two concepts. It may well be that rather than a lack of precision, researchers are actually attempting to explore concepts that are so similar that they are incapable of detailed differentiation.

This research is unambiguous in its desire to explore culture. However, in order to accurately examine the phenomenon of Sixth Form culture, it does make some use of research methods more commonly associated with research into climate. Hence surveys form a key part of the research, a methodology commonly associated with research into climate, as demonstrated by studies such as Stern's Organisational Climate Index (1963), Halpin and Croft's Organisation Climate Description Questionnaire (1963) and Scheeren's use of 'uncomplicated scales' to measure climate (1990). However, Dalin's Guide to Institutional Learning (1993) provides one example of the way in which surveys have also been successfully employed in culture research, and this study, in order to examine the responses of a wide range of students to aspects of Sixth Form culture, will also make use of this methodology. As well as using surveys, the research will also make use of interviews and observation, methodologies which are commonly associated with studies into culture such as those conducted by Nias (1989) into subcultures and the role of headteachers, and Hargeaves (1994) into subcultures and teachers. By

combining two approaches that have often been seen as mutually exclusive, the research aims to produce data of greater breadth and richness when compared to earlier studies. Whilst other research has insisted upon either a qualitative or quantitative approach, this investigation will suggest that a combination of the two provides greater clarity and depth. Commenting on the history of studies into culture and climate, Prosser comments that: 'very little research ... attempted to combine strategies' (Prosser, 1999, p6). By making use of methodologies in the manner shown above, this study will show that surveys and interviews can be combined in order to present a fuller picture of the manifestation of culture within a particular Sixth Form environment. Hence the study argues that methodologies commonly associated with climate research can be made use of in order to more fully explore culture and in so doing it adopts the stance of Heck and Marcoulides (1996) that climate is one aspect of the broader 'shared assumptions' which make up school culture. Having established how this study will make use of techniques derived from both culture and climate research, the next section will explore typologies specifically associated with culture. The section will also examine the ways in which this study responds to Nias' (1989) call for the development of new typologies based upon the exploration of 'particular' school cultures.

### 2.1.3 STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING CULTURE

Early research into school culture drew its inspiration from survey instruments such as Halpin and Crofts (1963) 'Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire'. In Britain, Finlayson (1970) developed the SCI (School Climate Index) based upon the OCDQ. At this early stage the assumption was that such 'scales' would gather objective and measurable evidence which could then be generalised to a range of different schools. This methodology, designed to measure climate, has gone on to influence a series of studies into culture. The work of Dalin (1993) provides one of the clearest examples of this influence. He developed GIL (Guide to Institutional Learning), which sought to break down culture into a series of survey items such as

values beliefs goals, instructional practices, institutional climate, norms and expectations, leadership, decision-making strategies, influence and control, degree of institutional change (Dalin, 1993, p67)

Since Dalin's work, researchers have continued to build on OCDQ and SCI to develop survey instruments for culture of increasing complexity. Recent examples include Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sadh (1997), whose research refined the SCS

(School Culture Scale) in order to compare culture in schools participating within the Just Community Program with those outside the scheme. A self administered survey was used by Hannay and Ross (1999) to explore the culture that existed within a range of middle managers. Their research concluded that 'reculturalisation' was only possible if middle managers were more actively involved in school leadership. A variation on these methodologies was employed by Wheeler (2001), who used a survey instrument which aggregated the responses of staff, pupils, parents and other stake holders to provide an overview of culture within the school.

The differing ways in which surveys into culture have been structured will be explored in the research methods chapter of this study. However, central to this current exploration is the fact that surveys have come to be challenged as the most appropriate way to explore culture. The comments of Finlayson (1989) are of particular significance in this respect. He developed the School Climate Index in 1970, suggesting at the time that the objective data generated by a survey could then be generalised to all schools. However, he later came to question his view, arguing that it ignored the complex human dimension that is present in all cultures. Hence in 1989 he suggested that survey instruments such as SCI are based upon a world view within which:

it is assumed that the social world is of an objective nature, that a basis exists on which it is possible to judge whether knowledge is true or false and that general laws can be established about that world which can be communicated and used in the control of the social world (Finlayson, 1989, p166)

The flaws in this methodology are highlighted by Finlayson who argues that 'researchers have become depersonalised participants in the school' (1989, p170). He argues instead that researchers need to develop 'metaphors' which can be used to represent 'a strong symbolic culture which gives more meaning to their experience in schools' (1989, p172). Many researchers into culture have endorsed Finlayson's call for a more qualitative approach which makes use of metaphors rather than seeking for objective data. This approach is exemplified by Striven (1985) who suggests that culture researchers should employ 'the skills of the ethnographer in exploring the elusive nature of a school's atmosphere' (cited in Prosser, 1999, p7). Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sadh (1997) argue that:



school culture is created by a particular combination of people in the school at any given historical point and thus, each culture is unique' (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p566)

For this reason each individual school needs its own set of metaphors to describe its distinctive culture. It may well be that these metaphors emerge over time as a response to the developing culture of the school.

To aid the search for metaphors, more recent qualitative researchers have developed a series of typologies which can be used to describe the culture that prevails within a school. An inventive typology is offered by Stoll and Fink (1999) within which practitioners can assess the culture that exists within their own school. By deciding if the school is effective or ineffective and improving or declining, school culture can be placed in one of five boxes labelled 'struggling', 'sinking', 'moving', 'cruising' or 'strolling'. However, the model is held back by the use of simplistic terms to describe a sophisticated concept. For example, describing an institution's culture as 'sinking' is likely to be too sweeping a term to describe the complex interplay of forces that have shaped culture in a particular direction. As Hargreaves (1999) observes 'participants find this difficult (except in extreme cases) since they judge the school is effective in some ways and not in others' (Hargreaves, 1999, p49). The criticism might be added that it is surely not appropriate to apply such value judgements to something associated with values and beliefs. Culture and climate are features that exist and can be explored, but it is a dangerous assumption to decide that they can be either good or bad and open to improvement. However, a series of other researchers have also offered similarly pithy typologies which can be used to label types of culture and which appear to draw upon the same set of assumptions. A four point typology is put forward by Handy and Aitken (1986), involving the club culture ('an informal club'), the role culture ('the school as a set of job boxes'), the task culture (the school as a matrix of 'variably composed groups') and the person culture (the school focused upon 'the development of its members talents'). Hargreaves (1994) proposes a similar four point typology, describing cultures of individualism, collaboration, contrived collegiality and balkanisation. Once again, Hargreaves (1999) highlights the limitations of such typologies:

they may strike some as rigid (can't [sic] a school be a mix of types?) and static (doesn't [sic] a school vary its mix of types over time or between situations?) (Hargreaves, 1999, p50)

By combining measures of both culture and climate, this research addresses Hargreaves' concern. Through this combination of methodologies, a wider range of data can be collected, indicating the changing nature of schools over time and the different ways in which various members of the school community perceive the culture of the institution.

A focus upon the relationship between goals and social harmony is proposed by Hargreaves (1999) who offers a four point typology of his own. The formal school culture 'puts pressure on students to achieve learning goals' (1999, p50), whilst the welfarist school culture 'has a relaxed, friendly and cosy atmosphere' (1999, p50). The hothouse school culture has a motto 'join in, enjoy yourself and be a success. Expectations of work, personal development and team spirit are high' (1999, p51). Finally, the survivalist school culture 'veers towards the 'school in difficulty' or 'failing school'' (1999, p51). This typology was turned into a diagnostic device by Ainsow et al (1995), who asked teachers to place their school in one of 64 squares, with the four types of culture placed at the four corners of a grid. As a refinement, the process can be used to compare staff perceptions of the school's ideal culture with their perception of its actual culture. This typology was further developed by MacBeath (1998) in order to produce a 54 item questionnaire which could be used for diagnosing a school's climate and organisational culture. Whilst Hargreaves is right to argue that 'this diagnostic device has considerable potential' (Hargreaves, 1999, p54), it is hard to avoid the observation that this typology researches the views of only one set of stakeholders within school culture. The views of teachers are important, but as will be argued later in this chapter, they are surely not the only ones within a school who can influence and diagnose culture.

Having explored the range of quantitative and qualitative strategies available for assessing culture, Nias (1989) provides a useful summary of the way in which these different tools should be deployed when exploring culture. Research should now aim to provide:

a clearer definition of the term; greater attention to the beliefs and values at the heart of all cultures; detailed study of particular school cultures and the creation of appropriate typologies; empirical and conceptual accounts of school cultures which allow for micro-political activity and internally initiated change (Nias, 1989, p143)

This prescription appears to be as relevant today as it was in 1989. Research now needs to move on from arguments about strategies for diagnosing culture, seeking instead to employ a wide range of strategies, using 'the skills of the ethnographer' in order to identify and describe a wide range of different cultures depending upon social and organisational environment. If this does not happen there is a danger that debates over definition will prevent us from understanding the different manifestations of culture in 'real life' situations. By exploring the developing culture in one Sixth Form over five years, this research study responds to Nias' call for the use of a wider range of strategies which can be used to explore the particular manifestations of culture in particular contexts. Whilst this research clearly requires a theoretical base, its aim is to move from abstract discussion to a detailed description and analysis of the ways in which a culture has developed and changed. As Nias implies, the battle for supremacy between climate and culture has arguably led to an excessive emphasis upon the theoretical. This study moves the debate onto new ground by dealing with real-life manifestations of culture, with a particular focus upon the way it has impacted upon the life and experiences of students. In order to do this, the study seeks to develop a distinctive focus upon the viewpoints and perspectives of students. The next section explores the issues raised by centring the research upon the views of students.

#### 2.1.4 WHOSE VIEW OF CULTURE?

A key part of this research centres upon the perceptions of students about the culture within their school. The way in which researchers have concentrated upon the views of teachers is illustrated by Sparkes (1991), who suggests that teachers can be 'makers' or 'breakers' of culture (1991, p.9). As Thrupp (1999) points out, this study is unusual because of the weight that it attaches to the views of students. He argues that recent initiatives have ignored the importance of subcultures, particularly those related to the students' perspective, thus developing:

notions of school culture which emphasise the organisational, management and institutional dimensions of schooling at the expense of the culture of the students and the community ... they fail to consider the impact of students and their cultures, wither individually or collectively, on school organisation and management (Thrupp, 1999, p177-8)

Cullingford (1991) echoes Thrupp's frustration that research into culture is often centred upon the perceptions of staff:

Schools belong to teachers rather than children. This is the way they have been designed and this is the way that both parents and government see them (Cullingford, 1991, p181)

The dangers of neglecting student perceptions of school culture are also explored by Cullingford, who argues that students often see aspects of school that staff are unaware of:

There appears to be a gap between their private experience of school and the school's implied sense of purpose (Cullingford, 1991, p181)

This argument is supported by Eliot-Kemp(1989):

Each member of an organisation... will have a unique perspective of the organisation. The 'truth' about an organisation will always be an aggregate of individual perspectives (cited in Wheeler, 2001, p46)

For this reason this study argues that whilst members of staff clearly play a critical role in establishing and maintaining culture, the importance of other stakeholders, particularly students, must not be forgotten. This point is emphasised by Bate (1994) who argues that research into culture must retain a focus on 'the humanness of organisations' because: 'culture exists not so much 'inside' or 'outside' people as 'between people' (Bate, 1994, p25). This argument is built upon by Wheeler who suggests that research into culture should seek to draw together this range of perspectives:

It is here that we find a way of trying to gauge 'culture' to look for it in the consensus, in the aggregated view of the perceptions of all the members of that organisation, students, parents and staff (Wheeler, 2001, p46).

The argument that student's 'private experience' of school culture is often neglected appears a strong one and a criticism which points towards the distinctiveness of this research. The study responds to Thrupp's (1999) concerns that 'schools belong to teachers rather than children' by focusing its research upon the views of students. Hence both chapters four and five explore the way in which student responses can be analysed to provide a distinctive perspective upon the culture of an institution. In this way the study seeks to explore the 'unique perspectives' provided by students as they receive and respond to the culture of an institution. The argument that culture exists 'between people' (Bate, 1994) is explored through an analysis of the culture that students have formed between themselves. The suggestion that the cultures of organisations are often explored 'at the expense of the culture of the students' (Thrupp, 1999, p177-8) demonstrates the way in which the views of students can be easily generalised, as if they represented one homogenous group within the organisation. This study will respond to Thrupp's (1999) concerns by exploring the variety and range of student responses to the culture of their institution. By placing students at the centre of the

research, the study will respond to his call to “consider the impact of students and their cultures’ (Thrupp, 1999, p177-8).

Having explored a range of issues surrounding the ways in which culture is perceived and defined, the following sections of the chapter will seek to explore the different pieces that form the jigsaw of school culture. Definitions of culture such as ‘the way we do things around here’ (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) often refer to particular cultures that are clearly understood by members of an organisation. Hence the next section will discuss the way in which the internal culture of an organisation develops and maintains itself.

## 2.2 THE FIRST PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: INTERNAL CULTURE

### 2.2.1 ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture is defined by Rossman, Corbett and Firestone (1998) as ‘the way things are: it interprets events, behaviours, words, and acts – gives them meaning’(p5). They suggest that organisational culture ‘prescribes the way people should act; it normatively regulates appropriate and acceptable behaviours in given situations’ (1998, p.5). This definition is echoed by Barth (2002) who also points to the way in which organisations form a culture that is both distinct and uniquely their own. He describes organisational culture as:

a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization. It is the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that wields astonishing power in shaping what people think and how they act (Barth, 2002, p6).

There is a growing body of research which explores the importance of culture to the success of an organisation. Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) point out that by studying culture we are able to define the ‘uniqueness of a particular organisational community... We have finally acknowledged publicly that uniqueness is a virtue, that values are important and that they should be fostered’ (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1989, p173). As with culture research in schools, a series of typologies have been developed to explore organisational culture. A broad view of how the internal culture of an organisation can be analysed is offered by Beare et al (1989). They suggest that the researcher should study three different modes:

- Concepts and language
- Behaviour

- Visual images

The definition of each mode is broad. For example, language can be verbal or written. Behaviour involves rituals and ceremonies and the interaction between people. Images encompass the symbols or physical artefacts and settings. However, given this breadth it is difficult to think of any aspect of an organisation that would fall outside this definition. The modes used are insufficiently differentiated and so cannot be easily applied to actual manifestations of culture.

A more precise model to consider is Deal and Kennedy's (1988), which has been widely used when exploring cultures in schools and industry. They suggest that the following elements combine to form an organisational culture:

- Shared values and beliefs
- Heroes and heroines
- Ritual
- Ceremony
- Stories
- Informal network of cultural players

The model proposes that the researcher should work through each of the elements in order to provide a qualitative description of the culture of the organisation. For example, the values required to be considered a 'hero' as the headteacher of a school in the 1970s (including perhaps 'liberal' teaching strategies or innovative curriculum proposals) might be very different from those required from a 'heroic' headteacher in 2004 (success in league tables and effective implementation of central government initiatives).

The model proposed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) offers a much more precise and clearly differentiated analysis of the elements that make up the internal culture of an organisation. It also combines the study of actual events with the consideration the 'folklore' and 'oral history' that helps to shape the culture of a school. This aspect of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) work is built upon by Heck and Marcoulides (1996) when developing a typology describing three interrelated subsystems of organisational culture. Firstly there is 'an orientation towards the goals of the organisation and how tasks must be organised to meet these goals' (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996, p78). A second 'subsystem of culture' is a 'belief system that embodies the myths, values and ideologies of the organization' (Heck and

Marcoulides, 1996, p 79). Finally, there is the 'individual belief system' within which individuals 'contribute their unique experiences beliefs, goals and personalities' (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996, p79). However, Lightfoot (1983) sounds a necessary note of caution, suggesting that no single model can be used to fully define an organisation's culture:

As we get closer and closer to understanding the culture of a social group, the anatomy of an institution, we recognise the inevitable inconsistencies and dissonant themes ((Lightfoot, 1983, p19)

This point is illustrated by Draper (2001) who argues that the evolving system of performance management is in the process of changing organisational culture within many schools:

Performance management offers the opportunity to reflect upon 'the way things are around here'. This reflection may lead to a realisation of role conflict or discontinuity between the vision of the school and its organisational structures (Draper, 2001, p34)

Hence the model proposed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) offers the method of analysis most suited to exploring organisational culture within the context of a school. Their typology offers a structure of analysis that can readily be applied to the reality of life in school. Hence by exploring ceremonies within the institution, or the anecdotes that circulate within the school, the researcher can make a practical start upon an exploration of the culture of the organisation. Other descriptions of culture, such as Barth's (2002, p6) 'historically transmitted pattern of meaning' cannot be operationalised with the same ease, normally because they have not been applied to the practical circumstances of schools in the way that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model has. Their typology is also helpful since it highlights the significance of the human dimension in the formation of organisational culture, reminding us that beliefs, values and heroes are as important as the objective data generated by research methodologies such as surveys. Chapter four of this study responds to Nias' (1989) call for detailed descriptions of 'particular school cultures' by demonstrating the way in which Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology, the model that offers the clearest operationalisation of culture within an educational context, can be applied to the internal culture of a school Sixth Form. However, chapter five seeks to go beyond Deal and Kennedy's model, in order to demonstrate the need for a system of cultural analysis that explores a wider range of influences than that explored by earlier research. This section has demonstrated the significance of the internal

culture of an organisation. However, some members of the organisation will not wish to endorse the values associated with this internal culture. Hence the next section considers the factors that lead to the development of subcultures and the impact that they have upon the overall jigsaw of school culture.

## 2.3 THE SECOND PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: THE ROLE OF SUBCULTURES

### 2.3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF SUBCULTURES

Culture is often discussed as if it were a distinct entity. However, an increasing body of research emphasises the point that the culture within a school is not a single entity, but rather a collection of different cultures brought together within one organisation. This approach is supported by Stoll and Fink (1995) who describe school culture as 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p87). Researchers such as Morgan (1997) have also questioned whether schools can be seen to have one culture. They point out that a single school can in fact be made up of a variety of different cultures, each relating to specific stake-holders (staff, pupils and governors) within the school community. In this sense culture can be seen as being made up of 'a mosaic of organisational realities' (Morgan, 1997, p137).

The fragmented view of culture is supported by Kottak (2002), who describes subcultures as: 'different symbol-based pattern and traditions associated with particular groups in the same complex society' (Kottak, 2002, p.26). Sarason (1982) goes a stage further by suggesting that the range of subcultures 'is of such a degree as to rule out the possibility that any one individual can know the culture of the school (Sarason, 1982, p185). One example of this problem of cultural definition is offered by Sparkes (1991) who points out the range of subcultures amongst teachers:

rather than there being an homogenous culture in which there is a uniformity of values, beliefs, operations and practices within teaching as an occupational group, there can be many cultures and subcultures (Sparkes, 1991, p4).

This comment is built upon by Bennett (1998) who suggests that understanding subcultures is a natural part of the process of understanding school communities:

cultures of differentiation may be more common in schools than cultures of integration: we may have to identify subcultural forms (Bennett, 1998, p.48)



Chapter five of this study responds to Bennett's suggestion through an identification of the range of 'subcultural forms' within the Sixth Form of a West Midlands school. Hence this research contributes to the process of understanding the range of subcultures that exist within a school community and the ways in which they contribute to the 'overall culture' within a school.

Despite all of the problems outlined above, Johnson (1993) suggests that it is still possible to trace an over-arching organisational culture:

Whilst individual managers may hold quite varying sets of beliefs about many different aspects of that organisational world, there is likely to exist at some level a core set of beliefs and assumptions held relatively commonly by the managers (Johnson, 1993, p61)

Morgan (1997) builds on Johnson's point to suggest that success within an organisation is often dependent upon conformity to this 'core set of beliefs':

Life within a given culture flows smoothly insofar as one's behaviour conforms with unwritten codes. Disrupt these norms and the ordered reality of life inevitably breaks down (Morgan 1997, p139)

However, Nias et al (1989) point out that individuals within an organisation may not be fully aware of the prevailing culture because 'beliefs are so deeply buried that individuals do not even know what they are' (1989, p11). In such cases members of the organisation may only become aware of these underlying values when they transgress them in some way. This view is supported by Harling (1989) who suggests that subcultures are deeply embedded within organisations, observing everywhere:

networks of informal relationships and unofficial norms which arise from the interaction of individuals and groups working within the formal structure (Harling, 1989, p20).

The 'Chicago School' of sociology offered a distinctive view of the forces that lead to the emergence of subcultures. Writing from the perspective of a criminologist, Jones (1965) argues that subcultures are based around a rejection of mainstream social values:

the community life of the old settled area breaks down . With change and mobility to be seen on all sides, people neither know each other, nor care very much about each other. There is very little shared community feeling and no sense of values held in common. People do not know what is expected of them in the way of behaviour (Jones, 1965, p27)

The view that subcultures emerge as part of an explicit rejection of the existing values of society is supported by Cohen (1955):

The crucial condition for the emergence of new cultural forms is the existence, in effective interaction with one another, of a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment (Cohen, 1955 p48)

Once established, members of this new subculture 'gravitate towards one another and jointly establish new norms' (Cohen, 1955 p51). A more contemporary example of this rejection of conventional values, is offered by Simon Firth (1980) who cites 'the case of punk':

The music was taken to articulate the values of the punk subculture and these in turn were read as a form of working class consciousness (Firth, 1980, p167)

Other members of the Chicago School have also pointed towards different explanations of the ways in which subcultures emerge. Howard Becker (1963) has suggested that members of subcultures effectively reverse the mainstream values that they are reacting against. Hence norms of behaviour are produced that are the opposite of that considered acceptable within 'conventional' society:

People who regard in activities regarded as deviant typically have the problem that their view of what they do is not shared by other members of society (Becker, 1963, p56)

This view is supported by Young (1971), who brings a Marxist analysis to the argument that subcultures are based around a 'reversal' of conventional values. Hence he argues that subcultures often reject traditional western economic values, creating instead 'groups that exist beyond the ethos of productivity' (Young, 1971, p15). These groups reject conformity to the bureaucratic rules of the western economic system, choosing instead to adopt 'subterranean values' such as 'short term hedonism and disdain for work' (Young, 1971, p15)

A final explanation of the development of subcultures emerging from the Chicago School is that members of these groups accept mainstream values but not the conventional methods of achieving them. Hence deviant behaviour can have the purpose of achieving mainstream goals. For this reason Becker (1963) comments that the aims of subcultures are 'grounded in the socio-economic relations of occupation, ethnicity and class' (Becker, 1963, p14). This point is built upon by Cohen (1955) who suggests that subcultures may offer their members a more convincing way of achieving the mainstream socio-economic goals that they aspire to. Hence subcultures:

answer more neatly to the problems of this group and appeal to its members more effectively than any of the solutions already institutionalised (Cohen, 1955, p49)

The Chicago School makes a final contribution to our understanding of subcultures by highlighting the fact that membership of a subculture may not be a permanent state of affairs. Hence Jones (1965) argues that subcultures are not necessarily permanent, suggesting that within the field of criminology 'given time and recognition of the problem, we may confidently expect that disorganized new communities will settle down' (1965, p37). Another perspective from the field of criminology is provided by Matza (1969) who suggests that rather than being seen as temporary or permanent, more attention should be paid to the 'transiency' of group membership. Petty female criminals known as 'taxi-dancers' had been highlighted by the Chicago School of criminology as being hugely different from 'conventional girls', thus providing evidence of the formation of distinct subcultures which influenced criminal behaviour. However, Matza (1969) points out that many 'taxi-dancers' go on to marry and to live exactly the same adult lives as these 'conventional girls'. Hence their membership of the sub-group has only been temporary, and Matza concludes his argument by suggesting that whilst subcultures might remain, membership of the subcultures is highly variable owing to this 'transiency'.

The work of Hargreaves (1967) shows how some of the ideas of Chicago School can be applied outside the field of criminology to the context of a school. Hargreaves produced an extended case study of one secondary school which demonstrated extensive evidence of the formation of subcultures within the school context. Within Lumley Secondary Modern School for boys he located two distinct subcultures, 'academic' and 'delinquent':

'academic' indicates that the values are orientated to those of school and the teachers, 'delinquent' indicates that the values are negatively orientated towards school (Hargreaves, 1967, p162).

The conclusions of this study echo the earlier comment of Cohen (1955), by suggesting that 'the critical condition for the emergence of the subculture is the existence of a group of persons with the same problem of adjustment' (Hargreaves, 1967, p175). He has no doubt of the importance of the school as a factor 'in the creation of conditions in which the subculture can form and define itself' (1967 p175). He argues that subcultures continue because schools are unwilling to reform and change:

The subcultures persist year after year because the school system persists unchanged and unchallenged. The same problems produce the same solutions. (Hargreaves, 1967, p180)

Subcultures are likely to be the focus for future research into school culture in the opinion of Prosser:

During the 1990s there has been a move away from research grappling with holistic notions of school culture and a growing interest in subcultures and their dynamic relationship (Prosser, 1999, p11)

However, Hargreaves (1967) offers a frank assessment of the problems involved when attempting to study the ways in which subcultures form and develop:

The variables at work are almost infinite, and assessment of the contribution of any one variable becomes exceedingly difficult (Hargreaves, 1967, p164)

Much of the interest in subcultures to date has resulted in the study of particular groups or issues, such as racism in schools (Gillborn 1995) or discipline (Johnstone and Munn, 1992). Rather than focusing upon the study of single issues or single sub-groups, this research is distinct in exploring the range of subcultures within one overall group. By studying two whole year groups it is possible to establish features of the prevailing culture and to then explore through statistical analysis of survey responses, the ways in which particular sub-groups have diverged from this prevailing culture. These divergences will then be further explored through interviews. Hence by bringing together both a survey and an interview it will be possible to offer a more detailed description both of the prevailing culture within the school and the range of groups who have chosen to diverge from it. In this way the present study will seek to identify the range of subcultures that can exist within one organisation, and the range of influences that have led to the development of these subcultures. The research also seeks to test out the explanations for the emergence of subcultures advanced by groups such as the Chicago School. Through an analysis of interview and survey responses, the study will seek to establish whether processes such as 'rejection' or 'reversal' of mainstream values provide an adequate explanation of the processes at work. Having considered the literature surrounding both the internal culture of an organisation and the factors that lead subcultures to diverge from that internal culture, the chapter now moves on to a consideration of the factors that can shape and mould the culture of an institution. In particular the next section will consider the role of leaders and their perceived ability to exert a profound influence upon the development of culture within their organisations.

## 2.4 THE THIRD PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

### 2.4.1 THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE

The influence of leaders upon culture has been a particular focus for research.

Hargreaves (1995) argues that:

No school or teacher culture can be shown to have a direct impact on student learning and achievement and claims to that end are vacuous (Hargreaves, 1995, p23).

This stark statement can be contrasted with Dalin's insistence that 'standard solutions are doomed to fail' (1993, p5) if they take no notice of the culture that exists within a school. Hence Nias et al (1989) suggest that headteachers are 'cultural leaders' whilst Schein (1985) argues that the primary role of a leader is to 'create and manage culture'. Supporting these interpretations, Deal and Peterson (1990) suggest that the principal's role is in 'the creation, encouragement, and refinement of the symbols and symbolic activity that give meaning to the organization' (Deal and Peterson, 1990, p.13). However, commenting upon Schein's research, Abercrombie et al (1994) point out that:

creating an organisational culture is likely to be a difficult and slow business and, if it contradicts existing group cultures, is unlikely to succeed however long organisational leaders persevere (Abercrombie et al, 1994, p297)

The ease with which leaders can re-shape the culture of their organisation is an issue which leads to sharp differences of opinion. Whilst Schein (1985) argues that cultural change is 'a difficult and slow business', Hall and George (1999) suggest that:

No matter what the leader does (and does not do) the effects are detectable throughout the school ... the school principal plays a significant role in establishing the climate for the school (Hall and George, 1999, p165)

Commenting upon the different ways that leaders can seek to influence culture, Hoyle (1986) remarks that:

Some heads ... will self-consciously seek to construct a great mission for the school. Others will convey their idea of the school less dramatically and construct meaning from the basic material of symbol-making: words, actions, artefacts and settings (Hoyle, 1986, pp155-156)

Going a stage further, Fullan (2003) suggests that leaders have a 'moral imperative' to shape culture:

the moral imperative of the principal involves leading deep cultural change that mobilises the passion and commitment of teachers, parents and others to improve the learning of all students (Fullan, 2003, p41)

However, Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994) argue against the view that culture can be so easily defined by leaders. Their case study of teacher culture within Belgian primary schools suggests that:

vision is created by the principal, but only to some extent ... Teachers are also creators and communicators of a vision. In other words, a vision is not created by leaders, but is developed collectively through action and reflection ... Vision as a part of school culture is socially constructed (Staessens and Vandenberghe, 1994, p193)

Further evidence of the social construction of culture is offered by Nias et al (1989):

staff developed its own taken for granted norms. Because shared meanings and ways of behaving become so taken for granted, existing staff are largely unaware of them. But they were visible to newcomers (Nias et al, 1989, p129)

This 'social construction' may well explain the frustration felt by some writers on management when they discover that leaders are unable to achieve the cultural change that they assume they are capable of. Evans (2001) suggests that failure to achieve cultural change within an organisation may be due to a lack of purpose and vision on the part of leaders:

True leaders will never allow the excuse that they are simply managing someone else's agenda to deflect them from achieving their vision. I am talking about a shift in mindset at every level that requires cultural change on a huge scale (Evans, 2001, p47)

However, Staessens and Vandenberghe's (1994) research seems to argue that the failure of leaders to achieve cultural change is not due to a lack of ambition or determination, but rather a reflection of the complexity and relative slowness of the task. The role of the leader in changing culture is seen as critical by Coleman (1996): 'One common factor in creating a positive school climate in all the studies however is the role of the principal' (Coleman, 1996, p34). However, it appears that on balance the influence takes time to operate and that the leader's influence may be hard to anticipate as a result of the 'socially constructed' culture referred to by Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994). Bush and Anderson (2003) shrewdly observe that leaders are perceived as having a 'responsibility' for 'generating and sustaining culture' that extends 'both within the organization and to external stakeholders. Maintenance of the culture is regarded a central feature of effective leadership' (Bush and Anderson, 2003, p9)

This research study seeks to test the accuracy of the conflicting views about leaders and culture outlined above. Chapter five will use data gathered from

interviews and a document study to explore the accuracy of Hargreaves' (1995) claim that 'no school or teacher culture can be shown to have a direct impact on student learning' (1995, p23). By assessing the influence of leaders upon the culture of a West Midlands Sixth Form the study will also seek to ascertain the accuracy of Fullan's (2003) conflicting claim that 'the moral imperative of the principal involves leading deep cultural change' (Fullan, 2003, p41). Hence the study will test the ability of leaders to play a leading role in 'generating and sustaining culture'. Evans (2001) argues that leaders who do not do not engage in cultural change are neglecting their central role and engaging in 'excuses'. Chapter five will seek to establish whether this is the case, exploring whether leaders are actually able to exert the influence upon culture that writers such as Evans (2001) assume. Hence the research will also explore the influence exerted by other stakeholders, such as teachers and students, and their ability to influence and shape the culture of an institution.

This section has considered the possibility leadership is not the only factor that influences the culture of an institution. Abercrombie et al (1994) argue that 'group cultures' can exert an influence more powerful than that of any leader. Hence the chapter will now move on to examine the influence of these group cultures. Perhaps the most significant group culture of all is the influence of the society outside the school upon the culture within the school.

## 2.5 THE FOURTH PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: EXTERNAL CULTURE

### 2.5.1. CULTURE AND SOCIETY

According to Morgan (1986) 'the nature of a culture is found in its social norms and customs' (1986, p129). The manner in which culture is rooted in society is also highlighted by Wilson (1971) who suggests that:

culture is socially shared and transmitted knowledge of what is, and what ought to be, symbolized in act and artefact (1971, p.5, cited in Rossman, Corbett and Firestone, 1988)

This point is developed by Deal and Peterson (1990) who suggest that culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behaviour over time (1990, p.7). However, Dimmock and Walker (2000) point out that studies of culture have often ignored the influence of the society that exists outside the school. They comment that: 'societal culture as an influence in the

study of educational management has been conspicuous by its absence' (p138). Despite the concerns of Dimmock and Walker (2000), not all researchers have overlooked the influence of social factors upon school culture. Thrupp (1997) makes the point that the social mix of a school plays a critical role in the way in which it functions. The interaction of different pupil cultures will clearly have an influence upon the overall culture of the school. The influence of staff cultures is also discussed by Becker and Greer (1974), who point towards the influence of 'latent' cultures derived from external social factors:

To the degree that group participants share latent social identities (related to their membership in the same 'outside' social groups) they will share these understandings, so that there will be a culture which can be called latent (Becker and Greer, 1974, p56)

However, the community within which a school finds itself, including the pupils' parents, will also flavour the school through their conception of what a school should be like. Stoll (1998) observes that: 'locally a school's community, including the pupils' parents, may have their own conceptions of what a 'real school' is' (1998, p2). She broadens this social context still further by pointing out the influence of a changing society within the nation as a whole:

Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture, whether they be related to learning, the pupil population, organisational management, rapid technological developments or the changing role of women (Stoll, 1998, p2)

The challenges facing schools as they seek to engage with the changing nature of society are discussed by Hargeaves (2003), who suggests that the 'knowledge society' of the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires schools to develop:

learning partnerships with parents, developing and using collective intelligence, and cultivating a profession that values problem-solving, risk-taking, professional trust, coping with change and committing to continuous improvement (Hargeaves, 2003, p20)

One of the first researchers to point towards the influence of the local community upon school culture was Bernstein (1974). He argued that the way in which pupils responded to the culture of the school was likely to depend upon the experiences offered to them by the community that they live in:

One child, through his socialization, is already sensitive to the symbolic orders of the school, whereas the second child is much less sensitive to the universalistic orders of the school (Bernstein, 1974, p64)

Bernstein argued that schools communicate their cultures through 'meta-languages' which transmit 'values and an attendant morality'. He suggested that the reason that some children will struggle to respond to the culture within the



school is that 'orientations towards 'meta-languages' of control and innovation are not made available to these children as part of their initial socialization' (Bernstein, 1974, p64). He goes on to argue that working class children will often feel alienated and divorced from the culture of their school:

Thus the working class child may be placed at a considerable disadvantage in relation to the total culture of the school. It is not made for him; he may not answer to it (Bernstein, 1974, p64)

Overall, school culture can be described through the study of four different social contexts:

- A regulative context within which 'authority relation' make a child aware of 'the moral order' (1974, p65)
- An instructive context, within which 'the child learns about the objective nature of objects' (1974, p65)
- Innovating contexts, within which 'the child is encouraged to experiment' (1974, p65)
- Interpersonal contexts, where 'the child is made aware of affective states-his [sic] and others' (1974, p65)

The researcher might face difficulties in interpreting Bernstein's model. Many activities within school may involve all four contexts operating at once (for example a lesson or a school assembly), making it difficult to distinguish the influence that each context has upon the overall culture of an organisation. However, whilst Bernstein's focus on social class might be too specific (surely it is not only working class pupils who can feel alienated by a school's culture) he does establish two important points: that society has an influence upon a school's culture and that the more diverse the social mix of a school is, the more likely it is that some pupils will feel alienated from the dominant culture within the school. This alienation may express itself through a refusal to wear conventional uniform, an unwillingness to take part in extra-curricular activities or more serious negative behaviour. A useful example of this is provided by Cullingford (1991) when he comments that:

it is no accident that much of the conflict between staff and students at the moment should take place over dress ... it is one of the current forms of a fight between cultures (1991, p66)

Chapter five of this study will explore the way in which the 'changes in society' highlighted by Stoll (1998) may have impacted upon Sixth Form culture. The study also seeks to use interviews and survey responses to explore the 'latent

social identities' identified by Becker and Greer (1974). Analysis of data relating to social trends such as the increased incidence of part-time jobs amongst sixth formers will then enable the study to test out Stoll's claim that 'changes in society pose challenges to school's culture' (1998, p2). Through its exploration of the differing influences of attitudes to sport, academic study and the significance of part-time jobs, chapter five will also explore aspects of the 'fight between cultures' that Cullingford (1991) refers to. Whilst exploring the alienation from the prevailing culture which Bernstein (1974) identifies, the research also seeks to go a stage further by exploring possible reasons for this alienation. The study will investigate whether pupils diverge from the prevailing culture because of the social context they find themselves within, as a result of their approach to academic study, through membership of a range of peer groups or as a result of other influences. Hence by exploring these different influences upon Sixth Form culture, the study will seek to establish whether the society outside the school should be given a higher prominence when considering the different forces that shape Sixth Form culture.

Writers such as Stoll (1998) have suggested within this section that society changes over time. The next section of this chapter will explore whether culture changes in the same way. The section will also explore the debate over how easy it is to manipulate and control cultural change in a planned manner. The section begins with a discussion of how culture itself can be used as a measure of change, through a discussion of the relationship between culture and school improvement.

## 2.6 THE FIFTH PART OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: CULTURAL CHANGE

### 2.6.1: THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN MEASURING QUALITY AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

As part of its study of culture this research study seeks to describe and analyse changing attitudes to academic study amongst students. In the opinion of Schein (1997) culture is often ignored as a serious influence upon school improvement. He argues that serious attempts to improve schools should grapple with

the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organizations view of itself and its environment (1997, p6)

This relative neglect of school culture reflects an increasingly narrow view of the definition of quality within an educational context. Developing this point, Sallis (1994) suggests that there are a number of contradictions embodied within the concept of 'quality'. The term can be defined both in 'hard' ways (measurable standards such as examination results) and 'soft' ways (less tangible issues such as student satisfaction and the ethos within a school) and may therefore mean very different things in different contexts. For both of these reasons, quality can also be seen as both a relative and absolute concept, as well as both an end and a means. She concludes that quality is 'an idea with a variety of meanings'. The essential ambiguity of 'quality' is also discussed by Harvey et al (1993), particularly within an educational context. They question the assumption that quality is an absolute standard, suggesting that quality within education can be viewed in five different ways:

- quality as exceptionally high standards
- quality as perfection of consistency (zero defects)
- quality as fitness for purpose
- quality as value for money (often related to accountability)
- quality as transformation

This observation leads to the inevitable suggestion that quality in education is a highly ambiguous concept which is open to a very broad range of interpretations. However, recent developments in education such as the school effectiveness movement, appear to base much of their work upon the assumption that quality is a known absolute that every stakeholder can readily agree upon. The school effectiveness movement is seen by critics such as Duffield (2000), Fielding (1999) and Raay and William (1999) as promoting an unhealthy focus upon measures which promote strong examination data, to the neglect of a broader range of factors which should also be part of an effective school. Such critics suggest that the movement has failed to grasp the wider range of issues that make up a true picture of quality within education. This attack upon the narrow view of quality promoted by the school effectiveness movement has extended beyond social naivety, to the damaging charge that they do not actually understand what makes an effective school. The views of other critics of the school effectiveness movement are articulated by Fielding (1999), who suggests that the process of measurement has become more important than what is being measured:

Strength of convictions about the necessity of measurement blinds its proponents to the limitations of current instruments and we all end up not only mismeasuring the measurable, but misrepresenting the immeasurable (Fielding 1999, p280)

The argument advanced by Fielding (1999) highlights the complaint that there are values and processes that make up the culture of a school- expressive arts, ethos, relationships, moral and social values- which cannot be measured by instruments such as Ofsted's PANDA report. Although not capable of easy measurement, it may well be that these aspects of the school are just as important to students and parents.

This last point is developed by Duffield et al (2000) who argue that the views of pupils have equal validity when assessing the effectiveness of a school:

Pupil testimony is not privileged as more 'true' than the accounts of teachers and advisers, but it provides a crucial element still too often overlooked (Duffield et al, 2000, p270)

They go on to suggest that pupils struggle to understand the aims and values of the school effectiveness movement, viewing it as an attempt to impose a confusing set of external values upon them:

For the pupils themselves the school game had largely instrumental goals; the answers that they needed appeared to be based on somewhat arbitrary criteria that were either seen as personal to the teacher or embedded in a system that failed to incorporate them as full participants (Duffield et al, 2000, p271)

For this reason attempts to measure and understand pupil culture, whilst drawing on more complex data than sets of examination data, may well provide a more rounded picture of 'school improvement' within a particular institution. (1999) Indeed it could be suggested that the neglect of broader issues such as culture calls into question the ethical basis of the whole school effectiveness movement:

Narrowing the focus of assessment, together with an emphasis on achieving the highest scores possible produces a situation in which unjustifiable educational practices are not only possible, but encouraged (Raay and William, 1999, cited in Fielding, 1999, p281)

It would therefore be false to assume that only things that can be easily measured make a significant contribution to quality within schools. In fact, as Hopkins (1994) points out, less tangible features such as culture make a contribution that is of at least equal importance. He suggests that culture:

is the key to improving quality. It is a reflection of the norms and values of its members; it is the way they get things done. It is actively, though often unwittingly, constructed by the school's participants (Hopkins, 1994, p158).

Hence Stoll and Fink (1995) argue that before any attempt is made to reform or improve schools, issues relating to culture should be actively considered:

Typically, those who introduce educational reforms or restructure educational systems pay scant attention to the social organisation and contexts in which these changes are introduced (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p80). Chapters four and five of this study build upon these comments by using what Duffield et al (2000) call 'pupil testimony' to explore features of school culture (for example attitudes to academic study) that relate to school improvement. Hence the study seeks to test Hopkins' (1994) assertion that culture 'is the key to improving quality' by exploring the link between changes in culture and changing student responses to academic study.

The importance of culture in any attempt to change or improve schools is also explored by Reeves, Moos and Forrest (1998) within their discussion of the experience of headteachers who have moved from one headship to another:

Contextual factors meant that transfer of learning from one situation to another was not necessarily straightforward or helpful ... Context was highly significant and the same person, they argued, placed in different contexts acts differently because of different opportunities and constraints.

(Reeves, Moos and Forrest, 1998, p46)

The authors go on to argue that this experience proves that improvement initiatives which have worked within one context will not necessarily transfer to another because different cultures operate within the two environments. For the same reason, headteachers who have been very successful within one culture may find that their methods prove much less successful in a different school with a completely different culture. The experience of so-called 'super-heads' would appear to confirm that strategies which work within one culture will not necessarily be successful within a different environment. For these reasons a leader in a new school must engage in 'values engineering' (Morgan 1997), seeking to move the culture before any other initiatives can be undertaken. Chapter five of this study will use surveys and interviews to test out the ability of leaders to engage in 'values engineering'. Data will be analysed in order to explore the ability of leaders to mould and shape the cultural attitudes of a particular group of students. The chapter will also take up Reeves, Moos and Forrest's (1998) emphasis upon context, by exploring the influence exerted upon student culture by both the headteacher and other leaders within a West Midlands school.

Culture's influence is not confined to a negative resistance to new initiatives. The culture within a school is perhaps the single most important element in determining the quality of the learning that takes place within the organisation:

Research on effective schools over the past two decades has identified several factors within the school that can make a difference in students' learning... These variables all appear to be elements in a conceptual framework that suggests the importance of a school's culture in determining student learning (Heck and Marcoulides, 1996, p76)

As a response to the influence that culture appears to have upon student learning, attempts have been made to measure the impact that culture has upon school improvement and overall 'quality' within the school. A significant movement in this direction has already taken place in Scotland. In 1992, following research by MacBeath, Thomson, Arrowsmith and Forbes, the Scottish Office and HMI published 'Using Ethos indicators in Secondary School Self Evaluation'. The publication built on the research of MacBeath et al (1992) to establish a series of templates that could be used by schools in evaluating the impact of ethos upon the overall quality of the school. These ethos indicators were, however, carefully balanced against other indicators of quality such as teaching and learning, pupil progress and management of staff. Much as in Prosser's earlier discussion of culture and climate, ethos appears to be used in this study where culture or climate has been used in earlier or later studies.

The research of MacBeath et al (1992) suggests that ethos indicators can be divided into two groups, those relating to the school as a whole and those which relate to the ethos of a particular department. In each case the team offer a series of descriptors which can be honestly discussed and evaluated by whole school and departmental teams in order to highlight area of strength and weakness. His approach can be illustrated through an exploration of the section on 'climate and atmosphere'. Major strengths in this area are suggested to include the following statements:

- 'There is a pleasant atmosphere which is relaxed but purposeful'
- 'Pupils work conscientiously and co-operatively with staff and one another'
- 'Management consistently plays a very significant part in fostering a good atmosphere'

A situation where strengths are outweighed by weaknesses is characterised by statements which are broadly the opposite of those above. It might be argued that

MacBeath's ethos indicators lack precision, since some of the descriptions might be applied to themselves by schools without sufficient supporting evidence. Similarly it might be argued that some descriptors themselves lack precision. Taking 'positive steps ... to ascertain parental views' could be interpreted in a wide variety of different ways. However, all forms of self-evaluation are open to interpretation. Even supposedly 'hard' measures of quality such as examination results can be expressed and interpreted in a variety of different ways.

The need for further research into the interface between school culture and school effectiveness is highlighted by Hargreaves (1999) who comments that :

I am not sure that we know very much about the characteristics of effective school cultures –and there must be many forms of them- let alone how they develop (Hargreaves, 1999, p64)

By describing the culture that exists in one section of one school, this study explores in considerable depth the characteristics of school culture that are manifested within the Sixth Form and the way in which this culture impacts upon attitudes to study. Hence rather than assuming that certain factors combine to produce an 'effective' culture (a process which leads to prescriptions for school improvement which are not necessarily rooted in reality) this research study offers the chance to explore the real culture of one institution and the way that it is formed by the coming together of a series of complex factors. This 'real culture' will be analysed in chapters four and five in order to examine the ways in which aspects of this culture have impacted upon, amongst other things, attitudes to study. Thus, rather than idealised prescriptions, the study offers the opportunity to explore the relationship between culture and school improvement in the realistic setting of a West Midlands Sixth Form. The comments of writers such as Hargreaves (1999) in this section have assumed that it is possible to shape culture in a particular fashion in order to create cultures that are 'effective'. The next section goes on to explore the accuracy of such suggestions. The section asks whether culture can be shaped in order to achieve aims such as school improvement. The section also explores the possibility that culture may have a resilience that makes it resistant to planned change.

### 2.6.2 CAN CULTURE BE MANAGED AND CHANGED?

As well as being divided over the definition and importance of culture, critical opinion also disagrees on the extent to which culture can be managed and

changed. Some researchers argue that knowledge of culture does not necessarily assist the process of school improvement:

it is somewhat uncertain whether and how knowledge of the organisational culture and its dynamics can be used to improve outcomes in a planned, intentional fashion (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1994, p44)

A contrary view is taken by Schein (1997), who argues that 'the only thing of importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture' (1985, p2), a view which is strongly supported by West Burnham et al (1995):

If school and colleges are to respond effectively to the demands made upon them in an increasingly turbulent environment, then they may well find themselves devoting as much, if not more, management attention to the understanding and influence of organisational culture (West-Burnham et al, 1995, p43)

In the view of Dalin (1993), responding to change is an essential part of managing the culture of any organisation: 'A culture that reflects stability, predictability and a hierarchy of decision-making is being challenged' (Dalin, 1993, p.98). However, Bate (1994) points out that it is naïve to think that there is one culture within an organisation. The diversity of the human beings who make up the organisation leads to a variety of different cultures being established in any one school:

Changing cultures is all about changing meanings, but ... such meanings cannot simply be imposed; people will always end up producing their own meanings (Bate 1994, p223)

In the light of this complex range of cultures, Bate concludes that

Culture cannot be changed in the abstract. You do not deliberately set out to change the culture (Bate, 1994, p23)

This argument is developed by Deal and Kennedy (1991):

As product it embodies the accumulated wisdom of those who were members before we came. As process it is continually renewed and re-created as new members are taught the old ways (cited in Stoll, 1999, p82).

Weick succinctly summarises this view: 'A corporation doesn't have a culture. A corporation is a culture. That is why they are so horribly difficult to change' (cited in Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998). A similar argument is advanced by Deal and Peterson (1990) who point out that even when cultural change appears to have taken place, it may well prove to be illusory:

bureaucratically implementing a reform policy can become a superficial exercise in compliance that never disturbs the underlying operations of schools (Deal and Peterson, 1990, p.6)

However, Bate (1994) does acknowledge that leaders are able to exert an influence upon culture by pointing out that they are able to 'initiate, influence and shape the direction of the emerging culture' (Bate, 1994, p245). The word



'reculturing' is coined by Fullan in order to describe 'the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms' (cited in Stoll, 1999, p46). An even more ambitious definition of the process is offered by Morgan (1997), who describes reculturing as :

a challenge of transforming mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images, metaphors, beliefs and shared meanings that sustain existing ... realities and of creating a detailed language and code of behaviour through which the desired new reality can be lived on a daily basis ... it is about inventing what amounts to a new way of life (Morgan, 1997, p143)

This view is supported by Hannay and Ross (1999), who comment that: 'active engagement in the re-structuring process itself can facilitate re-culturalisation of secondary school structures' (1999, p356). This process should be as wide-ranging as possible in the opinion of Stoll and Fink (1999): 'reculturing, however, needs to go beyond redefining teacher cultures; it must include pupil and community cultures as well' (1999, p47). Three recipes to promote cultural change are advanced by Rossman et al (1988). 'Evolutionary change' is implicit, unconscious and unplanned. 'Additive change' is based on new initiatives being introduced and may or may not be explicit. 'Transformational change' is 'explicit and conscious' with deliberate attention to changing 'norms, values and beliefs'. Some of the most practical advice to leaders of cultural change is offered by Hargeaves (1999):

- Choose your style
- Prioritize the focus
- Change behaviour
- Devise supportive structures
- Monitor the effects and penetration of cultural change
- Import assistance
- Be your own culture (1999, p61)

This practical approach is embodied in developments such as the 'Improving the Quality of Education For All Project (IQEA)' which Harris and Hopkins describe as 'building the school's capacity for cultural change' (Harris and Hopkins, 2000, p9). A further multi-level strategy for achieving cultural change is provided by Elmore and Burney (1999):

- It is about instruction and only instruction
- Instructional change is a long, multistage process
- Shared expertise is the driver of instructional change
- Focus on system wide improvement
- Great ideas come from people working together
- Set clear expectations then decentralise
- Establish collegiality, caring and respect (Elmore and Burney, 1999, p266)

Quoting Elmore and Burney's seven stage model with approval, Fullan (2003) suggests that it should be used by groups of schools working together to achieve 'deep change, which by definition involves changes in the culture' (Fullan, 2003, p51).

However, writers such as Schein (1985) argue that cultural change is not brought about by planned strategies, but rather by the interpretation of signals from the leader which may contradict the public values and assumptions espoused by the organisation. Developing the significance of interpreting signals, Sparkes (1991) pragmatically distinguishes between 'sacred' and 'profane' norms, commenting that

the former are immutable norms that when threatened create disorientation and diminish the professional identity of the teachers whilst the latter, even though they occupy strategic positions in the day to day world of the teachers, are susceptible to change by improved knowledge (Sparkes, 1991, p7)

He goes on to argue that 'many of the sacred norms of the culture of teaching are reinforced and therefore remain unquestioned' (Sparkes, 1991, p10).

Any leader's success in 'reculturing' is, however, likely to depend upon the context within which they find themselves. If a headteacher has succeeded a poor leader, Hargreaves (1999) suggests that he or she is likely to find staff 'open to new ideas and arguments'. However, if they are following a 'good' leader they may well find it 'difficult, if not impossible, to change the cultural direction in any speedy or direct way' (Hargreaves, 1999, p60). A balanced conclusion to this debate is proposed by Lumby (2001), who draws together the differing views about cultural change:

culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people and will also be subject to forces external to the organisation. The principal has a particular influence, though his or her power in this area may be obliterated if sufficient people are working in contradiction, trying to influence culture in a particular direction (Lumby, 2001)

In the opinion of Wheeler (2001), this process of cultural change is never likely to be complete:

cultural change is part of a continuum - past, present and future- and every leader is just part of that process. The problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past - and the solution may go on to be a problem of the future (Wheeler, 2001, p3)

This research study will make a contribution to the debate outlined above by exploring the degree of cultural change that has taken place within a Sixth Form group, as well as examining possible factors which may have contributed to this change. Hence chapter five of this study will seek to test Fullan's contention that leaders can engineer 'deep change, which by definition involves changes in the culture' (Fullan, 2003, p51). By using interviews to explore the perceived impact of leaders upon culture, the study seeks to establish whether 'deep change' can be produced through a planned series of activities initiated by a leader. Therefore chapter five also explores the accuracy of Bate's (1994) suggestion that 'culture cannot be changed in the abstract' (Bate, 1994, p23). Evidence derived from interviews, surveys and analysis of documentary sources will be used to examine whether Sixth Form culture has changed over time. However, in order to respond to Bate's (1994) argument, the study will seek to explore not just whether culture has changed, but whether any process of change has been initiated by measures proposed by the school's leadership. Thus the study responds directly to Morgan's ambitious definition of reculturing as 'inventing what amounts to a new way of life' (Morgan, 1997, p143). The research described in chapter five will explore whether Morgan's (1997) claims for the process of 'reculturing' are accurate, or whether they are describing an abstract concept that does not transfer into the constraints of an actual school environment. Finally, the study will also explore Wheeler's point that the culture of the past is able to exert an influence upon the culture of the present and the future: 'The problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past- and the solution may well go on to be a problem of the future' (Wheeler, 2001, p3). The study will use data derived from a document study and an interview with the school's previous headteacher to explore differences between the present culture of the school's Sixth Form and the culture that existed four years previously. Through this process the study will seek to establish the extent to which aspects of the school's culture in the past have influenced the present culture of the school.

## 2.7 CONCLUSION

Through a discussion of the literature relating to culture it has been demonstrated that this research study is distinctive because it seeks to combine perspectives drawn from both qualitative and quantitative research, using this broader approach to provide a fuller description of the developing culture within the Sixth Form of a

West Midlands School. The chapter also argues that this research study moves the debate on from abstract theories about the precise nature of culture to an exploration of how the phenomenon of culture is manifested in a real life situation over a period of time. As part of this process, the study also seeks to explore the forces that lead to the formation of this 'real life' culture, acknowledging that culture is a complex organism which resists simplistic analysis. Hence the study argues that the five stage 'jigsaw' of cultural analysis, discussed in the opening chapter, offers an effective model which can be used to explore this complex organism and so order to understand the different elements that make up the 'whole' of school culture.

This chapter has established aspects within each of the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw that require further exploration and research. The section examining internal culture suggested that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model of organisational culture represents the most comprehensive model yet developed to explore the elements that make up culture within an institution. Hence chapter four of this study will use Deal and Kennedy's model to explore the internal culture of the Sixth Form of a West Midland's school. However, the chapter will offer a fresh perspective upon Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model by exploring internal culture from the viewpoint of a group of students. Hence chapter four will respond to Thrupp's (1999) comment (discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter) that the views of students have largely been ignored by previous studies of institutional culture. However, chapter five of this study will then go further by exploring the elements of culture that are not addressed by Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology. Hence the impact of subcultures will be analysed, using interviews and surveys to test out the theories of the Chicago School about the forces that lead to the formation of subcultures. Secondly, the chapter will also explore the ability of leaders to shape and mould culture, exploring the accuracy of Evan's (2001) argument that effective leaders should be engaging in cultural change on a large scale. The study will pose the question: are leaders able to control and shape culture, or is culture more resistant to such programmes of planned change? Thirdly, the chapter will explore the impact of the society outside the school upon the overall culture of the organisation. The claim by Stoll (1998) that 'changes in society pose challenges to school's culture' will be tested through the use of data derived from interviews, surveys, observation and a

documentary study. Through this process the research will seek to establish the ways in which the culture outside the school can influence developments within the school. Finally, chapter five will explore the accuracy of Morgan's (1997) claim that organisations can be 'recultured' in order to produce 'what amounts to a new way of life' (Morgan, 1997, p143). Interviews, surveys and documentary evidence will be explored to provide evidence of cultural change over time, and the forces that have produced any perceived change will then be explored. Through this process the study will seek to establish whether cultural change has taken place through a planned programme of intervention or through a process that is harder to control.

Overall, the study will seek to create a comprehensive model for the analysis of culture, which goes beyond existing typologies such as Deal and Kennedy's (1988) by exploring the full range of factors that influence the 'overall' culture of an organisation. The research study also seeks to test out a series of abstract theories relating to culture by applying them to the 'real life' setting of a school Sixth Form. Hence the study responds to Nias' call for:

a clearer definition of the term; greater attention to the beliefs and values at the heart of all cultures; detailed studies of particular school cultures and the creation of appropriate typologies (Nias, 1989, p143)

Throughout this discussion of previous research in the field, the chapter has argued that this research study is distinctive because it combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to provide a fuller description of the phenomenon of culture in an actual school. Hence the next chapter will go on to describe the methodology to be employed in greater depth, also evaluating critically the methodologies employed in previous studies. However, the first step will be to clarify the aims and objectives of the research, identifying the questions that have arisen as a result of this review of the literature surrounding school culture.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will identify the research problem addressed by this study, as well as examining its central aims and objectives. It will then go on to identify the key research questions derived from the literature review, before exploring the different methodologies to be employed within the research. The chapter will also discuss ways in which surveys and case studies have been employed in past research into culture, considering some of the challenges posed by this form of research. Distinctive methodologies associated with research into culture will then be explored, such as the analysis of a range of photographic evidence. Finally, the chapter will consider some of the crucial ethical issues that arise as a result of this study.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study addresses the problem: what are the main factors that shape the culture of a West Midlands secondary school Sixth Form? In exploring this problem, a fundamental methodological issue has to be addressed, namely how far it is possible to develop a model that adequately explores the different elements that make up the overall culture of an organisation? Existing models such as that developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) effectively consider some dimensions of school culture, such as the significance of ceremonies and the impact of shared beliefs and values. However, the last chapter of this study highlighted Preskill's (1995) comment that 'The elements of school culture interact with each other to produce a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts' (Preskill, 1995, p191). Hence to understand the 'whole' of school culture it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the 'elements' that make up this complex force. Typologies such as those developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) offer only a partial analysis, neglecting the significance of forces such as subculture, leaders, society outside the school and cultural change. The neglect of these additional influences makes it impossible for models such as Deal and Kennedy's to adequately explore the full complexity of culture. Hence this study seeks to address the research problem identified above by developing a model that effectively analyses each of the elements that contribute to the 'whole' of school culture.

### **3.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of the study is to explore the manifestation of culture in a school Sixth Form, through an analysis based upon the Sixth Form of a West Midlands secondary school. This aim offers an opportunity to provide one of the ‘detailed studies of particular school cultures’ which Nias (1989) suggests should be the next stage in culture research in order to provide ‘the creation of appropriate typologies’ which address the real human, societal and political forces which shape culture. As part of this exploration, the study seeks to examine the different influences which lead to the formation of culture, and to examine the relationship between leaders and culture, exploring the extent to which leaders play the central role in the shaping of culture within an institution.

The objectives which underlie the research can be summarised as follows:

1. To explore the ‘internal’ culture of a school Sixth Form.

The research study seeks to establish why particular environments promote a distinctive set of values and priorities. The study will seek to explore the forces that have shaped the Sixth Form culture of one school, exploring the developing response of students to the academic and sporting values of the institution. The study will also explore whether internal culture can exist independently of the wider community context, or whether the impact of external forces is able to overwhelm cultural forces within the institution.

2. To explore the influence of ‘external’ society upon culture within an institution.

Ways in which changes in social priorities have impacted upon students will be explored and the extent to which the society outside an institution can exert an influence upon its overall culture will be considered. The previous chapter illustrated a range of views on the extent to which culture is influenced by society. By examining the responses of students, the study offers a fresh perspective on the changing impact of society upon members of the Sixth Form. In this way the study will seek to explore the balance between the ‘internal’ (school based values) and ‘external’ (values derived from the society outside the school) forces which combine to form culture within an organisation

3. To describe the range of subcultures that can exist within a student population, exploring possible factors which may have created a sense of alienation from the prevailing culture.

Prosser (1999) has suggested that future studies of culture may focus upon subcultures rather than culture, implying that the variations in culture within an organisation can be more significant than the variations in culture between organisations. The study will explore the factors which lead to the formation of subcultures, in the process gathering data from students who are actually experiencing the culture of a school. The study will also consider to what extent organisations are mono-cultural and how far an organisation's culture is made up of a myriad of different cultures, each offering competing values and priorities to a number of subcultures.

4. To explore how students perceive the culture of their school and to examine the ways in which perceptions of culture vary according to role within the organisation.

As outlined in the previous chapter, earlier studies have focused upon the ways in which teachers perceive the culture of their schools. By focusing upon the views of students, this study seeks to introduce a genuinely fresh perspective into culture research. Through this process the study seeks to explore an area of study that has been largely neglected by much of the research that has taken place to date.

5. To analyse the ability of leaders or others to change and shape culture in accordance with a previously agreed plan.

The previous chapter illustrated the way in a number of writers have assumed that leaders have the power to influence the culture of their organisation. Chapter five seeks to explore this issue through the collection of data from those who are actually experiencing the culture of the organisation. In the process, the study explores the issue of how easy it is for any one person to influence and shape organisational culture.

6. To explore the extent to which culture can be managed and controlled.



Can cultures be created which propound certain values that are seen as important by those who are seeking to 'engineer' the culture? Or do individual cultures have a resilience which makes them impervious to attempts to manipulate and shape them in a particular direction? Whilst the leadership team of a school may decide that it wishes to establish a culture which gives a priority to academic study, is it then able to transfer this desire into a series of measures that will actually transform culture in the desired manner?

7. To explore the ways in which culture changes over a period of time.

The study seeks to explore the organic nature of culture and to determine where indicators of cultural change might be located. If cultural change takes place, is this a natural process, or does change only take place under certain circumstances? Just as significantly, can steps be taken to prevent cultural change, or to ensure that it does take place?

8. To explore the importance of history within a school environment.

To what extent is culture influenced by events that have taken place in the past? Does culture continue to respond to the ideas and actions of leaders who may have since left the school? The previous chapter discussed the importance of myths, symbols, metaphors and anecdotes in the formation of culture and it seems appropriate to ask if these features can assist in the preservation of an oral tradition which upholds cultural values that the institution thought it had left behind.

9. To explore the way in which methodological approaches drawn from culture and climate research can be combined in order to provide a more effective description of the culture of a particular environment.

As discussed in the previous chapter, climate research has come to be associated with quantitative research methods, whilst culture research has normally employed qualitative research methods. This research study seeks to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the environment of a Sixth Form of a West Midlands secondary school. The study is distinctive in seeking to draw the insights of culture and climate research together in order to describe the 'overall culture' which exists within the organisation.

In turn, these objectives point towards the following research questions:

1. Is it possible to develop a model that draws together the diverse elements that make up culture?

The previous chapter of this study explored the limitations of a range of cultural typologies. This study seeks to bring together a set of jigsaw pieces-based around internal culture, subcultures, the role of leaders, an exploration of social forces and an analysis of cultural change- that when brought together form the 'whole' that makes up the culture of an organisation. Chapters four and five of this study will explore whether this model provides a cohesive structure that is able to deal with the complex whole that is school culture.

2. What balance exists between external and internal forces in the development of culture?

The study seeks to establish whether internal or external forces exert a significantly greater impact upon the process of cultural formation. Models of cultural formation such as that developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) suggest that culture is shaped by forces that are entirely within the institution. By using a model that considers a broader range of influences, this study seeks to establish the part that is played by forces that do not lie within an institution, such as changing attitudes towards students having part-time jobs.

3. Does the existence of subcultures make it impossible to describe the overall culture of an institution?

Morgan's claim that every culture is made up of 'a mosaic of organisational realities' (Morgan, 1997, p137) poses a significant challenge for any researcher. If his analysis is accurate, is it therefore pointless to try to analyse culture within an institution as a whole? For this reason the study seeks to explore the range of subcultures within the institution and the forces that have led to their formation. However, it also seeks to establish whether a distinctive prevailing culture exists that is more than merely 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p87).

4. Can leaders influence culture?

As the previous chapter made clear, there is extensive disagreement amongst researchers on the extent to which leaders are actually able to influence culture. Whilst Hargreaves (1995) maintains that leaders can do little to influence culture, Bush and Anderson (2003) comment that maintaining culture is seen as the central role of an effective headteacher. This study seeks to explore the answers to this key research question by exploring the views of students, a constituency who have neglected by previous studies. If students are the recipients of culture, then they are well placed to comment upon the central influences shaping the culture that they experience. Hence the study poses the question: do leaders have the influence over culture ascribed to them by previous studies, or is their actual influence much more limited than researchers, teachers and leaders themselves have tended to assume?

5. Can culture be changed according to pre-arranged plan?

The study explores whether it is possible to change and mould culture by following a pre-ordained plan. Can one person, or a small group of individuals, change culture so that it conforms to a model which they perceive to be more desirable? Or is culture more complex and resistant to planned change? The previous question discussed the ability of leaders to mould and shape culture. This section goes one stage further in posing the question: who, if anyone, has the ability to influence cultural change within an institution?

6. Can a focus upon the perspective of students provide an adequate description of the culture within an institution?

As mentioned in the last chapter, previous research studies have emphasised the viewpoints and perspectives of teachers when discussing culture. This research study seeks to explore culture from the perspective of students, though the views of a former headteacher are considered in order to provide a broader perspective. Hence the study seeks to explore the ways in which the views of students add a fresh perspective to our understanding of culture. It also seeks to explore related issues such as the extent to which students are aware of culture and their perception of the key influences upon this concept.

7. Will a case study based upon culture in one institution provide conclusions which can then be generalised beyond the institution?

It could be argued that the institution analysed within this study contains a series of factors which make it relatively unique. The school is selective (although the Sixth Form, the focus for this study, is non-selective with a relatively low qualifying GCSE score of four grade Cs or above). The school is also a boys school and with 750 pupils, is a relatively small secondary school. However, the research methodologies of a case study containing surveys, interviews and forms of document study, are entirely transferable to a range of circumstances. All of the students within the school's Sixth Form have been involved in the study and this provides an unusually large sample from which conclusions can be drawn. The two central ideas behind the construction of these methodologies, a focus upon the views of students and a desire to combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies, are also not specific to the context of the school and able to be transferred to a range of different situations.

Having identified the objectives and questions to be explored by this study, it is now necessary to explore in much greater detail the research methodology to be employed, with a particular focus upon the reasons for selecting a case study.

### 3.4 CASE STUDY

This study seeks to explore Sixth Form culture through the use of a case study. Surveys, interviews, document study and observation will be combined in order to explore the five piece cultural jigsaw discussed in the previous two chapters. The following definition of case study is offered by MacDonald and Walker (1975):

Case-study is the examination of an instance in action. The choice of the word 'instance' is significant in this definition, because it implies a goal of generalisation (MacDonald and Walker, 1975, cited in Bassey, 1999, p24)  
It is significant that this definition centres upon the importance of generalisation from 'an instance'. The way in which this process operates is discussed further by Cohen and Manion (1998):

The case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such an observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs (Cohen and Manion, 1998, pp106-107)

A common philosophy which often underpins case study is highlighted by Sturman (1994): the belief that it is possible to predict from a single example

because 'human systems develop a characteristic wholeness' (1994, cited in Bassey, 1999, p26). A detailed study of this system unit is therefore essential before generalisation can take place. Yin (1994, p137) suggests that this 'unit' might be a particular individual or an institution such as a school. However, the key point is that it must be investigated within 'its real life context', as opposed to experiments or surveys which impose external controls upon reality.

Prosser comments that much of the research into culture seems to 'rest on the assumption that climate (or culture) is something 'felt'' (Prosser, 1999, p5). Whilst Prosser goes on to lament this 'wilful lack of precision', in the view of Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1984), case study is at its most effective when describing the complexities of a particular situation, even though it might prove difficult to generalise from the data

Case study data, paradoxically, is strong in reality but difficult to organize.

In contrast, other research data is often 'weak in reality' but susceptible to ready organization (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101)

Nisbet and Watt point out that: 'A large scale survey can be followed up by case studies to test out conclusions by examining specific instances.' (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, p77). Similarly, Cohen and Manion observe that whilst case study is 'interpretive and subjective' it should be seen as 'complementing rather than competing with the experimental stance' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p106)

However, despite the uses of case study noted above, Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1984) point out that

they are often regarded with suspicion and even hostility. Their general characteristics remain poorly understood and their potential underdeveloped (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p93)

This suspicion appears to be related to a difficulty in going beyond the broad definitions above to a more precise definition of what is involved in a case study. Whilst Nisbet and Watt argue that the interview is 'the basic research instrument' (1984, p82) in case study research, Cohen and Manion suggest that 'at the heart of every case study lies a method of observation' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p107). Whilst these two statements are not necessarily contradictory, they do point to some differences of view about what lies at 'the heart of every case study'. The case study employed within this study's research into culture is centred upon both a survey and an interview, with observation then being used to triangulate the resulting findings.

These viewpoints are drawn together by Bassey (1999, p81) who suggests three complementary methods that can be combined in a case study: asking questions, observing events and reading documents. Yin (1993) argues that this is an inevitable result of studying phenomena in their context: 'the richness means that the study cannot rely on a single data collection method, but will likely need to use multiple sources of evidence' (Yin, 1993, p3). This study will make use of each of the three methods of data collection identified by Bassey (1999). However, it will further develop the 'richness' identified by Yin (1993) through the use of a survey administered to every student in Years 12 and 13. Through this process the case study employed within this research project will seek to collect as broad a range of data as possible about the 'instance' it is exploring.

### 3.5 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CASE STUDIES

The different strengths of case study research are drawn together by Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis. They point out that part of its strength lies in the uniqueness of its approach:

Case study data, paradoxically, is 'strong in reality' but difficult to organise. In contrast, other research data is often 'weak in reality' but susceptible to ready organisation (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101)

They argue that this grounding in reality makes it easier for a reader to relate case study to the details of his or her life and 'thus provide a natural basis for generalization'. Also, because of their intense focus upon a particular instance, 'case studies allow generalizations about either an instance or from an instance to a class' (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101). This range of generalization is possible because of their focus upon 'the subtlety and complexity of the case'. The authors repeatedly argue that the complexity and detail of case study actually gives the research a much greater grounding in reality, or what they call 'social truths'. Indeed, like many aspects of reality, they defy simplistic interpretation: 'The best case studies are capable of offering some support to alternative interpretations' (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101). They also suggest that the very process of completing a case study is likely to have an impact upon the behaviour of practitioners:

Case studies are 'a step to action'. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101)

However, Nisbet and Watt (1984) have pointed out that the use of a case study is not without problems, particularly in the area of generalisation. They argue that generalisation from case study cannot reliably be achieved

except by an intuitive judgement that 'this case' is similar to 'that case'... the observer in a case study has to be selective but his [sic] selectivity is not normally open to the checks which can be applied in rigorously systematic enquiries such as large scale surveys - it tends to be personal and subjective (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, p77)

This point is taken up by Stake (1995), qualifying his earlier comment that 'case study is a poor basis for generalization' through the following commentary on the problems of generalisation:

It is not uncommon for case study researchers to make assertions on a relatively small database, invoking the privilege and responsibility of interpretation. ... An ethic of caution is not contradictory to an ethic of interpretation (Stake, 1995, p33)

However, Stake does argue that 'naturalistic generalisation' is possible, which he defines as: conclusions arrived at through personal involvement in life's affairs' (Stake, 1995 p86). Bassey (1999) argues very strongly against the suggestion that generalisation is problematic, even though he concedes that the type of generalization might be 'fuzzy':

The fuzzy generalization arises from studies of singularities and typically claims that it is possible, or likely or unlikely that what was found in the singularity will be found in similar situations elsewhere: it is a qualitative measure (Bassey, 1999, p12)

In an earlier article, Bassey (1984) suggests that it is a fallacy to suggest that generalization is essential for research to be of value. He instead suggests that a better measure of the value of research should be 'the criterion of usefulness to teachers':

Other forms of educational research ... should perhaps eschew the pursuit of generalizations, unless the potential usefulness is apparent, and instead should actively encourage the descriptive and evaluative study of single pedagogic events. In this way pedagogic research will contribute effectively to the improvement of pedagogic practice (Bassey, 1984, p121)

Despite this resolute defence, Johnson argues case study can still be accused of lacking scientific rigour:

There is no book of rules for the design of a case study. Each must depend upon the nature of the phenomenon investigated, and the particular circumstances in which it occurs (Johnson, 1994, p22)

The case study used within this research responds to the concern of Johnson (1994) about a lack of rigour by drawing upon data derived from a variety of

sources, making triangulation much easier, particularly when comparing comments made by students about culture to the picture of culture emerging from other sources of data. The case study is also set alongside survey data, an approach advocated by Nisbet and Watt (1984, p77), and one which allows further potential for triangulation and for placing the data derived from the case study into a broader context. Bassey's advocacy of the need to study 'single pedagogic events' (1984, p121) also appears to have a particular relevance to this study. By studying in detail the Sixth Form culture of one institution, the research provides an account of the manifestation of culture within one environment. However, by analysing the data to produce a model that draws together the different forces that shape culture, the study produces just the sort of 'fuzzy generalization' (1999, p12) that Bassey suggests can emerge from the study of specific situations. The model that the study seeks to produce, addressing the five jigsaw pieces that influence the formation of culture, can be applied to other institutions and for this reason it is clearly open to generalisation. However, the culture of every institution is certain to be distinctive, thus ensuring that any generalisation is 'fuzzy' as suggested by Bassey (1999). Hence, as suggested by Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1984) the case study employed in this study makes it possible to apply conclusions 'from an instance to a class' (1984, p101). However, the uniqueness of school culture and way in which it manifests itself, ensures the accuracy of Bassey's prediction that all generalisations will be 'fuzzy'. Having explored the ways in which this research study responds to concerns over the use of case studies, the next section will discuss the way in which the study also seeks to focus upon the views of a group who have been ignored by a series of earlier studies.

### 3.6 STUDENTS: A NEGLECTED CONSTITUENCY IN CASE STUDIES THAT EXPLORE CULTURE

Coleman's (1996) study of school climate, whilst offering insights into a neglected area of study, illustrates the opportunities that have been missed when using case studies to research either culture or climate. Setting out to explore the effect of school principals upon climate, Coleman held a series of meetings with parents, based around the central question 'what makes a school good'. One hundred and forty four items were collected, which were collected through factor analysis into four main factors which were seen to influence climate (for example,



the style of the Principal and the quality of the environment). This data then provided the basis for a series of further interviews and surveys conducted with parents and teachers. Coleman concludes that:

Climate is generated by the actions of the Principal at a whole school level and by teacher classroom practices. School climate can be improved by changes to both of these (Coleman, 1996, p36)

By only asking parents and teachers, Coleman (1996) unsurprisingly produces a set of findings which emphasise the role of teachers and the way in which parents perceive them. The opinions and experiences of students have been ignored, despite the fact that their experience of culture is arguably the most direct and sustained. For this reason, Coleman's findings do not mention the role of students. One wonders if the role of the Principal in shaping culture would be seen as so significant by students, who are likely to experience a wider range of what Deal and Kennedy (1988) call 'cultural players'. Hence by focusing upon students, this study concentrates upon a constituency neglected by earlier research. Whilst students have been consulted in studies of subcultures such as Duncan's (1999) study of culture and gender, typologies for exploring whole school culture, such as those developed by Stoll and Fink (1999), Handy and Aitken (1986) and Ainscow (1995) have largely ignored the views of students, preferring to focus primarily upon the assessments of teachers. Just as a novelist may not be the best person to provide an analysis of his or her work, so a headteacher or group of teachers may lack the necessary detachment to analyse and discuss the culture which they have helped to shape. A much more objective assessment will surely be provided by students who are the recipients of that culture on a day to day basis. Hence the research approach adopted here of seeking the views of students arguably offers access to a richer and more accurate source of data than that available to earlier studies in the field of school culture.

### 3.7: TYPES OF CASE STUDY

Four types of case study are suggested by Stenhouse (1988, p50), each relating to different aspects of education. Within his definition, evaluative case studies consider a single case or group of cases in order to provide educational decision makers with relevant information. Educational case studies are used by researchers in order to understand educational action and are not concerned with 'social theory or evaluative judgement'. He also argues that case study can be

used within action research in order to 'guide revision and refinement of the action'. Finally he suggests that ethnographic studies can take place, within which:

A single case is studied in depth by participant observation supported by interview ... it does not relate directly to the practical needs of the actors in the case, though it may affect their perception (Stenhouse, 1988, p49, cited in Bassey, 1999)

The different purposes behind case studies are discussed by Yin (1993) when describing three different forms of case study:

An exploratory case study ... is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (not necessarily case) study ... A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An explanatory case study presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships (Yin, 1993, p5)

The case study to be employed in this research study accords most readily with Yin's definition of a 'descriptive' case study, since it seeks to explore the phenomenon of Sixth Form culture 'within its context' (that is, within a school). For these reasons it also has a number of similarities to what Stenhouse (1988) describes as an 'ethnographic' case study. As Adelman et al (1984) suggest, the case study is being used to follow up' a survey in order to 'test out conclusions by examining specific instances' (p77). Hence interviews, observation, documentary study and an analysis of photographic evidence will all be employed to explore the issues first highlighted by the questionnaire completed by the Sixth Form. Furthermore, the qualitative case study data will have equal weight in the overall research study, 'complementing rather than competing' with the quantitative data produced by the earlier survey (Cohen and Manion 1998, p106). This complementary use of quantitative and qualitative research methods also accords with the research objective stated earlier: to employ methodologies associated with both climate and culture research in order to develop a fuller description of the culture of an institution. Having established the parameters of the case study to be employed, the following sections go on to discuss the issues that arise through the decision to use a survey as part of the case study. The next two sections will explore the critical debate surrounding the use of surveys in culture research. Sections 3.10 and 3.11 will then demonstrate how the design of the survey instrument used in this study responds to this critical debate.

### 3.8 THE FIRST STAGE OF CASE STUDY: DO SURVEYS HAVE A ROLE IN CULTURE RESEARCH?

The first two chapters of this study made it clear that research methodologies associated with climate research will be employed as part of an overall study of culture. Surveys have often been associated with research into school climate, particularly that based around the school effectiveness movement. The introductory chapter of the study highlighted Chapman's (1999) argument that different movements within education have tended to favour contrasting methods of research, leading to quantitative methods being associated with the school effectiveness movement and qualitative methods with the school improvement movement. Finlayson's (1970) research on 'Measuring School Climate' provides an example of the way in which quantitative researchers have sought to use surveys as a tool for measuring climate. His work also provides a demonstration of one researcher's changing attitude towards the use of survey research. As part of the Comprehensive Schools Feasibility Study Finlayson adapted a questionnaire method employed by Halpin and Croft (1963). He decided that two key factors contributed to the climate that existed within a school: the relationship between teachers and pupils and the communication between a school and its community. Having established the aims and objectives of his study, he summarised the variables which his questions would explore in the following terms:

1. The perceptions of the behaviour of other pupils and of their teachers
2. The perceptions of teachers of some aspects of their colleagues' behaviour
3. The teacher's perception of the behaviour of heads of department
4. The teacher's perceptions of the behaviour of the head (Finlayson, 1970, p20)

The survey was administered to teachers and pupils from ten different comprehensive schools in Liverpool, with comments from teacher organisations being used as the basis for a form of pre-testing. He made use of a five point Likert scale, which Moser defines in the following terms:

a group of people reasonably representative of those whose attitudes are to be scored are given a number of statements and are asked to respond to each in terms of one of (usually) five categories – ranging from 'strongly approve' to 'strongly disapprove' (Moser, 1958, p238)

The data produced by his survey was used by Finlayson to produce a series of scales, each recording a particular aspect of climate within the school. For example, under section four, 'Head's Behaviour', six different scales were

developed to record awareness, professional concern for staff, personal concern for staff, bureaucratic orientation, friendliness and openness. Finlayson concludes his description of his methodology by stating that 'the average score on each scale was then taken as the quantified perception of the sample of teachers and pupils of their school' (Finlayson, 1973, p20)

At the end of the study Finlayson argues that, whilst further research is still necessary:

These scales provide a basis on which some quantification of the way in which some patterns of social behaviour in school are perceived by the pupils and staffs of these schools (Finlayson, 1970, p26)

However, returning to the subject in 1987, Finlayson seriously questions the use of surveys to measure climate. At the heart of his criticism is continuing uncertainty about what is being measured:

The cues which teachers use to come to some conclusion about the climate of a school vary enormously: they range from the colour of the paint on the walls, through the way chairs are arranged in the staff room and the presence or absence of displays of pupils work (Finlayson, 1987, p163)

He cites the work of Anderson, who suggests that climate can be measured in purely quantitative terms through a broader survey which combines measurement of 'ecology', 'milieu', 'social system' and 'culture'. Finlayson suggests that even here there is a lack of precision over the variables being measured, making an effective survey impossible:

If the last of these terms is taken as an example and if one assumes that Anderson is using culture as applied to some form of social grouping, that even within the discipline of anthropology there is no consensus about the meaning of terms. It is therefore legitimate to question in what sense Anderson is using it (Finlayson, 1987, p166)

The philosophical approach to research which states that climate can be measured is also questioned by Finlayson:

In that world view, it is assumed that the social world is of an objective nature, that a basis exists on which it is possible to judge whether knowledge is true or false, and that general laws can be established about the world which can be communicated, and used in the control of the social world (Finlayson, 1987, p166)

He suggests that often quantitative researchers into climate have focused upon what can be most easily measured, rather than seeking a broader and potentially more accurate perspective:

the way the problem can be 'solved' is implied in the way in which it is set. What is necessary is to devise reliable and valid measures of these variables and to manipulate them in such a way as to produce significant

relationships, a solution which is consistent with the assumptions of the dominant orthodoxy (Finlayson, 1987, p168)

His critique of existing methodology leads him to the conclusion that research into climate should have a much greater focus upon people:

This symbolic depersonalisation of participants is unfortunate, given the findings of recent studies of the effectiveness of business organizations ... successful organisations have been found to 'respect the individual' 'make people winners' 'let people stand out' and 'treat people as adults' (Finlayson, 1987, p171)

It can be seen, therefore, that a methodology based upon surveys alone is incomplete. Whilst surveys can generate valuable data relating to perceptions and opinions, the relatively rigid structure does not allow the flexibility for the more detailed, individual response that makes it possible to probe culture in much further detail. This is particularly true when, as is this the case with this study, a Likert scale is being employed, since the rigidity of a five point scale does not allow respondents the flexibility to express a range of feelings and responses. Finlayson (1987) reminds us that we live in a 'social' world and for this reason a study such as this needs to make use of at least some research instruments that have the ability to explore the complex relationships and perceptions that exist within this world. Hence whilst the study begins with a survey, it then goes on to use interviews which allow respondents a much more flexible and personal response. Other instruments such as a document study, observation and the analysis of photographs are also employed, each one in their different way exploring the view of culture that emerges in our 'social' world. However, by balancing the objective data produced by surveys with the subjective data produced by interviews, observation and documentary analysis, the study allows a rounded picture of culture to emerge in its various manifestations. This process is essential if the complex and elusive nature of culture is to be understood.

### **3.9 USING SURVEYS MORE EFFECTIVELY IN CULTURE RESEARCH**

Researchers have continued to use surveys as part of their culture research, although they have sought to structure their questionnaires in a more flexible manner in order to sample the range of voices that make up a school. Of particular interest is the research of Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath (1997) who provide a recent example of research which builds upon earlier criticisms to construct a survey instrument that seeks specifically to measure culture in a more complex

manner. To counter the criticism that survey research lacks a focus upon people and the complex problems that they face, the School Culture Scale (SCS) devised by Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath (1997) made use of sophisticated 'qualitative moral atmosphere interviews' which they define as 'structured interviews using realistic, but hypothetical school-life dilemmas' (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p557).

The study compared two significantly different schools. Theodore Roosevelt High School was a large urban school with 2800 students, which had just completed the first year of the Just Community Programme, designed to foster strong school community values. Jericho High School was a suburban high school, not involved in the Just Community intervention. As with Finlayson's (1970) research, the data was collected through the use of a five point Likert scale which moved from 'rejecting the idea that one's school is of any value to valuing one's school instrumentally to meet one's needs, then to 'enthusiastic identification' with the school' (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p558). Surveying took place amongst students, since they were seen as the ones best able to judge the culture that prevailed within the schools and by this broader sampling the researchers have responded to Finlayson's call for a wider range of variables to be considered. Similarly, the breadth of the sample, drawn from a cross-section of students within the five different schools, meant that the final measures of culture drew on data derived from a range of different subcultures within the school. Hence Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath point out that 'groups or cultures within a school may respond differently and these differences should register in the SCS scores' (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p563). This range of different subcultures is reflected in the fact that the study produced 25 different scales which were seen as indicators of culture within the two schools. Using factor analysis this data was arranged into four different groups that had a significant influence upon culture: 'normative expectations' of student behaviour, 'student-teacher/school relationships', 'student relationships' and 'educational opportunities'. The overall conclusion of the study was that survey research and the data that it produced was capable of measuring sharp differences in culture between the two scales:

A Just Community educational intervention in an urban neighbourhood created a very positive culture, one that surpassed the culture of a middle and upper middle class town (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p565)

However, their broader conclusions show an awareness of the complexity that Finlayson points toward: 'culture is multifaceted in that different groups within one school experience various cultures' (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p566). Similarly they are also sensitive to the argument that the broader culture prevailing within the local community must have an impact within the school, arguing that the next step is to develop

a new measure specifically focussed on the relationships of the various school cultures to the cultures of the larger community (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath, 1997, p566)

Hence Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath's (1997) research has illustrated the role that surveys can play within research into culture. Their reference to the 'multifaceted' nature of culture further reinforces the need to construct a methodology which explores both the internal culture of the school and the external social forces which play a part in the moulding and shaping of school culture. Having established that surveys do have a role within culture research, the next two sections explore the principles underlying the construction of the survey used by this study. The sections will illustrate the role that a survey can play in exploring the 'multifaceted' nature of school culture

### **3.10 OPERATIONAL ISSUES UNDERLYING THE SURVEY USED BY THIS RESEARCH STUDY**

The survey used in this study (shown as Appendix A) has one central aim, to measure the culture of two year groups within the school (Years 12 and 13). This aim can be broken down into a set of operational issues, the first of which relates to the aspects of culture which the survey will attempt to measure. The school's identity as a grammar school and its focus upon academic results provided some obvious aspects of culture for the survey to explore. Section 2.3 of the last chapter explored the significance of subcultures, and for this reason the survey asked students to give some indication of their perception of subcultures within the school. The survey also sought to establish the beliefs and values of the school as perceived by students. Student expectations for the future also provided a measure of the beliefs and values that the school was transmitting to them. Hence the areas of internal culture to be explored by the survey could be summarised as follows:

**Table 3.1: INTERNAL CULTURE AND SURVEY QUESTIONS**

ASPECTS OF INTERNAL CULTURE	SURVEY QUESTION	QUESTIONS COVERING MORE THAN ONE ASPECT OF INTERNAL CULTURE
Attitudes to academic study	1,4,5,11 and 14	7, 13, 15
Relationships with and perceptions of other students	3 and 12	13, 15
Perceived values of the school	2,8,9 and 12	7, 13, 15
Aspirations for the future	6 and 10	15

The second operational issue to be considered was how best to measure responses to the survey. Finlayson (1973, p19) made use of the following five point Likert scale:

**TABLE 3.2: LIKERT SCALE SUMMARY**

NUMBER	RESPONSE
1	Strongly Agree
2	Agree
3	Uncertain
4	Disagree
5	Strongly Disagree'

Adapted versions of this scale have been used by other researchers in the field such as Dalin (1993), Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath (1997) and Hannay and Ross (1999). A Likert scale can be defined as 'a scaled response ... structured by means of a series of gradations. The respondent is required to record their response to a given statement by selecting from a number of alternatives' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p280). The great advantage of using this type of scale is that the data produced is easily quantifiable and that it can then be analysed to produce the sort of easily quantifiable measures developed by Finlayson (1973) and Higgins-D'Alessandro and Sath (1997). This 'hard' data can then be analysed and explored alongside the 'soft' data produced by other measures of culture such as



interviews and observation. As Tuckman (1972) comments 'unlike an unstructured response which has to be coded to be useful as data, a scaled response is collected in the form of usable and analysable data' (Tuckman, 1972, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p280). Hence a Likert scale was employed in order to produce this 'usable and analysable data'. Later interviews with a small sample of respondents then provided the opportunity to explore relevant issues in much greater depth.

Whilst Tuckman's (1972) comments above highlight the advantages of a scaled response, the use of a Likert scale does also bring some problems. Cohen and Manion (1998) focus upon these problems when discussing the advantages of 'open-ended' questions:

they are flexible, they allow the interviewer to probe so that she may go into more depth if she chooses, or to clear up any misunderstandings: they enable the interviewer to test the limits of the respondents knowledge (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p277)

A Likert scale clearly lacks this flexibility, since respondents can only choose one of five responses. Similarly, this limited response prevents subjects from going into 'more depth', since they cannot go beyond the limitations of the five responses contained in the scale. Interviewers are also unable to explore the subtle variations in the response of those who have completed the survey. Whilst these limitations are important, they are balanced by the fact that more than one research instrument is being used. Hence the use of interviews and a document study allows for more flexible exploration of responses. The Likert scale in the survey offers the specific advantage of 'usable and analysable data', whilst the later use of interviews and a document study allows for greater flexibility and the opportunity to 'go into more depth'.

The third and final operational issue was to ensure that the survey was repeatable, in order to generate responses from Years 12 and 13 which could be compared. Fowler (1993) suggests that this can be achieved by ensuring that 'the questions should all mean the same thing to all respondents' in order to avoid 'the use of terms or concepts that can have multiple meanings' (Fowler, 1993, p74). These issues were addressed through a pilot survey, that will be discussed within the next section.

### 3.11 SURVEY DESIGN AND THE ISSUE OF SAMPLING

Cohen and Manion (1998) suggest that ‘typically, surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions’ (1998, p83). However, before this gathering of data can take place, the construction of the survey needs to be carefully considered. Moser (1958) suggests that it is crucial to consider the purpose of the survey:

The first step in designing a questionnaire is to define the problem to be tackled by the survey and hence to decide on what questions to ask (Moser, 1958, p212)

Having defined this central purpose the researcher should then move on to ‘the identification and itemizing of subsidiary topics that relate to its central purpose’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p85). Fowler suggests that these ‘subsidiary topics’ should be regarded as ‘variables to be measured’. These variables should then be broken up into significant sub-groups:

- a. Which variables are designed to be dependent variables, for which measures of central tendency are to be estimated.
- b. Which variables are needed as independent variables in order to understand distributions and patterns of association (Fowler, 1993, p95)

The variables to be measured in this research relate to the distinct elements that make up the internal culture of the school.

The next issue to be considered is the population, that is the people approached in the survey. Johnston points out that ‘They are the desired providers of the information sought, and are sometimes referred to as ‘units of enquiry’ (Johnson, 1994, p15). She points out that for reasons of expense, time and accessibility, it is common to decide to sample a representative group of this population which will allow researchers to make generalisations about this population. Cohen and Manion (1998) suggest that a sampling frame should be developed, providing a list of everyone in the population from which the sample is drawn. Various methods can then be used to construct a sample of the available population. For example, simple random sampling involves everyone in the population having an equal chance of being selected, perhaps through use of a computer program, whilst within a stratified sample a population is divided into strata before a random sample is constructed. Various forms of non-random sampling are also available. A convenience sample targets those who are most readily available, whilst in a purposive sample ‘researchers handpick the cases to be included in the

sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p89). Quota sampling uses a form of stratified sampling by obtaining 'representatives of the various elements of the total population in the proportion in which they occur there' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p89). Dimensional sampling develops quota sampling by identifying a number of factors of interest and then 'obtaining at least one respondent of every combination of these factors' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p89). A final approach is to use 'snowball' sampling, within which researchers identify individuals who have the required characteristics. These individuals are then used as 'informants' to identify others who can be included in the sample.

This survey employed in this study will use a census, defined by Johnson as a survey that makes enquiries of 'the entire population' (1994, p15). The issue of sampling is a significant one, since it appeared that the easiest way to administer the survey was to ask the whole year group to complete it. The survey had deliberately been designed to take approximately ten minutes to complete, since a longer period of time was much more likely to result in non-completion. It was easiest to administer a survey of this sort during a form period or at the end of an assembly. The relatively short completion time made it possible to ask students to complete it on the spot before returning it to the person administering the survey. This approach removes the need to sample the population and solves issues of non-completion (although some students were absent from the assembly at which it was completed). In practical terms it would be more cumbersome to sample the population, since it is unlikely that any given random sample would be as readily available in one location. This large sample also allows for greater confidence when making generalizations about the results produced by the survey. Surveying the entire population will also make it easier to allow for some pupils being absent. If the survey had used a stratified sample the effect of absences might have a significant distorting effect, but the impact of absences upon a census is limited, because of the size of population that is being surveyed. However, when selecting the sample for student interviews a stratified sample was employed, for reasons that will be explored in section 3.11.

Having explored the issues underlying the selection of sampling method, it is also necessary to explore the factors influencing the design of the questionnaire. The

importance of considering the design of the questionnaire is highlighted by Davidson (1970), who suggests that surveys must 'minimize potential errors ... a questionnaire has to help in engaging their interest, encouraging their cooperation and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth' (cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p93). Particular considerations might be the number of questions on a page, the type face used, size of font and ensuring that respondents are thanked for their help. Linked to these considerations is the need for particular care over the wording of questions:

Speaking the common language means finding synonyms for the polysyllabic and Latinate constructions that come easily to the tongue of the college educated ( Lewis-Beck, 1994, p92)

Similarly, the questions should be neutral in tone:

A leading question is one which, by its content, structure and wording, leads the respondent in the direction of a certain answer (Moser, 1958, p225)

Responding to these pieces of advice, no more than six questions were put on one page and a large typeface was used in order to give an uncluttered feeling to the survey. Respondents are thanked for their help and the pilot study, described in the next paragraph, was used to test the clarity and neutrality of the questions used.

The survey was piloted with a group of 12 Sixth Form pupils in the year group above those surveyed, allowing students the opportunity to comment on design, language and ease of completion. The selection of this group responded to Fowler's advice that 'respondents drawn from a population the same as, or similar to, the population to be included in the survey' (1993, p101). The actual layout of the survey did not appear to cause any problems and there was no evidence that questions had been missed or that respondents felt the page was too crowded. However, when answering question 13 some respondents did circle both 3 and 4. The instructions for the survey had asked respondents to ring only one number, but the comment may have been missed by some students. Hence, those who administered the survey were asked to emphasise at the start that only one response was required. In a minority of responses the wording of particular questions was commented upon, although normally this was to indicate a personal response to a particular question. Hence one student added "not enough" to the question 'The school values sporting achievement more highly than academic achievement', whilst another sought to qualify a question by adding 'outside fixed

lessons' when asked about the freedom to decide when to work. In these cases the responses did not appear to require a change to the wording of the survey, rather they were a way of adding a more personal response to the narrow confines of the Likert Scale. Hence the design of the survey appeared to be appropriate and only minor changes were required as a result of the pilot. The responses of the pilot group are shown as Year 14 within the survey data discussed in chapters four and five. Although only representing 12 students, this data provides a wider context to the study, by exploring the responses of another year group. However, given the small size of the sample, generalisations cannot be made about their responses in the same way as the data derived from a survey of all students in years 12 and 13.

Before the survey is administered it is also important to devise a method for coding, (that is, assigning a code number to each answer in a survey question):

A coding frame is generally developed in advance... it is vital to get the coding frame right from the outset – extending them or making alterations at a later point in the study is both expensive and wearisome (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p102)

Fowler points out that one way to resolve issues over coding responses is to 'provide a list of acceptable answers' (1993, p78) The survey used within this study will follow this strategy, constructing a survey that will produce a range of ordinal data, whereby 'people or events are ordered or placed in ordered categories along a single dimension' (Fowler, 1993, p81).

A number of approaches will be adopted when analysing the ordinal data provided by the student surveys. Survey data for each question will be presented through the use of box and whisker plots. These 'boxplots' are defined by Gorard (2001) as:

A diagram used by some analysts to express the distribution of a set of values. A line (whisker) is drawn from the smallest to largest values which are not outliers, and a box is drawn to the middle of the line covering the median and the middle 50 per cent of the values (Gorard, 2001, p183)

Analysis will compare the boxplot diagrams produced by Years 12, 13 and 14, with a particular focus upon the positioning of the median line within each. Gorard (2001) confirms that ordinal data, such as that produced by the survey, is best explored through a comparison of median values:

(the median) is a form of average, giving the reader an idea of the central or most representative value of a set of measurements. If the measurements are placed in order of size, the median is the value in the

middle... It can only be used with data of ordinal, interval or ratio data (Gorard, 2001, p185)

Variations between year groups in the positioning of the median line will provide important information about the different responses of each year group to the cultural statements contained within the survey questions. If the median line for one group suggests that they agree with a statement, whilst another year group disagrees with a statement, it may be that the data is pointing towards the emergence of a subculture within a particular year group. If the median lines show that all three year groups have responded in a similar way to a survey item, it is likely to point towards a strong feature of the prevailing 'internal' culture of the school that requires further analysis and exploration.

As well as focusing upon the positioning of the median line within the boxplot, analysis will also consider the shape of the diagrams for each year group. If the box is relatively small, it will suggest that the middle 50 per cent of responses have been focused around a similar set of responses, implying a similarity of response to the survey item. However, if the box is larger it points towards a wider variety of responses to the survey statement. Hence analysis will focus not only upon the positioning of the median line, but also upon the range of responses to a particular survey item.

A final analytical tool will be the application of the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test to the ordinal data provided by the survey. This technique will be explored in some detail within the next section of this chapter.

### 3.12 NON-PARAMETRIC ANALYSIS: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

Statistical analysis makes it possible to explore the relationship between different responses to survey questions. In order to explore this issue it was necessary to first select a dependent variable that could be said to express overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the internal culture of the school. The variable selected was question 15 'I feel I might be the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School', since it expressed a summative view of the culture within the school. The application of the Kruskal-Wallis test then made it possible to explore a range of variables (in the form of different questions within the survey) that may have had a bearing upon this outcome variable. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric

equivalent of an ANOVA (or Analysis of Variance) test, used to 'test one dependent variable in terms of one independent variable' (Gorard, 2001, p183). However, Gorard (2001) goes on to point out that when ordinal data is concerned a different test is required:

For analyses with ordinal variables... more powerful tests (often named after their inventors) are available that take advantage of the ranked nature of at least one of the variables (Gorard, 2001, p124)

Gorard (2001) goes on to point out that the application of the test makes it possible to investigate the effect of 'K independent variables' (where 'K' refers to the number of variables) upon the outcome variable. Thus fourteen survey items, as well as year group, were tested in order to examine their impact upon the dependent variable. The Kruskal-Wallis test gave each independent variable a critical value in order to identify the significance level of their effect upon the dependent variable. A score of .000 for a particular question would suggest that it had a very high effect upon the dependent variable of 'I feel I made the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School', whilst a score of .673 would suggest that the survey item had a much lesser effect upon the dependent variable. The test statistic employs a Chi-Square distribution, as do many statistical procedures. However, the use of the Chi-Square distribution should not be confused with the Chi-Square test. Gorard points out that

For any analysis using only nominal variables the chi square test is appropriate (Gorard, 2001, p24)

However, in the case of ordinal data the 'more powerful' Kruskal-Wallis test is required to investigate the effect of a number of 'K independent variables' upon the dependent variable identified above. Unlike the parametric independent group ANOVA, this non-parametric test makes no assumption about the distribution of data (for example, normality). Neave (1981) summarises the process that the test follows:

The Kruskal -Wallis test is also designed to detect differences in average, but now when we have three or more samples to compare. Again, as in the Mann-Whitney test, we rank all the data together (averaging the ranks of tied observations) and form the sum of the ranks in each sample (Reeve, 1981, p28)

Appendix D shows how SPSS has applied the Kruskal-Wallis test to the survey data, ranking data together and then forming the sum of the ranks.

This use of the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test will make it possible to explore in chapter four of this study the two extremes of student responses to the dependent variable 'I feel I might the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School'. Section 4.3 of the chapter will explore survey responses that have a particularly strong bearing upon the statement, as well as survey items that appear to have a relatively limited influence upon the dependent variable. In this way the chapter will explore the factors that have a particularly strong or weak influence upon student responses to the internal culture of the school. These responses will then be placed alongside data collected by other research instruments, such as interviews, in order to assess the forces that help to shape and mould the internal culture of the school.

### 3.13 THE SECOND STAGE OF CASE STUDY: INTERVIEWS

Although Bassey (1999) emphasises the need for social skills in the interviewer, an important first step is to decide upon the nature of the interview that is to be used. Structured interviews can be used, within which the interviewer is left little freedom to make modifications. 'It is therefore characterised by being a closed situation' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p273). Wragg (1984) points out that the structured interview is similar to a questionnaire, making it potentially unsuitable for the complex, 'rich' data that a case study seeks to extract. Certainly in the context of this study, when a survey has already been administered, a structured interview might be seen as repeating the same process. At the opposite spectrum, an unstructured interview offers an open situation and the opportunity to pursue a free and flexible line of questioning. Wragg (1984) comments that 'sensitively and skilfully handled (they) can produce information which might not otherwise emerge' (Wragg, 1984, p185). However, Bell (1987, p72) suggests that most researchers will choose to construct interviews which fall between the two points on the continuum, and that is the case with this case study. Elements derived from structured interviews are used to highlight significant points for exploration. However, although certain key questions were posed, respondents were then free to respond as they wished, with no closed frame controlling their responses.

By using a semi-structured interview, Johnson (1994) points out that information can be collected that is equivalent to that obtained from a structured interview.



The distinction is that the researcher is able to use: 'a more flexible approach ... adapted to the personality and circumstances of the person being interviewed' (Johnson 1994, p45). Possibly drawing upon personal experience, Wragg (1984), strongly argues the case for interviews that combine freedom and structure:

A semi-structured interview schedule tends to be the one most favoured by educational researchers as it allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but allows enough shape to prevent aimless rambling (Wragg, 1984, p184)

Following Wragg's advice, the case study will employ a series of semi-structured interviews. These interviews will involve four pupils taken from each year group (two of whom joined the school at age twelve and two of whom joined the school at sixteen). The questions used in the interview with the Sixth Form students are shown as Appendix B. The table below summarises the way in which particular interview questions addressed the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw identified in the opening chapter of this study:

**TABLE 3.3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THE PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW**

PIECE OF CULTURAL JIGSAW	QUESTION NUMBER
INTERNAL CULTURE	1,2,3,4,5
SUBCULTURE	3,8
INFLUENCE OF LEADERS	6,7
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY	5
CULTURAL CHANGE	9,10

The next chapter will explore the ways in which the questions on internal culture draw upon Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model of cultural formation. The previous chapter argued that this model presented the most comprehensive analysis to date of the factors that lead to the formation of a culture. Hence this study uses Deal and Kennedy's (1988) research as a starting point, before seeking to construct a model that offers a more complete analysis of the factors that combine to produce the overall culture of an institution. The following table summarises the aspects of Deal and Kennedy's model that were used in particular interview questions:

**TABLE 3.4: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEAL AND KENNEDY'S MODEL AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

DEAL'S MODEL	INTERVIEW QUESTION
Shared beliefs and values	1,2,3
Heroes and heroines	4
Stories	5
Informal network of cultural players	4

It was decided that the interview sample should consist of four students from each year group, since the 'rich' and complex data produced by a case study would make it impossible to administer interviews to more than a small group. Interviews with an overall total of eight students provided a significant amount of 'rich' data. A larger sample would have made it difficult to give sufficient weight to the opinions of each respondent, whilst a smaller sample might not have produced a sufficiently wide range of data. Hence a stratified sample was used, defined as 'dividing the population into homogeneous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p87). Consideration was given to constructing a random sample, within which everyone in the defined population would have an equal chance of being selected. However, there was a danger that a totally random sample would not reflect the differing groups who make up the school's Sixth Form, which is composed almost equally of those who had studied at the school in Years 7-11, and those who had joined the school after taking GCSEs at neighbouring schools. It was also important to reflect the range of academic ability and attitudes to study within the school. For all of these reasons a purposive sample was constructed, within which 'researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p89). Four students were selected in Years 12 and 13, two who had been within the school throughout their academic career, and two who had joined the school for the Sixth Form only. Students were also selected across a range of GCSE points scores. Each student was asked if they were willing to take part and they were briefly told that research was taking place into Sixth Form perceptions of the school.

The interviews with students yielded a range of data relating to the research objectives that underlie the study. They clearly yielded a large amount of data relating to the way in which students perceived the internal culture of the school, including extensive material about changing attitudes to study. Significant data also emerged about the 'external' or social pressures upon students and the impact of subcultures upon the overall culture of the school. Student responses also provided a distinctive insight into the impact of leaders upon culture. Once again variations in attitude were of particular interest, with the membership of year group, experience of the school and perceptions of subcultures appearing to have a particular impact.

This study also makes use of a further interview, conducted with Dr Rex Pogson, the school's former headteacher. This interview was principally used to provide additional information relating to the impact of society upon the culture of the school. The principal data for this section was supplied by a document study that explored two versions of the schools' prospectus, one drawn from 1997 and one from 2001 (see section 3.13). Since Dr Pogson, was headteacher of the school for the thirteen years leading up to the completion of the first prospectus, data derived from his interview provides important historical evidence relating to the changing relationship between school and society. Such an approach is advocated by Placier (1998) who argues that 'qualitative studies in education often suffer from an absence of historical contextualization' (1998, p303). She goes on to argue that if this 'historical contextualization' is provided then it should 'help me build an explanation of current events' (1998, p303). Her argument points towards the impact that the culture of the past may have upon the present:

The assumption is that there is a chain of events from past to present that brought the institution or school to its current predicament. Decisions in the past may also have established patterns of belief and practice that could impede the restructuring process (Placier, 1998, p304)

The use of the interview with Dr Pogson provides this 'historical contextualization'. By charting the changing impact of society upon Sixth Form culture, the interview with Dr Pogson points towards the 'chain of events' in the past that may provide a key to the present. Indeed, data derived from the interview also offers 'historical contextualization' that sheds light on other pieces of the cultural jigsaw such as internal culture, subcultures and leadership and culture.

The advantages that arise from making use of 'historical research' can be summarised in the following terms:

Historical research in education can also show how and why educational theories and practices developed. It enables educationalists to use former practices to evaluate newer, emerging ones...it can contribute to a fuller understanding of the relationship between politics and education, between school and society (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p46)

The following table summarises the way in which the 'historical contextualization' provided by the interview with Dr Pogson aids the completion of the cultural jigsaw:

**Table 3.5: THE USE MADE OF THE INTERVIEW WITH DR POGSON IN COMPLETING THE CULTURAL JIGSAW**

PIECE OF CULTURAL JIGSAW	POGSON INTERVIEW
INTERNAL CULTURE	1,2,3,8
SUBCULTURE	
INFLUENCE OF LEADERS	11
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETY	6,7,9,10
CULTURAL CHANGE	3,4

Hence data provided by the interview with Dr Pogson helps the study to achieve its aim of exploring 'the manifestation of culture in a school Sixth Form'. By providing historical context, the interview makes it possible to chart the developing impact of society upon the culture of the school. Without this 'contextualization' it would not be possible to achieve the related aim, identified in section 3.3, of identifying the forces that have shaped the present culture of the Sixth Form.

The analysis of interviews which are "strong in reality" but difficult to organise' (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1984, p101) could potentially prove a challenge. The danger facing the researcher is that he or she could be overwhelmed by the range and quantity of data produced by an interview, particularly when 'there is no book of rules for the design of a case study' (Johnson, 1994, p22). However, Hycner (1985) provides a useful set of guidelines for the analysis of interview data which allows the researcher to be

true to the phenomenon of interview data while also providing concrete guidelines (Hycner, 1985, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p292)

Hycner's (1985) principles provide a useful set of guidelines that will be followed within this study when analysing interview data. Firstly Hycner (1985) recommends that the interviewer should suspend:

the researcher's meanings and interpretations and enter into the world of the unique individual who was interviewed (Hycner, 1985, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p292)

This study has adopted this principle when referring to interview responses. The comments of interviewees are, where possible, quoted fully and are not subject to additional editing. Hence the study seeks to allow the voice of interviewees to be clearly heard. Hycner (1985) also recommends that the researcher should delineate units of meaning that are relevant to the research question. Interview responses will thus be analysed under the five sections of the cultural jigsaw identified within the research objectives of this study. As part of this process the study will eliminate redundancies and cluster together units of relevant meaning, seeking to establish:

Whether there seems to be some common theme or essence that unites several discrete units of relevant meaning (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p294)

Within this process of identifying common themes within interviews, two analytical principles will be followed. Firstly the study will seek to identify areas of agreement between interviewees, particularly when this agreement crosses year groups. Just as importantly, the study will also seek to identify areas of difference between interviewees, seeking to establish whether these differences provide evidence of the emergence of subcultures or just reflect a difference of perception. Cohen and Manion (1998) summarise this approach:

The researcher now looks for the common themes to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations. The first step is to note if there are themes common to all or most of the interviews. The second step is to note when there are themes that are unique to a single interview (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p295)

Hence the study will seek to analyse interview responses by 'clustering' them around the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw, hence breaking them down into 'discrete units of relevant meaning' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p294). The process of analysis will seek to identify both areas of agreement and disagreement between interviewees. This analysis will then be placed in the wider context provided by other parts of the case study such as survey responses, observation and document study.

### 3.14 THE THIRD TOOL OF CASE STUDY: OBSERVATION

Cohen And Manion argue that ‘there are two principal types of observation-participant observation and non-participant observation’ (1998, p107) Whilst ‘cover’ is not required for participant observation, they suggest that it should be carried out by someone who has ‘worked alongside’ the group being observed. Non-participant observers, on the other hand, ‘stand aloof from the group activities they are investigating’ (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p107). The role of the researcher as headteacher makes it unrealistic to engage in anything other than non-participant observation, since the presence of a senior teacher in a classroom often has a significantly inhibiting effect upon behaviour (section 3.16 explores in greater detail the ethical issues raised by this research study). In the light of these problems, it is reasonable to pose the questions: ‘How they see you creates a context within which you see them. How can you handle such social complexities?’ (Cohen and Manion, 1984, p113) However, it could be argued that the very presence of a researcher who is also headteacher introduces an element of participation into the research. The newly constructed Sixth Form common room (opened September 2001) appeared to be the obvious place to undertake observation, since this is the only environment within which all of the Sixth Form gather together at the same time. Relationships and subcultures could only realistically be explored through observation of this environment.

Students in Years 12 and 13 were observed during one lunch hour within the Sixth Form Centre. Rather than seeking to observe under a set of different headings, relevant events were recorded and the time noted at which they occurred. The aim of the observation was to provide a contemporaneous account of the different events and behaviours that took place in the Centre during a lunchtime period away from the direct influence of teachers. Observing students in a lesson would have provided some relevant data, but the more formal situation would have made it more difficult to explore relationships and subcultures. Since part of the purpose of this study is to explore the way in which students experience culture, it also appeared sensible to observe students in an environment that they largely controlled. The observation was intended to contribute to the broad picture of the ‘overall’ Sixth Form culture which the study seeks to investigate. The observational research conducted particularly addressed the research objective

that the study should 'describe the range of subcultures that can exist within a student population'. Since students were observed in the environment of the Sixth Form Centre, it was possible to observe their groupings, relationships and the way in which they related to one another and to members of the teaching staff. Observation also yielded some data relating to the research objective of ascertaining how culture has impacted upon attitudes to study. It could be argued that patterns of study during a lunch-hour will not necessarily be repeated during the school day. However, it was necessary to conduct the observation at this time in order to observe the groupings and relationships that existed between as wide a group of students as possible.

The major problem facing the observer is that his or her presence will be noted and that this in turn will affect the behaviour that is occurring. The researcher's role as headteacher created a particular danger that his presence would be noted and that this would in some way influence the behaviour of students. For this reason the initial observation was conducted in a small room at the rear of the Sixth Form Centre. The room had a glass window, making it possible to observe activity within the Sixth Form Centre. However, the positioning of the room at the rear of the centre meant that students were not aware of the presence of the researcher. The researcher hoped that his presence would not therefore alter the behaviour of students. However, subsequent reflection has led to a re-evaluation of the ethics of this approach to observation, an issue that is addressed further in section 3.18.

Data was collected through a technique that Johnson (1994) defines as 'unstructured observation', within which a researcher is able to

record observation as it occurs. This is more accurate than the retrospective or anticipatory reports of their own behaviour that respondents might give in interview (Johnson, 1994, p55)

Southworth (1987) summarises the problems associated with recording and analysing data collected through this method of observation:

Collecting data was not easy. I had to learn to listen and to look. I have mentioned the learning of a language and in some ways that is an appropriate metaphor. However, the language that I learned was both oral and visual. There is a considerable amount of non-verbal communication in schools (Southworth, 1987, p86)

Hence notes recorded the time that events took place and sought to describe both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of events within the common room. No attempt

was made to impose a set form of recording, since this would have limited the researcher's ability to record the less than predictable range of events that took place (for example, towards the end of the observation, a student entered the common room with a megaphone). Powney and Watts (1987) suggest that a key question in the analysis of observation data is 'what basis is used for filtering the data?' (Powney and Watts, 1987, p177). In this study the range of data produced by the observation will be 'filtered' and analysed according to the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw identified in the introductory chapter. Since observation is used as a method of triangulation for the central research tools of interviews and surveys, analysis of observation will normally follow discussion of data provided by these two central research tools. As with interviews, observation data will be analysed for 'common themes' and 'individual variations' (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p295). Hence observation notes may confirm results emerging from other research tools. However, they may also point towards areas of dissonance that may suggest a different conclusion from that emerging from interview and survey data. The fact that the observation conducted took place within the school's Sixth Form Centre means that the data yielded by the observation is likely to be particularly relevant to three parts of the jigsaw- internal culture, subcultures and culture and society. It is less likely that observation by itself will yield evidence relating to leadership and culture or cultural change, although observation data may contribute to a broader picture assembled from a range of case study data.

Hence the analysis of the observation will aid the process of triangulation and add to the 'richness' of the data provided by the case study. Southworth (1987) suggests that such an approach can be described as 'a post event analysis of what we saw and heard in the school' (Southworth, 1987, p86). He suggests that by analysing observation data alongside material derived from other aspects of case study (such as interviews and surveys) it is possible to develop 'a clarity of vision that only comes with hindsight' (Southworth, 1987, p86)

### **3.15 THE FOURTH TOOL OF CASE STUDY: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

Other features of case study such as interview and observation are often triangulated by the analysis of documents that provide further information about the phenomena being explored: 'The essence of a document or record is that it already exists in a definitive form' (Johnson, 1993, p58). This definition reminds



us of the uniqueness of documentary analysis, since it uses data that already exists, rather than seeking to gather data for a specific research purpose. A strength of this approach is that research can be unobtrusive, with the data or phenomena not being affected by the fact that it is being used for the enquiry.

Documentary analysis is described by Hockett (1955) as 'strictly speaking, a process supplementary to observations, a process by which the historian attempts to test the truthfulness of the reports of observations made by others' (Hockett, 1955, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1984, p50). A recent revision of the school's prospectus offered the chance to analyse the changes and developments within the cultural values articulated by the school. Hence the study explores two versions of the school prospectus, one completed in December 1997 and one in October 2001 (shown as Appendix C). Whilst only part of each document discusses the Sixth Form, each contains sufficient data to be able to chart the changing cultural values of the school over a period of four years. In turn these changing cultural values of the school provide a context against which the cultural values articulated by students can be more clearly understood. Whilst the study primarily explores culture from the perspective of students, this perspective can only be fully understood if the changing influence exerted by the school is also analysed.

However, the potential weaknesses of documentary research also have to be considered. Documents can sometimes be limited or partial, although these problems did not apply to the two prospectuses that were analysed. Documents can also be biased or distorted, shaped by the assumptions of those who wrote them. It could be argued that each prospectus has a bias since they seek to promote the school. However, the analysis focused upon what each prospectus revealed of culture, and bias within the documents did not impede this process. Indeed the changing details selected as strengths of the school provided crucial data about the evolution of culture within the institution. Hence the assumptions underlying the documents became a crucial part of the cultural analysis. Documents can sometimes not be authentic or representative. However, the strength of basing a documentary study around a prospectus is that it unquestionably embodies the 'public face' of the institution at a particular moment in time. Hence it is representative of a whole range of cultural values, both implicit and explicit. A final problem that sometimes confronts documentary

research is the availability of documents. However, the fact that both prospectuses were published within the past five years ensured that there were no significant problems of availability.

Johnson (1993) suggests that one method for analysing historical documents is through content analysis. Within this approach documents are sampled in the light of the research question that has been identified. A recording unit is selected (probably the individual word), items to be researched are coded and these codes are then applied to the text. This approach appeared to be too mechanistic given the complexity of the 'rich' data provided by the two prospectuses, and the need to evaluate evidence in the light of data provided by other research instruments such as surveys and interviews. Hence a more qualitative approach of thematic analysis was adopted, with each document being analysed for evidence relating to the five piece jigsaw of school culture. In this way the study sought to address the two questions that Mouly (1978) suggests should be answered when undertaking any form of documentary analysis:

Has the dependability of the data been adequately established? Has the relevance of the data been adequately explored? (Mouly, 1978, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p55)

Whilst the dependability of the data was not in question, only through this qualitative, thematic analysis, based around the cultural jigsaw, could the complex 'relevance' of the data be fully explored. Through this process of analysis the documentary study made a strong contribution to the research aim of providing a description of 'the manifestation of culture in a school Sixth Form'. The data provided obviously did not offer evidence of how students perceive culture. However, it provided excellent information on the 'official' view of Sixth Form culture upheld by the school, which could then be compared with the responses offered by students in interviews and surveys. It also provided evidence of the changing attitudes and values, both inside and outside the school, which had in turn helped to shape the cultural values of students. Hence the analysis of data provided by the document study made a particular contribution to the exploration of the cultural jigsaw pieces associated with culture and society and cultural change.

### 3.16 THE FIFTH TOOL OF CASE STUDY: ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHS

An original contribution to the field of study is made by Preskill (1995) who suggests that the study of photographic evidence should be part of any case study which explores school culture:

In addition to commonly used methods such as interviews, participant observation and record/document analysis, using photography in evaluation offers 'reality and truth and specific precision' and yet still holds 'magic and mystery'... by valuing intuition and tacit knowledge (Preskill, 1995, p184)

Preskill (1995) makes the interesting claim that the use of photography offers a bridge between different research methods:

Photography thus allows the researcher or evaluator to collect quantitative data in the form of artefacts that can be counted, while it also enables the development of a more holistic, qualitative conception of culture (Preskill, 1995, p184)

The author goes on to describe the way in which she has used photographs as part of a case study which evaluated the progress made by Marston School. As part of the evaluation report 'over 400 photographs were taken that depict the social, environmental and academic setting of the school'. She goes on to describe the strategies she employed when analysing the photographs that she had collected. Photographs were arranged in chronological sequence, before being analysed for 'key issues and elements of organisational culture'. Finally, they were analysed for evidence of a range of cultural features such as 'anecdotes', 'celebrations', 'customs', 'patterns of interaction', 'physical arrangements', 'ways of doing things' and 'historical vestiges'. In summarising the outcomes of her research, Preskill (1995) comments that: 'using the photographs to explore the school's culture appeared to help provide a richer context for interpreting issues with which the school had been grappling' (Preskill, 1995, p191).

The study will build upon Preskill's (1995) work by incorporating analysis of photographic evidence within the overall case study. In accordance with the longitudinal nature of the study, the research will compare photographs of the school Sixth Form collected for the School Prospectus (1997) with those collected for the new edition of the School's Prospectus (2001). Photographs from 1997 and 2001 have been selected because they cover the same period being considered by documentary analysis, surveys and interviews. The fact that photographic and documentary evidence has been derived from the same two prospectuses should assist the process of triangulation. Analysis of data will explore the ways in which

the photographs tell the story of an evolving culture within the Sixth Form. Preskill's (1995) principle of selecting headings that relate to different aspects of culture will be employed. However, in this case the analysis of photographic evidence will be based around the five pieces of the cultural jigsaw identified in the introductory chapter. Patton (1987) points out that photographs are useful to support 'findings established through more conventional data collection and analysis' (Patton, 1987, p171) Hence analysis of photographic evidence within this study will be used to triangulate the findings emerging from the central research instruments of interviews and surveys.

The study of photographic evidence addresses the research objective of 'exploring the ways in which culture changes over a period of time' through its comparison of photographs derived from 1997 and 2001. Even in the space of four years photographic evidence is likely to point to any changes in the cultural values and beliefs of the school. Patton (1987) highlights the point that photographic evidence can provide qualitative evidence about changes that may or may not have occurred within an organisation, suggesting photographs can be

Systematically collected and analyzed to learn about program implementation and outcomes (Patton, 1987, p171)

By focusing analysis upon the comparison of photographs from two different versions of the prospectus, the study seeks to respond to the research objective of considering 'the manifestation of culture in a real life situation'. By using photographs drawn from 1997 and 2001, chapter five will compare two manifestations of culture 'in a real life situation' and seek to consider the ways in which culture has changed during the period covered by the research study. As Preskill (1995) points out:

The value of photography lies in its ability to provide a record of people, places and events in a timely and authentic way (Preskill, 1995, p185)

Hence through an analysis of this 'timely and authentic' photographic data, the study offers a broader context within which to understand Sixth Form culture.

### 3.17 ETHICAL ISSUES

Cohen and Manion (1998) comment that ethical issues 'may stem from the kind of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data' (1998, p348). Their suggestions that problems may arise from 'the nature of the research project itself' is reflected in the issues facing this

research. A situation in which a researcher is not only working within his own school, but is also headteacher of the school, clearly raises a series of ethical issues. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Peter Foster's (1999) evaluation of research commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency and involving serving teachers makes it clear that it is not always easy for serving teachers to become researchers in their own institutions. This danger may be even more acute when the researcher is head of the school. It could be argued that this makes the process of triangulation even more important, since it provides a further safeguards which should prevent data being interpreted in a way that merely confirms pre-existing opinions about the school. Foster warns that the teacher who is a researcher must interpret data very carefully:

In nearly all the reports insufficient evidence is presented to support key claims ... in most cases there are other plausible explanations for claimed differences in dependent variables which the teacher-researcher failed to eliminate (Foster, 1999, p388)

The significant ethical issues facing those who study 'familiar settings' are highlighted by Hammersley (1990). He points towards the danger that 'insiders' will engage in a form of self-deception, choosing to interpret data in a way that fits in with preconceived viewpoints. For this reason, he suggests that outsiders will find it easier to adopt a form of intellectual distancing that allows them to view events in a wider context. This criticism could certainly be applied to this study, since the researcher's role as headteacher clearly leaves him open to the dangers of 'self-deception'. However, the use of a case study, making use of data derived from several different sources, makes it less likely that one piece of data will be misinterpreted in order to fit in with the researcher's pre-conceived ideas. Through this process of inbuilt triangulation, case study researcher helps to ensure a balanced conclusion that draws upon data derived from a wide range of different sources.

A second ethical issue that has a particular relevance to this study is also highlighted by Hammersley (1990). He points out that practitioners may be able to gain access to data because of their role within the institution. However, this role may go on to 'distort and influence' the way in which subjects respond. Hence there is a real danger that respondents to surveys or interviews may provide the answers that they feel they are expected to provide, rather than stated their own

views. Hence some students might feel pressurised into recording what they perceive to be the 'right' answer, rather than offering their own genuine response, influenced by the fact that the survey is being administered by the headteacher. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) comment on the inevitable issues of power and status which arise when children are given a central role in research:

As a guiding principle they advise that while it is desirable to lessen the power differential between children and adult researchers, the difference will remain and its elimination may be ethically inadvisable (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p352)

For this reason the surveys used were organised and administered by other staff. Whilst they were still teachers at the school, students would not have perceived them as having the same the same direct interest in the outcome of the research. Year 13 surveys were completed during tutor group periods, whilst Year 12 surveys were completed within Year 12 PSE classes. However, for ethical reasons colleagues were not asked to withhold the purpose of the survey or the fact that it was part of the headteacher's research. It could be argued that even having taken these precautions, student responses may have been distorted. Student interviews also involved, of necessity, direct contact with the teacher researcher and it could be argued that this contact might the responses offered by students. However, as the next two chapters will illustrate, examination of survey and interview responses produced no evidence that students felt influenced to answer in a particular manner. Indeed, when discussing areas such as the influence of leaders upon culture, it could be argued that students stated the exact opposite of what they might perceive as the 'correct' or approved' answer.

A third significant ethical issue is pinpointed by Hitchcock and Hughes (1988). They raise the issue of how open a researcher should be about the investigation that is taking place:

Doing participant observation or interviewing one's peers raises ethical problems that are directly related to the nature of the research technique employed. The degree of openness or closure of the nature of the research and its aims is one that directly faces the teacher researcher (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1988, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p374)

The earlier discussion of the conduct of observation made it clear that the researcher concealed his presence in the Sixth Form Centre from students because of fears that knowledge of his presence would have an impact upon student behaviour. In this instance the desire to gain accurate data was viewed as being more important than informing students about the observation that was taking

place. However, in both the student surveys and interviews, the purpose of the research was discussed. In the case of student interviews, there was also a brief discussion of the issues being explored through interview questions. Hence, the main body of the research employed considerable openness about its purpose. Indeed there would have been no obvious benefit in being anything less than open.

A final ethical issue is raised by the comments of Finch (1986):

The researcher is very much in a position of trust in being accorded privileged access to information which is usually private or invisible. Working out how to ensure that such trust is not betrayed is no simple matter (Finch, 1986, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p374)

The issue of protecting trust is particularly strong for the teacher researcher who is working with students. One way in which this trust can be protected is through a deliberate policy of anonymity for all respondents to both surveys and interviews. Transcripts of interviews were not circulated to other teachers within the institution or discussed by other members of the institution. Hence the trust shown by students in agreeing to take part in the research was respected in that their anonymity was maintained and comments were not passed on to others who might not appreciate the context in which they were made. Issues of trust were also considered in selecting the data to be explored for this research study. The document study deliberately concentrated upon two drafts of the school's prospectus: public documents that did not contain confidential material. Whilst the privileged position of the researcher would have allowed him to gain access to more confidential documentary records, the researcher concluded that this would be an inappropriate breach of his position of trust within the institution.

Whilst the research clearly raises issues which need to be sensitively considered, it does not infringe the code of ethical behaviour outlined by Cohen and Manion:

a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. Being ethical limits the choices we can make in pursuit of truth. Ethics say that the whole truth is good, respect for human dignity is better (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p359).

However, the ethical imperative emerging from this section is the need to ensure that this trust is respected and handled with sensitivity and honesty. Pring (2000) points out that research is an intensely moral activity:

To research them through deceptive methods would be to treat them as objects, things, not a persons worthy of respect (Pring, 2000, p3)

He therefore concludes that: 'there seems an inescapable dependence on the trustworthiness of the researcher' (Pring, 2000, p4). Hence the responsibility of the researcher is to ensure that he displays the trustworthiness for which Pring (2000) calls. As part of this challenge, the study has attempted to maintain the accuracy of data whilst ensuring that a 'power relationship' between student and researcher does not distort results. The researcher will also aim to ensure through techniques such as triangulation that his position within the organisation does not lead to any form of 'self-deception'.

### **3.18 THE ETHICS OF OBSERVATION**

Section 3.13 outlined the way in which the researcher sought to guard against the danger that his presence might distort behaviour within the Sixth Form Centre by undertaking 'covert' observation of students. Hence the observer placed himself in a separate room at the back of the centre that looked onto the centre through a glass screen. His entrance into the room was not concealed from students and on a number of occasions poor visibility within the room meant that the researcher sat at the back of the main common room, clearly visible to all those within the common room. However, the researcher's original intention was to undertake 'covert' observation, within which his presence would be concealed from those he was observing. Subsequent re-evaluation of ethical values underlying the study has led the researcher to question this particular approach to observation. The researcher had intended to respond to Cohen and Manion's (1998) comment that:

It is frequently the case that the type of observation undertaken by the researcher is associated with the type of setting in which the research takes place (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p109)

A decision was taken that the 'type of setting' created by the Sixth Form Centre required the researcher to seek the 'complete anonymity' adopted by researchers such as Patrick (1973) whose:

researcher role remained hidden from the members of the Glasgow gang in whose activities he participated for a period of four months (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p107)

Such an approach is particularly associated with participant observation that seeks to probe the characteristics of particular subcultures. Hence the work of the Chicago School, discussed in section 2.3.1 draws in part in on such a 'covert' approach in order to accurately study delinquent subcultures.



However, the decision to adopt such an approach in this research was flawed since it breached the principle of 'voluntary informed consent' set out by the British Educational Research Association:

The association takes voluntary informed consent to be the condition in which participants understand and agree to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway (British Educational Research Association, 2004, p6)

No attempt had been made to gain such consent before the observation began, and this clearly seriously undermines the ethical basis of the research that then took place. The covert nature of the observation is also seriously questioned by the same British Educational Research Association guidelines:

Researchers must therefore avoid deception or subterfuge unless their research design specifically requires it (British Educational Research Association, 2004, p6)

They go on to recommend that if for any reason such 'subterfuge is employed: approval for this course of action should be obtained from a local or institutional ethics committee (British Educational Research Association, 2004, p6)

At that time there was no such committee available for students on the Doctorate of Education at the University of Leicester. Parker's (1973) research into Glaswegian gang subcultures clearly demanded an element of 'subterfuge', both to preserve the accuracy of data and to protect the researcher himself. The same point can reasonably be made about the research of the Chicago School, whose work into delinquent subcultures would clearly have been undermined if they had revealed their full intentions as field researchers. However, on reflection such subterfuge was not essential to this study, and the breaching of the ethical principles outlined by the British Educational Research Association was a significant error. Hence on reflection a more open approach should have been adopted, within which the planned observation was discussed with the Sixth Form and the purpose of the research explained. Members of the Sixth Form would have readily accepted this since a similar approach had already been adopted for both the surveys and interviews used within this study. Cohen and Manion point out that such open observation is the common approach adopted by non-participant observers:

The best illustration of the non-participant observer role is perhaps the case of the researcher sitting at the back of a classroom coding up every three seconds the exchanges between teacher and pupils (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p109)

This open approach should have been adopted at all stages within the observation.

The significant ethical issue discussed in this section highlights the accuracy of Finch's suggestion that when undertaking research:

Working out how to ensure that trust is not betrayed is no simple matter (cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p374)

Once again one is reminded of the complex range of ethical issues facing someone undertaking research within his or her own institution:

The degree of openness or closure of the nature of the research and its aims is one that directly faces the teacher researcher (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1988, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p374)

### 3.19 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the research aims and objectives underlying the study of Sixth Form culture. Through using a case study which employs the quantitative approach of a survey alongside a range of qualitative techniques such as interviews, observation and documentary and photographic studies, the research will seek to construct a model that achieves 'a more effective description of the manifestation of culture in a real life situation'. Both surveys and interviews will be used to provide extensive data about the ways in which students perceive culture, and the research will explore whether student data by itself can provide an adequate description of culture. A wide range of additional data will also be collected from sources such as observation, documentary study and photographic analysis in order to provide a broader picture of Sixth Form culture against which the students' comments can be considered. The researcher's role as headteacher leads to a series of ethical issues which do not invalidate the research but which need to be constantly borne in mind.

The study will now move on to a discussion and analysis of the data that has been collected from the differing sources described in this chapter. In the course of this process of discussion it will become apparent that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) deceptively simple definition of culture as 'the way we do things around here' is more problematic than it first seems. Once we begin to explore the context provided by 'around here' it becomes apparent that 'the way we do things' is influenced by a surprisingly complex and unexpected series of factors. Taking Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model of the formation of culture as a starting point, the next chapter will explore what the data collected tells us about the internal culture of a school Sixth Form. Chapter five will then illustrate the ways in which

this study goes beyond Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model, to offer a more complete picture of the forces that shape and develop culture.

#### 4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA PART ONE

##### 4.1 AN ANALYTICAL MODEL THAT BUILDS UPON DEAL AND KENNEDY'S RESEARCH

Chapter two of this study explored the ways in which Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model of cultural formation offered the clearest analysis to date of the forces that combine to shape the development of culture within an institution. Their typology offers a view of culture that can be relatively easily operationalised within an educational context, whilst other writers have offered an analysis of culture that cannot be as easily operationalised within an educational context. Hence Barth's (2002) description of organisational culture as 'a complex pattern of norms, beliefs, behaviours, values, ceremonies, traditions and myths' offers a view of culture that appears accurate as an abstract concept. However, Barth (2002) offers few clues as to how these ideas might be explored within an educational setting. Whilst Barth's model is difficult to explore in a 'real life' educational setting, other models fail to grasp the complexity of the school environment. Beare et al (1989) suggest that culture should be viewed as:

- Concepts and language
- Behaviour
- Visual images (Beare et al, 1989, p173)

However, these three areas are so broad that the researcher would once again struggle to operationalise them within an educational context. In contrast, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model offers a precise description of the way in which different elements of the life of a school combine to shape the internal culture of the institution, suggesting that the researcher should focus upon:

- Shared values and beliefs
- Heroes and heroines
- Ritual
- Ceremony
- Stories
- The network of cultural players

This chapter will seek to explore the internal culture of a West Midlands Sixth Form through surveys and interview questions that draw upon aspects of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model. Hence interviews have sought to explore those elements which Deal and Kennedy claim make up the culture of a school, by asking students about their perception of the values of the school, anecdotes which sum up the school's values and which members of staff have an important

role within the institution. The survey employed has also drawn upon elements of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model. Hence 'shared values and beliefs' are explored by asking students about the relative importance of academic and sporting achievement within the school. Given the school's identity as a grammar school, a key part of these 'shared values' is likely to relate to the academic identity of the school. Hence the survey poses a series of questions about attitudes to study, such as the priority attached to academic study and attitudes shown to other students who are perceived as being successful. The survey seeks to explore the extent to which students share the academic focus of the school, for example by asking them to respond to the statement 'academic work is my main priority'.

However, earlier chapters of this study have made it clear that internal culture only represents one piece of the larger jigsaw that makes up school culture. For this reason it can be argued that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model by itself does not provide a sufficiently broad measure of culture. Hence this study seeks to construct a broader model that draws together all of the elements that influence and shape culture. In this way it makes a fresh contribution to our understanding of culture, by constructing an alternative model that offers a broader understanding of the factors that make up the overall culture of an institution. Chapter five will outline the four additional elements that need to be explored if the jigsaw of school culture is to be fully completed. The first additional element will be the significance of subcultures. Stoll and Fink (1995) suggest that school culture is 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p87). Hence the model of cultural analysis used within this chapter will collect and explore data relating to subcultures within the Sixth Form. The semi-structured nature of the interviews offers an appropriate form in which to collect this data. As part of the interview process students will be asked to discuss subcultures and the reasons that have led to their development. Surveys are also used to reveal evidence of the formation and development of subcultures through the analysis of responses which diverge from the normal pattern of students answers. Observation is also used to provide further evidence of subcultures within the school through the exploration of student behaviour within the Sixth Form Centre. Documentary analysis contributes to the analysis of the issue by examining sources both inside and outside the school that may have encouraged the development of subcultures. Having drawn together these methods of data

collection, the study seeks to provide fresh insights into the forces that shape the formation of subcultures. Chapter two explored the theories of subcultural formation put forward by the Chicago School of criminologists, and the suggestion that subcultures might be formed by either a rejection of mainstream values, an attempt to reverse the normal pattern of mainstream values or an acceptance of existing social values, but not how to achieve them. Evidence will be provided that may point towards the accuracy or otherwise of these theories and which will also seek to establish whether other processes also exert an influence upon the formation of subcultures within the school Sixth Form.

The second element that chapter five will add to the model of cultural analysis is an exploration of the role of leaders. Hall and George's (1999) comment that: 'No matter what the leader does (and does not do) the effects are detectable throughout the school' (Hall and George, 1999, p165) makes it clear that any exploration of culture within a school environment must consider the impact of leadership. Chapter two explored the critical debate that surrounds this issue, contrasting Hargreaves' (1995) comment that 'no school or teacher culture' can directly impact upon learning with the claim of Fullan (2003) that leaders have a moral duty to change culture in order to 'improve the learning of all students'. This study seeks to explore this critical dispute in the context of the experiences of a group of Sixth Form students, examining their view of the impact that leaders have had upon the culture of their institution. Hence interviews with students ask them to discuss who has the greatest impact upon the culture of the school. The study is distinctive in exploring student perceptions of the impact of leaders upon culture, rather than assuming that the opinions and perceptions of teachers and leaders themselves provides all the necessary data on the subject. However, for the purposes of triangulation, the interview with Dr Pogson also explores the impact of leaders upon culture, in the process revealing some of the assumptions that may have misled researchers over the years. The documentary study also explores evidence of the impact of leadership upon culture within the Sixth Form by exploring cultural change and the extent to which this has been influenced by decisions taken by school leaders. As part of this process photographic evidence will also be explored for evidence of cultural change, using imagery drawn from two school prospectuses to explore the ways in which leaders have sought to influence culture. Preskill (1995, p184) reminds us that photographs offer 'a more

holistic, qualitative conception of culture' and the study will use these images to provide a qualitative measure of the impact of leadership that complements quantitative data such as that produced by student survey responses.

A third element to be explored in chapter five will be the impact of external forces upon Sixth Form culture. The work of Bernstein (1974) and Stoll (1998), discussed in chapter two of this study, points towards the significance of society and its impact upon the culture of the school. For example, Stoll comments that 'changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture' (Stoll, 1998, p2). The chapter also considered the claim of Dimmock and Walker (2000) that educational management has neglected the influence of 'societal culture' and the argument of Becker and Greer (1974) that external social factors could create 'latent' cultural identities within an institution. For this reason the cultural model has incorporated an attempt to explore the impact of social trends upon the culture of the school. Hence the survey completed by students explores the impact of part time jobs and the response of students to the grades which society expects them to achieve. The interview with Dr Pogson also provides historical data relating to social issues such as the changing relationship between school and the outside world and the changing impact of the expectations of society upon the behaviour of students. In these ways the study seeks to explore the ways in which the 'changes in society' noted by Stoll (1998) may have helped to shape culture within the institution. The study also seeks to establish whether, as Becker and Greer suggest, social identities outside the school can influence culture within the school. The study also seeks to address Bernstein's argument that some students may be alienated from the school because their experience of society outside the institution does not match the 'total culture of the school'. Analysis of data will explore whether Sixth Formers feel that the expectations of the society outside the school run counter to the values promoted by the school itself. Through this process the extent to which students feel more influenced by the internal culture of the school or the culture that exists outside the institution will be considered.

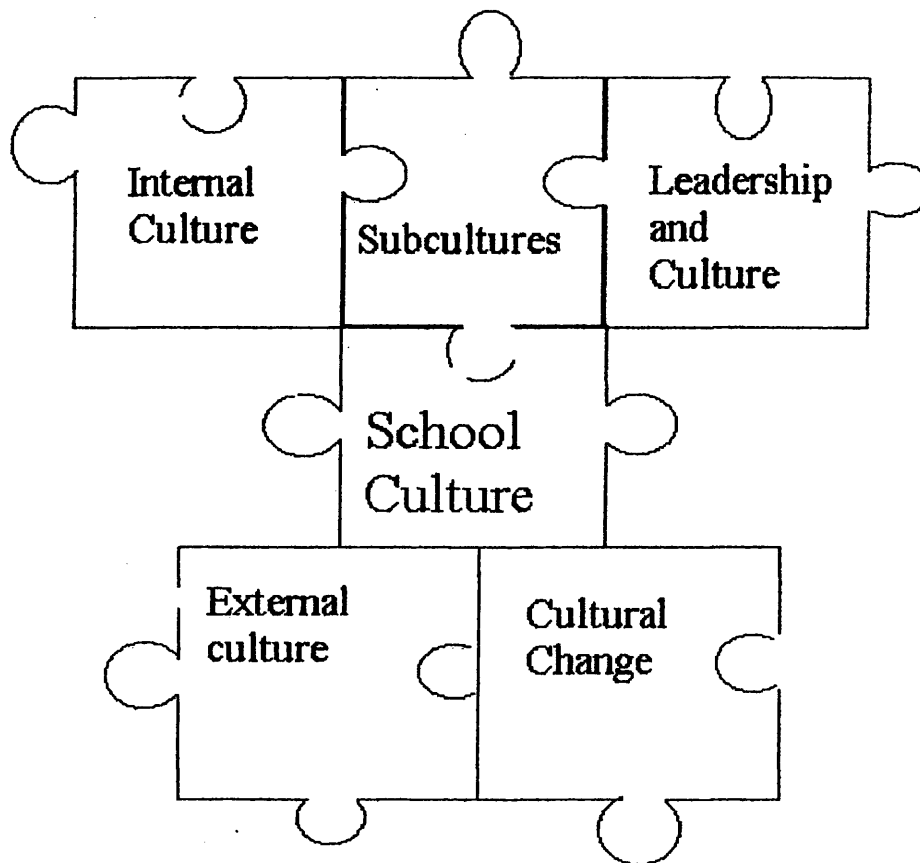
The final element of the cultural model explored by the study is a consideration of the extent to which culture has changed during the period covered by the study. Data collected deals with the period from 1997 until 2001, although interviews with Dr Pogson do make reference to 1985, the point at which his headship began.

Chapter two explored the disputed concept of cultural change. Researchers such as Lumby (2001) have questioned the extent to which culture can be changed in a planned and structured manner, suggesting that: 'culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people'. Others have suggested that key members of the organisation, particularly leaders, have the ability to mould and shape culture in certain, desired directions. Morgan's (1997) ambitious definition of 'reculturing' demonstrates the extent to which some writers in the field believe that culture can be manipulated, describing reculturing as: 'creating a detailed language and code of behaviour through which the desired new reality can be lived on a daily basis ... it is about inventing what amounts to a new way of life' (Morgan, 1997, p143). In the light of this critical debate, the cultural model used in this study seeks to explore the extent to which the organisation has experienced cultural change. A variety of sources are used to collect this data. The distribution of the cultural survey to students in Years 12, 13 and 14 makes it possible to chart any changes in the response of students to cultural issues such as the balance between academic and sporting priorities. Interviews with students from Years 12 and 13 also ask respondents to chart the extent to which they feel culture has changed and developed. Data derived from the two different versions of the school prospectus, one completed in 1997 and one completed in 2001, also provides evidence of the way in which culture has changed and developed. Photographic evidence derived from this study, including evidence of significant changes in the physical environment, contribute further to the evidence of cultural change. The interview with Dr Pogson also offers a broader historical context, providing evidence of the ways in which present day Sixth Form culture may differ from that which existed ten or more years ago. Using all of these sources, the study seeks to determine not only whether cultural change has taken place, but also what forces have influenced any change that has taken place.

Chapter two of this study suggested that existing models of cultural formation did not fully explore the complexity of the process of cultural development. The chapter suggested that, whilst Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model offered the clearest analysis to date, significant elements within the formation of culture were omitted from this model. The introductory chapter of this study advanced a more comprehensive model, offering the image of culture as a three-dimensional jigsaw, with each section of analysis needing to be in place before the overall



picture of culture emerged. Hence the different pieces of the cultural jigsaw can be summarised in the manner shown in Figure 4.1:



**Figure 4.1**  
**The Jigsaw of School Culture**

## **4.2 KEY ISSUES FOR ANALYSIS**

Through the model of cultural analysis outlined in the previous section, the study seeks to develop a more comprehensive model for the exploration of culture. As discussed in chapter two, previous studies have tended to focus upon only one of the cultural dimensions outlined above. For example, Dalin (1993) used surveys to explore the internal culture of schools, whilst Bernstein (1974) sought to analyse the impact of society upon school culture. Chapter two suggested that Deal and Kennedy's model (1988) of cultural formation offered the fullest model of cultural formation to date, but that even this did not examine all of the factors that form and shape culture. Over the next two chapters the study will demonstrate that in reality the five elements discussed in section 4.1 combine in a complex manner to produce the entity that can be described as 'Sixth Form culture'.

The first piece in the jigsaw of school culture used within this study explores the 'internal culture' of the school by examining the internal factors, specific to the school that have impacted upon the culture of the organisation. Nias (1989) points towards the need to study features which are specific to the cultures of particular schools, allowing researchers to engage in 'detailed study of particular school cultures'. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, this will be done through the application of Deal and Kennedy's model (1988) to the Sixth Form culture being explored by this study. Their model emphasises the importance of 'shared values and beliefs' and in exploring these the research will inevitably focus upon some factors that relate to the particular circumstances of the school. Hence issues to be explored within this section will include the significance of the school's identity as an academic grammar school and the importance of features associated with the school's identity as a boys school, for example its emphasis upon sporting achievement.

The second piece of the school culture jigsaw is an exploration of the range of subcultures that exist within the institution, as well as considering the ways that they impact upon the overall culture of the school. Prosser's (1999) comment that 'during the 1990s there has been a move away from research grappling with holistic notions of school culture and a growing interest in subcultures and their dynamic relationship' (Prosser, 1999, p11) illustrates the increasing importance

attached to the study of subcultures. However, it does not seem adequate to simply point out that a number of subcultures that exist within an organisation. This study seeks to take the further step suggested by Prosser of first identifying subcultures and then exploring their impact upon the organisation as a whole. Sarason (1982) claims that the range of subcultures 'is of such a degree as to rule out the possibility that any one individual can know the culture of the school' (1982, p185). Hence this study also seeks to explore whether a distinct Sixth Form culture exists, or whether what the school really has is 'a mosaic of organisational realities' (Morgan, 1997, p137) made up of a variety of different subcultures, with no one dominant culture existing. Chapter two highlighted the significance of the Chicago School and their exploration of deviant behaviour, discussing the work of writers such as Cohen (1955), Becker (1963), Matza (1969) and Young (1971). The previous section of this chapter highlighted the significance of their different theories of subcultural formation, involving either a rejection of mainstream values, an attempt to reverse the normal pattern of mainstream values or an acceptance of existing social values, but not how to achieve them. The data discussed in chapter five will provide an opportunity to examine whether a 'real life' educational setting does or does not provide evidence to support these theories.

The third piece of the cultural jigsaw considers the role of leaders. Chapter two demonstrated the widespread assumption that leaders have a dominant influence upon culture. Bush and Anderson (2003) illustrate this by suggesting that leaders are perceived as having a 'responsibility' for 'generating and sustaining culture'. This study seeks to test the accuracy of this statement. Through the cultural model described above, it seeks to explore the true extent of the influence of leaders upon school culture. Bush and Anderson's comment can only be accurate if leaders are demonstrated to have a central role in 'generating and sustaining culture'. If other stakeholders have an equal influence upon culture, then it is unreasonable to expect leaders to accept 'responsibility' for the culture within their institution. In exploring these issues, the study places a strong emphasis upon the perceptions of students. Since they both experience the culture of the institution and play a crucial role in shaping it, the study argues that they are well qualified to assess who has the greatest influence upon culture. It may well be that commentators who are themselves leaders have attached an exaggerated

importance to the role of leaders, since this accords with their perception of themselves and their overall world view. Through its five part model of the formation of culture, this study seeks to redress the balance by assessing the contribution of leaders to the shaping of culture alongside the impact of subcultures, changes in society and other forces within the internal culture of the institution.

The fourth piece of the cultural jigsaw seeks to address the relative neglect of the impact of social factors upon culture. Chapter two of this study explores the comment of Dimmock and Walker (2000) that 'societal culture as an influence in the study of educational management has been conspicuous by its absence'. Too often culture has been seen as generated by wholly internal factors, a point illustrated by the absence of factors relating to the society outside the school in Deal and Kennedy's model (1988). However, as Stoll points out, 'Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture' (Stoll, 1998, p2). It is often convenient to exclude social factors, because it is relatively easier to look within one self-contained organisation, rather than seeking a range of broader influences that are external to the organisation. However, by attempting to explore the influence of external social factors upon school culture, the model of cultural analysis used within this study offers a more comprehensive discussion of the elements that have shaped organisational culture. Interview data will provide a particular focus for this exploration, analysing the growing influence of the society outside the school upon Sixth Form students.

A final piece of the jigsaw of Sixth Form culture is a consideration of the extent to which culture has changed within the school over the past five years. The previous section highlighted the critical debate that has taken place over the extent to which culture can be modified in a planned way. Much of the controversy around cultural change has centred around the perceived ability of leaders to mould change. Hence whilst Bate (1994) is adamant in stating 'Culture cannot be changed in the abstract. You do not deliberately set out to change the culture' (Bate, 1994, p23) Evans insists that 'true leaders' must be involved in engineering 'a shift in mindset at every level that requires cultural change on a huge scale.' (Evans, 2001, p47). This study will explore evidence that cultural change has taken place, but will also acknowledge the complexity of the processes

that have led to the change. In so doing it will question some of the assumptions that underlie national policy for achieving change in schools, in particular the view that achieving cultural change is a relatively simple process which can be engineered by a small group of leaders. The study will also focus upon the accuracy of Lumby's (2001) argument that leaders can influence but not necessarily manage or control culture. Through this process the study will seek to establish whether the literature surrounding cultural change is based around aspiration and assumption, rather than clear evidence. As part of this exploration the study will explore the influence of past events upon the present culture of the school. Culture is the product of events that have taken place throughout the history of the school. Hence Nias (1989) comments upon the need to take account of the 'micro-political activity and internally initiated change' (Nias, 1989, p143) that can only be discovered by looking into past events within an institution. Two versions of the school's prospectus, spanning the period between 1997-2001 enable the study to explore the impact of this 'internally initiated change'. The use of an interview with Dr Pogson, the headteacher of the school for the thirteen years up to 1997, also serves to establish a historical context that makes it possible to explore the influence of the past upon the present.

Overall, by bringing all these strands of cultural analysis together, this study seeks to go beyond a one-dimensional approach that only considers the influence of internal or external factors. In this way the study responds to the demand of Striven (1985) that the researcher should demonstrate 'the skills of the ethnographer' when daring to enter the complex arena of culture.

#### 4.3 THE FIRST PIECE OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW: APPLYING DEAL'S MODEL TO INTERNAL CULTURE

##### 4.3.1 SHARED BELIEFS AND VALUES

Deal and Kennedy (1988) argue that shared beliefs and values are fundamental to the culture of any organisation:

These are the basic concepts and beliefs of an organisation: as such they form the heart of the corporate culture (Deal and Kennedy, p15)

They go on to argue that these shared values provide culture yardsticks for members of the institution, defining 'standards of achievement within the organisation' (p15). They also suggest that a measure of a 'strong culture' is the willingness of members of the organisation to discuss 'these beliefs openly and

without embarrassment'. As discussed in section 4.1, this chapter seeks to apply Deal and Kennedy's model to the internal culture of the Sixth Form of a West Midlands school, exploring in this section the ability of Sixth Form students to discuss the cultural beliefs of the school 'openly and without embarrassment.' The analysis of shared beliefs and values will discuss responses to student interviews as well as several questions used in the survey of Year 12, 13 and 14 students. As mentioned in chapter three, the survey used with students was designed to particularly focus upon the internal culture of the school. Having used survey responses to establish cultural values currently existing within the school, data from interviews was then used to explore issues in greater depth.

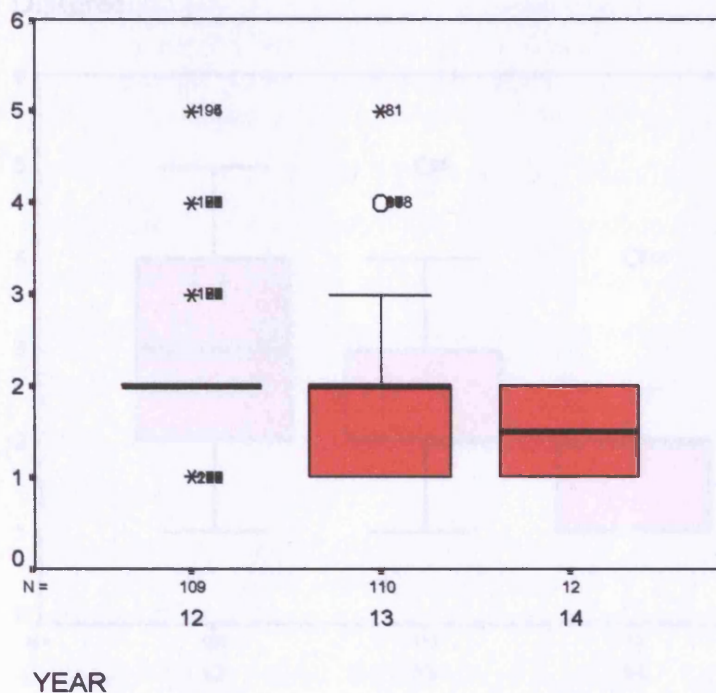
'Box and Whisker' diagrams have been used to summarise the response of students to each survey question, since they provide a readily accessible overview of the responses of each of the three year groups. The horizontal axis of the graph indicates year group, whilst the vertical axis indicates the range of responses which the statement produced. The box represents the inter-quartile range, containing the central 50% of values, whilst the whiskers are lines that extend from the box to the highest and lowest values. Extreme highest and lowest values are represented as 'outliers' (an arrow with the survey number next to it). A line across the box indicates the median point of survey responses. The median line is a particularly useful detail since ordinal data, such as that produced by the survey, is best explored through a comparison of median values. In each case the actual question used in the survey will be followed by a 'box and whisker' diagram which summarises the findings for each year group.

An analysis of responses to the survey points towards the centrality of academic values within the school. The first question in the survey demonstrates this point:



1. Academic school work is my main priority whilst in the Sixth Form

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

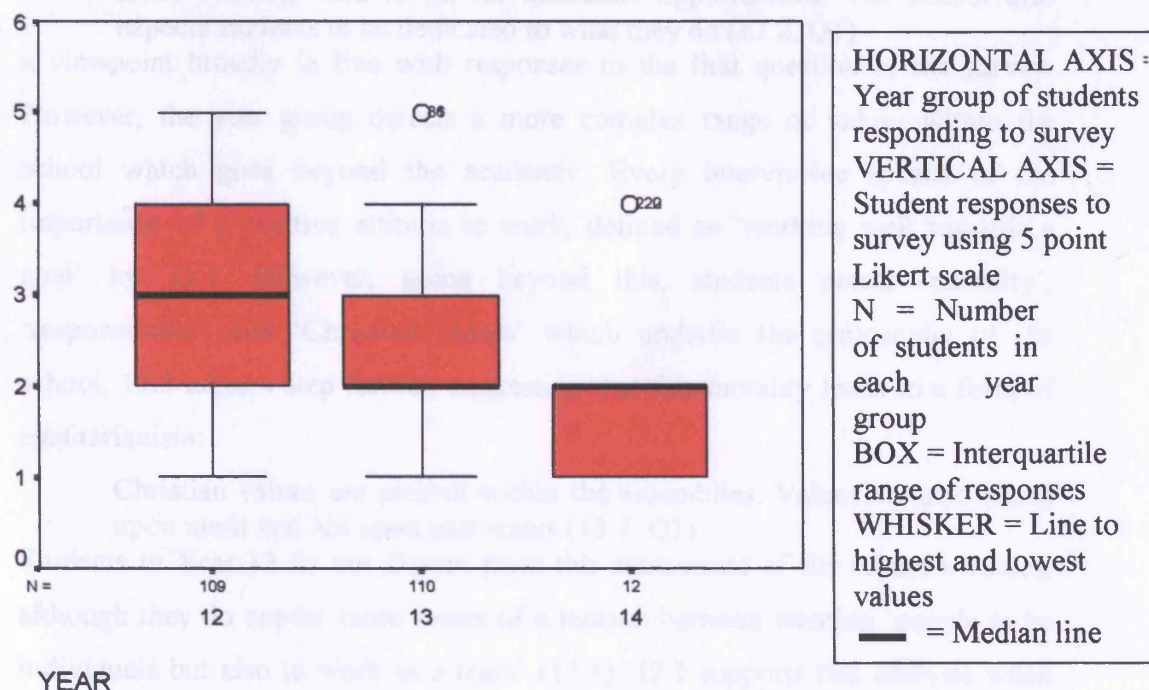


HORIZONTAL AXIS =  
Year group of students  
responding to survey  
VERTICAL AXIS =  
Student responses to  
survey using 5 point  
Likert scale  
N = Number of  
students in each  
year group  
BOX = Interquartile range  
of responses  
WHISKER = line to  
highest and lowest values  
— = Median line

The box and whisker diagram indicates that students are in clear agreement that academic work is their priority within the Sixth Form. The smaller group in Year 14 indicate the strongest agreement, but this is to be expected given the small number of students involved and the fact that most are prefects. For the other two year groups median responses of '2' indicate that both groups see the achievement of academic success as the main reason for coming to the school. Given the strength of this response, it would seem reasonable to suggest that all other comments about the culture of the school have to be viewed within this context. Responses to question four provide another indicator of the academic culture that exists within the school:

#### 4. I normally plan to work during free periods at school

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Both Year 13 and 14 strongly endorse the importance of using free periods for study. The response of Year 12 is, however, more equivocal, with a median response of '3' indicating that they are unsure whether their free periods should be devoted to academic study. This response provides the first indication that this year group is less willing to conform to the established academic culture within the school. Rather than fitting into the expected values of others within the school, the year group shows some uncertainty about whether free time should be used for working. In this way the year group gives a first hint of a willingness to question the prevailing cultural orthodoxy within the Sixth Form. For this reason their comments on this question will be explored in the later section discussing subcultures. However, it is clear from student responses to these two survey questions that academic values and the achievement of academic goals are central to the shared beliefs and values of the Sixth Form.

Interview responses support the conclusion that academic values are at the heart of the shared beliefs and values within the school. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, each student has been assigned a number indicating year



group and the order which they were interviewed within the year group. Hence student 12.1 was the first to be interviewed in the Year 12 cohort. 13.2 comments that the value most approved of by the school is

Basically high grades and academic success. Students are also encouraged to be 'willing' and to go for academic opportunities. The school also expects students to be dedicated to what they do (13.2, Q1)

a viewpoint broadly in line with responses to the first question of the survey. However, the year group detects a more complex range of values within the school which goes beyond the academic. Every interviewee speaks of the importance of a positive attitude to work, defined as 'working well towards a goal' by 13.1. However, going beyond this, students detect 'morality', 'responsibility' and 'Christian values' which underlie the philosophy of the school. 13.3 takes a step further, suggesting that this morality leads to a form of egalitarianism:

Christian values are present within the assemblies. Values are also based upon merit and not upon past status (13.3, Q1)

Students in Year 12 do not dissent from this assessment of the school's values, although they do appear more aware of a tension between wanting 'people to be individuals but also to work as a team' (13.1). 12.1 supports this analysis when remarking that the culture of the school:

likes people to be individuals but also to work in a team and get the team spirit going. Keen on hard work, conscientious approach. Also respects non-academics e.g. music and sport (12.1, Q1)

12.4 also explores the importance of 'community' within the school's values:

There is a sense of history and tradition: the school approves of traditional values. It wants good approach to work and likes people to work together. There is a clear sense of community being valued (12.4, Q1)

12.3 is the only student to refer to 'pressure' as being part of this set of values:

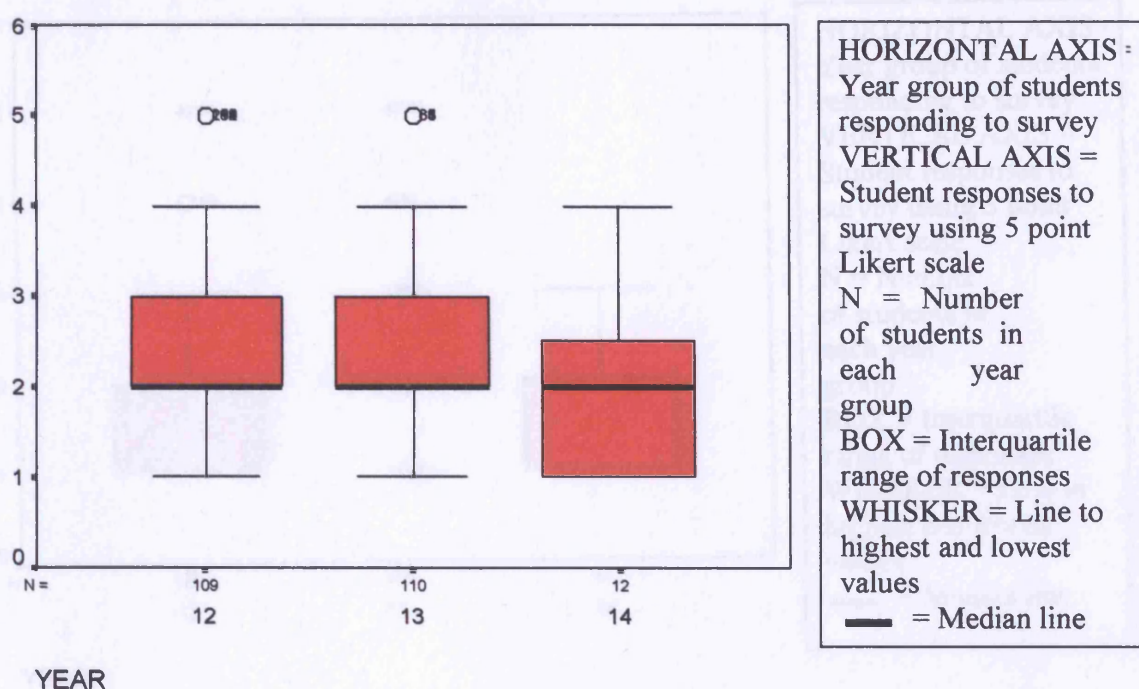
The school wants to produce a rounded individual. They want sporting achievement, but also integration and an active social life. The pressure comes academically: subjects can be very demanding (12.3, Q1)

The answers above demonstrate that there appears to be significant agreement between year groups about the 'shared beliefs and values' within the Sixth Form.

Survey responses illustrate the way in which these shared values and beliefs influence the behaviour of students outside school. When asked about their patterns of work at home, a similar set of responses emerges:

11. I normally do at least an hour's work during the evening and weekends

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

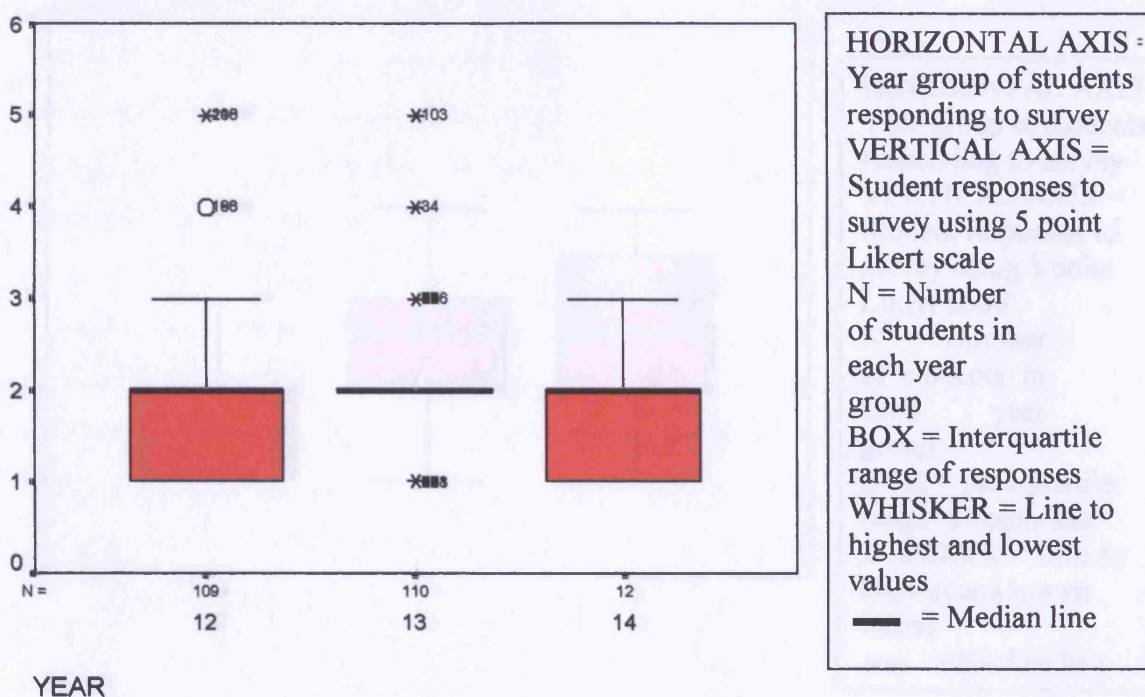


All students agree with the statement above, though it is no surprise to note that the answer box for the small, more academic sample in Year 14 indicates a greater number of students who strongly agree with the statement. Years 12 and 13 demonstrate an identical pattern of responses, perhaps indicating that whilst Year 12 students question the need to spend free time in school on academic study, they accept the need to spend at least part of their free time on study. The overall median response of 'agree' further establishes the prevailing academic culture within the school, indicating that students accept the need to spend a reasonable proportion of their own free time on academic studies (and that they expect other students to do the same).

As a result of the shared academic values within the Sixth Form, students show a robust belief that they will achieve academic success. Student survey responses indicate both a knowledge of their target grades and a clear confidence that they will be able to achieve them:

10. I know my target grades and I think that I can achieve them

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



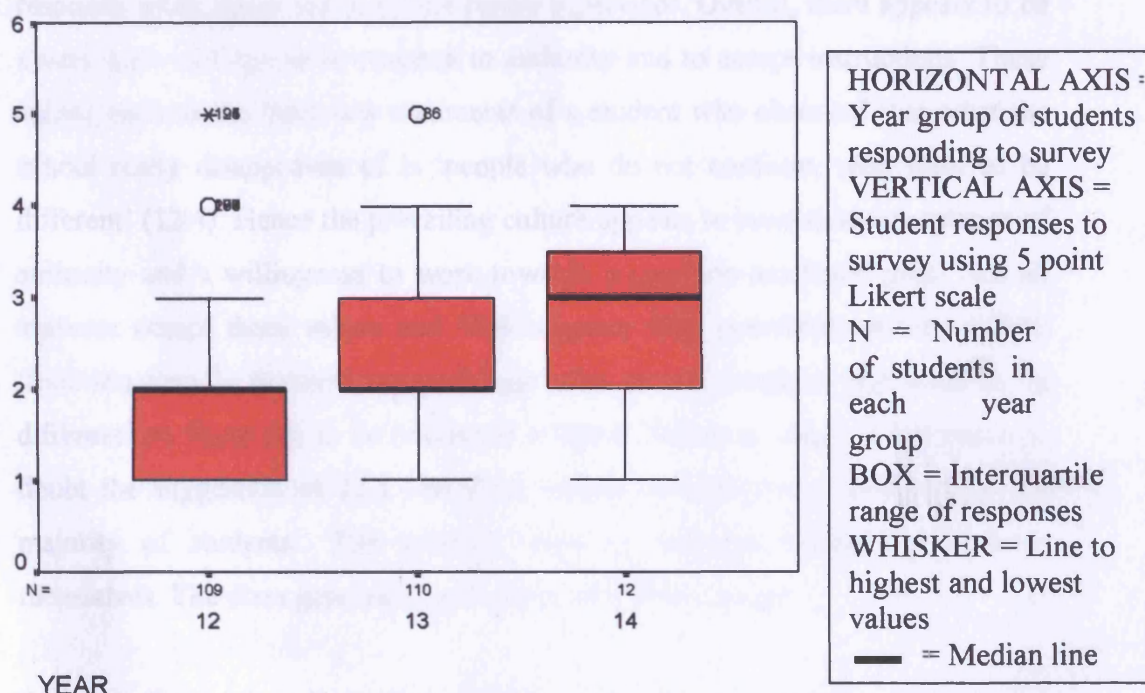
It is significant that whilst the median value of '2' or 'agree' is the same for all students, the shape of the box diagrams also indicates that many students in years 12 and 14 have a confidence level of '1' or 'strongly agree'. Hence a culture emerges where academic success is seen as the norm and is clearly expected. Only a few students indicate uncertainty and still fewer suggest that they do not expect to achieve their target grades. However, such a strong finding also points towards the potential for subcultures to emerge, since students who do not accept these academic values are likely to feel significantly alienated from the prevailing culture. Chapter five will consider the contribution that these subcultures make to the overall culture of the institution.

Students in each year group broadly endorse the view that academic success will be achieved through increased work. In response to question 14, both Years 12 and 13 indicate that their level of work has increased since the start of Year 12:



14. I work harder in the Sixth Form than I did in Year 11

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



The median value of '3' for Year 14 might well be explained by the fact that the survey was distributed amongst twelve prefects within the year group. Hence they are likely to be academically motivated, setting high goals for themselves. For this reason it is likely that they were already working very hard in Year 11 and so did not notice a huge difference in the Sixth Form. Although Years 12 and 13 have the same median value, the shape of the box indicates that far more students in Year 12 were inclined to strongly agree with the statement. Hence, although they were earlier identified as a year group that questioned the need to work during free periods, it is clear that their overall level of work is extremely high. They have raised some questions about parts of the school's prevailing culture, challenging the assumptions that students will make academic results their main priority and spend most of their free time working. However, it is clear that overall, Year 12 strongly endorse the academic culture of the school.

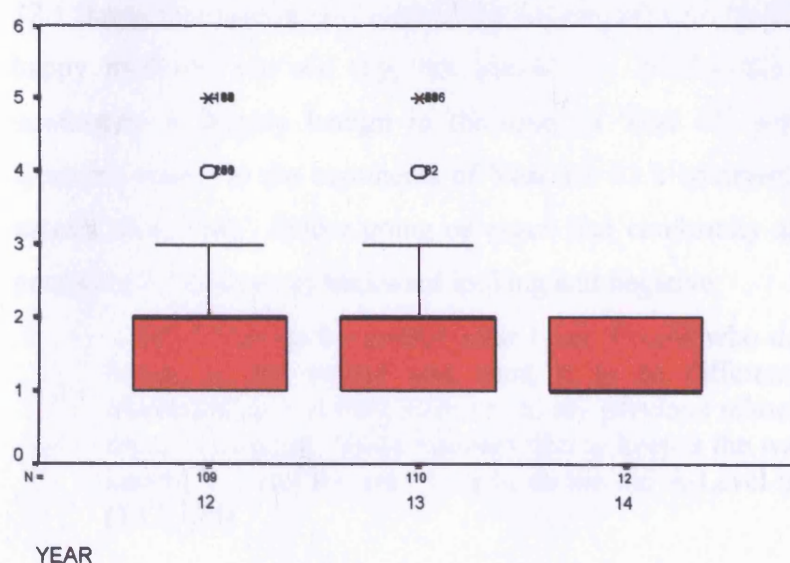
Observation notes point towards an expectation within the school that students will conform to the shared beliefs and values discussed within this section. The observation provides repeated examples of what could be called a cooperative culture across both year groups. When the centre supervisor asks a group not to

lean on a window, the notes record that 'the group moves away'. When a student is about to leave school they are observed visiting the supervisor's office in order to sign out. A student who laughingly playing with a megaphone immediately responds when asked not to by the centre supervisor. Overall, there appears to be a very high willingness to respond to authority and to accept instructions. These values endorse the interview comments of a student who observed that what the school really disapproves of is 'people who do not conform, who want to be different' (12.4). Hence the prevailing culture appears to involve an acceptance of authority and a willingness to work towards a common academic goal. Not all students accept these values and 12.4 suggests their potentially stifling effect: 'Individualism is frowned upon. People who do not conform and want to be different are likely not to be interested in sport'. However, there is no reason to doubt the suggestion of 12.2 that these values are shared and endorsed by the majority of students: 'The school's view is probably echoed by students themselves. The class gets angry with those who mess around'.

A final indicator that all year groups endorse the prevailing culture of the school comes in the response to the last question within the survey:

15. I feel that I made the right choice in attending the Sixth Form at Lawrence Sheriff

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



**HORIZONTAL AXIS :**  
Year group of students responding to survey  
**VERTICAL AXIS =**  
Student responses to survey using 5 point Likert scale  
N = Number of students in each year group  
BOX = Interquartile range of responses  
WHISKER = Line to highest and lowest

Once again, the more positive response from Year 14 might be expected when one remembers that a small group of academically very able students is being surveyed. However, both Years 12 and 13 produce almost identical responses, indicating a median response of '2', with a number of students also strongly agreeing. However, this response also points towards the potential for subcultures to emerge. In each year group a small number of students either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Their feeling of alienation from the prevailing culture is likely to provide fertile ground for the emergence of subcultures which question the academic values endorsed by so many students within the Sixth Form. These issues will be considered in chapter five when the contribution of subcultures to the overall jigsaw of school culture is discussed

Whilst still supportive of the school's internal culture, interview and observation evidence does point to concerns amongst students about the way in which the internal culture of the school deals with those who are 'not productive' and who 'do not conform'. Interview data illustrates this when students discuss the values that the school does not approve of. Many Year 12 students suggest that the school will not tolerate an unwillingness to work 'teachers set a lot of work and expect a lot to be done in school'. 12.4 takes this point a stage further by suggesting that the school really disapproves of 'people who do not conform, who want to be different'. 12.2 supports this argument by suggesting that the school disapproves of:

people who are here and do not try to fit in (either inside or outside lessons). The school's view is probably echoed by students themselves.

The class gets angry with those who mess around (12.2, Q2)

12.1 draws this together by suggesting that the school's ideal student would be 'a happy medium- not too shy, not too brash'. Whilst this view of required conformity is largely benign in the eyes of Year 12, some more disturbing elements appear in the comments of Year 13. 13.2 comments that he has 'to be careful what I say', before going on to argue that conformity amongst staff can be perceived by students as backward looking and negative:

I feel I have to be careful what I say. People who do not fit in with the nature of the school and want it to be different. For example, in Mathematics it is very different to my previous school. I have sometimes found it difficult. Some teachers like to keep it the way they have always known it. I feel we are trying to do the old A-Level in the new AS exam (13.2, Q2)

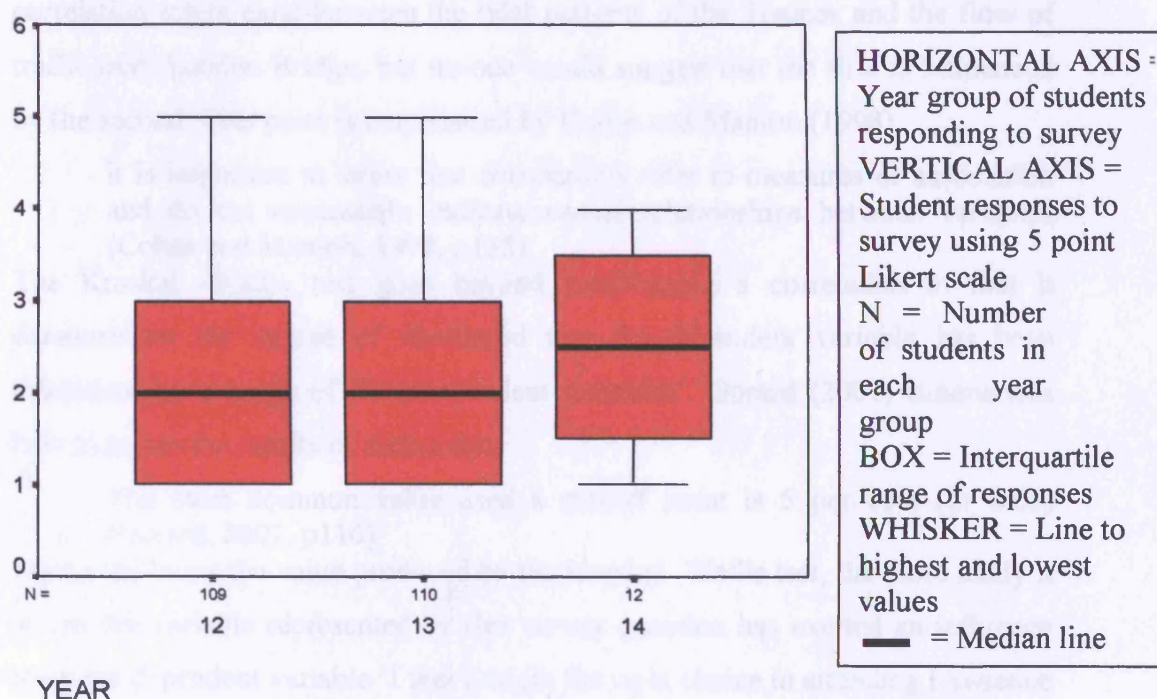


However, balancing this more negative view, both 13.3 and 13.4 emphasise the school's 'tolerance of people - against racism or class conflict' (13.4). Overall, both year groups appear to endorse 13.1's assessment that the worst crime that a student can commit is 'not being productive'.

Survey evidence also points towards pressure upon students who are perceived not to conform to the shared values and beliefs noted above. This is demonstrated when students are asked about the priorities of the school:

9. The school is mainly interested in students who will achieve high academic results

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



A median value of '2' for both Year 12 and 13 indicates that both year groups agree that the school is mainly interested in 'academic' students (the smaller Year 14 group are slightly more equivocal in their response, though the variation of 0.5 is small enough to be accounted for by the relatively small sample size). Whilst it is unclear whether students consider themselves to be academic, it would be reasonable to conclude that some students might find themselves alienated from what they perceive to be the main priority of the school.

#### 4.3.2 APPLYING THE KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST TO SURVEY DATA

The previous chapter discussed the use of the Kruskal-Wallis test to explore the impact of a number of independent variables upon a dependent variable. The section explained that the dependent variable would be question 15 'I feel I might the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School', since it was seen as a reflection of each student's overall satisfaction with the culture of the school. The previous section also established that the ordinal data produced by the survey requires the non-parametric Kruskal -Wallis test rather than a parametric ANOVA (or Analysis of Variance) test, particularly since Kruskal-Wallis makes it possible to test the influence of a number of independent variables upon a dependent variable. It is important to stress that the Kruskal -Wallis test does not establish a correlation between two survey questions, since that would merely suggest that a possible relationship might exist between the two pieces of data. A correlation might exist between the tidal patterns of the Thames and the flow of traffic over London Bridge, but no-one would suggest that the first is influenced by the second. This point is emphasised by Cohen and Manion (1998):

it is important to stress that correlations refer to measures of association and do not necessarily indicate causal relationships between variables (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p132)

The Kruskal -Wallis test goes beyond establishing a correlation in that it demonstrates the degree of likelihood that the dependent variable has been influenced by a range of 'K independent variables'. Gorard (2001) summarises how to assess the results of such a test:

The most common value used a cut-off point is 5 per cent (or 0.05) (Gorard, 2001, p116)

Hence the lower the value produced by the Kruskal -Wallis test, the more likely it is that the variable represented by that survey question has exerted an influence upon the dependent variable 'I feel I might the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School'. The influence exerted by the 'K independent variables' represented by the fourteen survey questions plus year group is summarised in Table 4.2:



**FIGURE 4.2: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'**

	Q1	Q2:	Q3:	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	YEAR
Distribution	10.323	9.281	7.294	12.102	31.093	22.710	6.070	17.477	31.095	9.857	12.365	2.341	8.744	3.293	2.668
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.035	.054	.121	.017	.000	.000	.194	.002	.000	.043	.015	.673	.068	.510	.615

Appendix D shows the set of calculations completed by SPSS in order to arrive at the findings summarised in figure 4.2. The study will seek to explore two aspects of the data generated by the Kruskal -Wallis test. Firstly where a very low score has been produced by the test, the study will seek to examine why this particular variable has exerted such a strong influence upon the overall response of students to the culture of the school. Hence question 5 ('I would be prepared to reduce the hour of my part-time job if it interfered with my A-Levels') is shown to have a score of .000 with question 15, suggesting a very high probability that this variable has influenced responses to the dependent variable. For this reason section 4.4 of this chapter seeks to examine the reasons that may explain the ability of question five to influence the dependent variable represented by question 15. The same approach will then be applied to other survey questions that demonstrate a similar ability to influence the dependent variable (such as questions 6 and 9).

However, as well as exploring variables that influence the dependent variable, it is also revealing to examine variables that are shown to have very little influence upon the dependent variable. For this reason section 5.5 of chapter five will discuss in some detail the reasons that underlie the significance score of .673 for question 12 ('The school values sporting achievement more highly than academic achievement'). The score of .673 generated by the Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that this survey response, dealing with perceptions of sporting achievement, has the least influence upon the response of students to the overall culture of the school. Section 5.5 will place this result in the context of cultural change, seeking to explore whether data from the quantitative Kruskal-Wallis test confirms other

data emerging from a qualitative exploration of two drafts of the school's prospectus.

Hence the 'more powerful test' (Godard, 2001, p125) represented by the Kruskal-Wallis test will be applied to the survey data in order to explore the relationship between particular survey items. Through this process it will be possible to explore both significant influences upon the dependent variable and survey items that exert very little influence upon the dependent variable. Through linking this process to other research instruments the study aims to offer a detailed range of insights into the jigsaw of school culture.

#### 4.3.3 INTERPRETING THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

As discussed in the previous section, table 4.2 explores the effect of fourteen 'K independent variables' upon the dependent variable of question 15: 'I feel that I made the right choice in attending the Sixth Form at Lawrence Sheriff School'

FIGURE 4.2: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'

	Q1	Q2:	Q3:	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	YEAR
Distribution	10.323	9.281	7.294	12.102	31.093	22.710	6.070	17.477	31.095	9.857	12.365	2.341	8.744	3.293	2.668
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.035	.054	.121	.017	.000	.000	.194	.002	.000	.043	.015	.673	.068	.510	.615

Question 5 ('I would be prepared to reduce the hour of my part-time job if it interfered with my A-Levels') is one of the three questions that have a value of .000 when set against the dependent variable 'I feel I made the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School', meaning that they can be said to almost certainly influence students' satisfaction with the overall culture of the school (to a 95% confidence level). This Kruskal – Wallis score of .000 suggests that the higher the satisfaction level that a student feels with the school, the more likely they are to make changes to their lifestyle in order to achieve the academic success demanded by the school's prevailing internal culture. However, this satisfaction with the school may well be traced back to a student having high academic expectations. Hence, although cause and effect is uncertain, it can be

concluded that the more academically successful that a student is, the more they feel that they are supported by the prevailing culture of the school. The median response of '2' to question 5 by Years 12 and 13, reminds us that most students feel that they fall within the school's academic priorities. However, it is also true that students who do not think of themselves as academically successful are likely to feel alienated from the overall culture of the school. As mentioned earlier, responses indicate significant potential for subcultures to exist within groups of students or even year groups who feel neglected by the perceived academic priority of the school.

Evidence of the pressure to conform to the school's academic values also emerges when students discuss the treatment of those who do not conform to the school's values. Some comments emphasise the school's tolerance:

The school holds out to the very last point- gives the benefit of the doubt until last minute in the hope that you will turn it around (13.4, Q3)

However, other students point towards a strong social pressure to conform:

There is a form of punishment. Students accept divergence, but those who do so are perhaps shunned and given a low status (13.3, Q3)

Comments from a Year 12 student support this view:

If you do not fit in, however, then you tend to be ignored and shut out (12.1, Q3)

12.3 suggests that the pressure to conform is not confined to students. He argues that teachers and students combine to exert 'a social pressure' to bring students back into line:

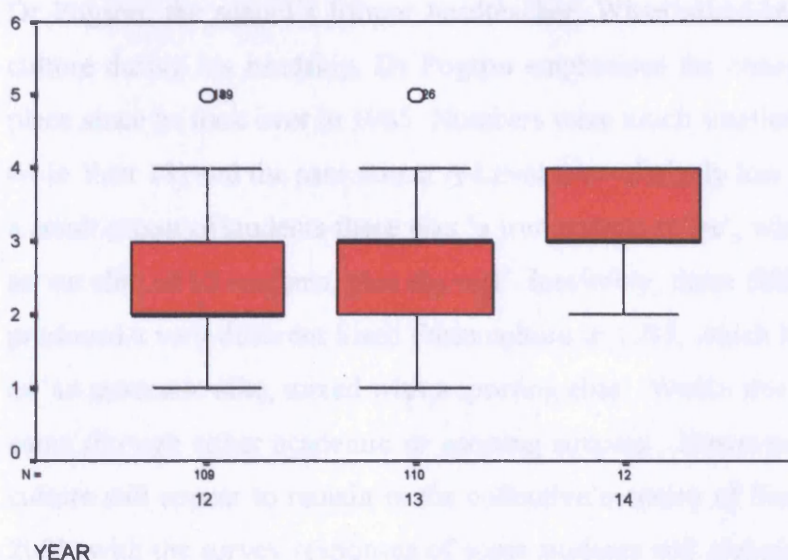
Such people usually get singled out and become victims. If they are not performing academically they are placed under the spotlight. If they are missing lessons, they are talked about. There is a social pressure (12.3, Q3)

Overall, the culture of the Sixth Form appears to use these 'social pressures' to bring non-conformists into line, with students working with teachers to 'redeem' those who are seen as rebelling against the school's values. The use of words such as 'punishment', 'shunned' and 'victims' emphasises the strength of the pressure to conform to the internal culture of the school. Whilst some students see the school as 'holding out' in the way that it treats non-conformers, it is clear that the 'social pressure' of being 'shunned' by the majority is a very significant one.

Evidence of this pressure to conform also emerges in the survey responses of students:

## 8. The school places too much pressure on Sixth Form students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



**HORIZONTAL AXIS :**  
Year group of student responding to survey  
**VERTICAL AXIS =**  
Student responses to survey using 5 point Likert scale  
**N =** Number of students in each year group  
**BOX =** Interquartile range of responses  
**WHISKER =** Line to highest and lowest values  
**— =** Median line

Year 14 students have a median value of '3' or 'uncertain', but their answer box indicates that a number of students disagree with the statement. Once again the fact that the Year 14 sample was made up of prefects appears to be significant. This small sample of relatively able students clearly feels able to cope with the academic demands of the school, and so feels equivocal about the idea that too much pressure is placed upon them. Interestingly, the larger sample of 110 Year 13 students also produces a median value of '3', but an answer box which indicates that a number of students have agreed with the statement. Whilst the shape of the answer box for Year 12 is identical, the median value of their responses is '2', indicating overall agreement that the school does place too much pressure upon students. This year group appears to resent the imposition of the school's values and the resulting pressure to achieve that this produces. This sense of pressure may also be produced by the tension between the need to live up to the academic values of the school and a desire to avoid formal structures such as supervised study. Years 13 and 14 feel less pressure because they find themselves more in agreement with the academic culture of the school. In this respect the differing perceptions of pressure may be a barometer indicating the differing extents to which year group accepts or rejects the prevailing culture of the school. This variation in the responses of year groups will be further analysed in chapter five, within which the different factors that contribute to the development of subcultures will be considered in further detail.

Evidence of the historical forces that have shaped the strongly academic 'shared values and beliefs' that underlie internal culture emerge from the interview with Dr Pogson, the school's former headteacher. When asked to define Sixth Form culture during his headship, Dr Pogson emphasises the changes that have taken place since he took over in 1985. Numbers were much smaller (67 in Year 12 and 64 in Year 13) and the pass rate at A-Level was relatively low (76%). Even within a small group of students there was 'a tremendous range', which he characterises as 'an elite of 12 students, plus the rest'. Inevitably, these differences would have produced a very different Sixth Form culture in 1985, which Dr Pogson describes as 'an academic elite, mixed with a sporting elite'. Within this culture 'acceptance came through either academic or sporting success'. However, the echoes of that culture still appear to remain in the collective memory of Sixth Form students in 2001, with the survey responses of some students still claiming a bias within the school towards either academic or sporting achievement. Just as it is difficult to engineer supposedly 'positive' changes to a culture, it is also hard to remove negative aspects of a culture. Even seventeen years later, some values from a very different Sixth Form still appear to remain. As the final chapter of this study will demonstrate, echoes from a past culture can have a profound impact upon the culture that exists in the present.

Overall, this section points to a set of shared values that are based upon 'academic success'. Students assert the priority of academic work, place emphasis on study whilst at school and assert confidence that they will achieve high target grades. Hence the research supports Deal and Kennedy's assertion that:

Values provide a sense of common direction for all employees and guidelines for their day to day behaviour (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p21)

However, whilst expressing confidence in the institution and its values, students do express feelings of concern about the pressure to conform to its values. Students suggest that the school disapproves of 'people who do not conform' and that part of this pressure comes from students themselves, who get 'angry with those who mess around'. Discussion of these shared values is placed in historic context by the interview with Dr Pogson who described the school in 1985 as 'an academic elite, mixed with a sporting elite'. Chapters five and six will consider in greater detail the ability of 'shared values' from the past to shape the culture of

the present. However, at this stage it is interesting to note the comment of Deal and Kennedy that:

circumstances can change whilst shared values continue to guide behaviour in ways no longer helpful to the organization's success (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p34)

This section also notes that the strength of the shared academic values and the pressure to conform to them, may well create the conditions for subcultures to emerge. Chapter five will further consider the contribution that these potential subcultures make to the overall culture of the institution. Through this process of analysis, the chapter will demonstrate the need to develop a model of cultural formation that more fully recognises the contribution that subcultures make to the 'overall culture' of an institution.

Having considered shared values and beliefs, the next section of this chapter will move on to consider the contribution made by certain 'heroes' to the internal culture of the institution. The section will also consider student perceptions of what does and does not constitute 'heroic' behaviour.

#### 4.3.4 HEROES AND HEROINES

Deal and Kennedy (1988) suggest that internal culture is influenced by certain key figures who are perceived as taking a leading role in shaping and upholding the values of the institution:

These people personify the culture's values and as such provide tangible role models for employees to follow (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p14)

Deal and Kennedy (1988) go on to discuss the impact of heroes upon an organisation's culture. They emphasise the ability of heroes to provide role models by 'making success attainable and human'. Heroes also remain in the corporate memory of an institution:

Perhaps most importantly, heroes provide a lasting influence within the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p41)

Student interviews and surveys reveal strong opinions about those who and do not have heroic status within the internal culture of the institution.

An interesting range of opinions emerges when students discuss the 'sort of people who are highly regarded by the school community'. There is a surprisingly broad agreement among students when suggesting the type of person who is highly regarded by the school community:

Sports people, particularly rugby players are well received. Key value is the genuinely rounded person. If you are too academic or too sporty, then there is often a problem. It is best to mix these qualities (12.1, Q4)

12.1's description of the 'genuinely rounded person' effectively summarises the replies of many other students. Hence 13.1 offers the thought that:

Both sporting and academic success is valued - not just one or the other is valued (13.1, Q4)

13.4 develops this answer by describing some of the characteristics of the 'genuinely rounded person':

The key is being able to get on with other people. Generally we respect those who avoid 'macho' gestures, someone who is willing to understand and listen. People dislike those who are opinionated, they like an open nature (13.4, Q4)

Hence terms such as 'balance', 'success' and 'openness' appear to be particularly valued within the Sixth Form culture. This finding accords with the earlier comment of 12.4, who suggests that the school disapproves of 'people who do not conform and want to be different'. 13.3 suggests that approval is related to attitude and not to visible success:

Those who seem to try: they are respected because of the effort they seem to put in (13.3, Q4)

This view is supported by 13.2 who also suggests that approval is related to the values displayed by the student. Hence the students approved of are:

- Those that like giving their time
- Those that show dedication
- Those who are willing to be involved in community service (13.2, Q4)

However, 12.3 does argue that academic success is still the most important value upheld by the school:

The main thing is academic success and performing well at A-Level. Sporting success is also valued: for example in rugby or cricket. Sometimes prefects are respected, sometimes not. Academic success probably carries more weight (12.3, Q4)

The rather ambivalent attitude that this answer displays towards prefects will be explored in the later section on ceremonies and rituals. However, student responses demonstrate once again that conformity to the school's academic shared beliefs and values is seen as extremely important and high status, whether by a teacher or by a student, appears to be dependent upon endorsement of these values.

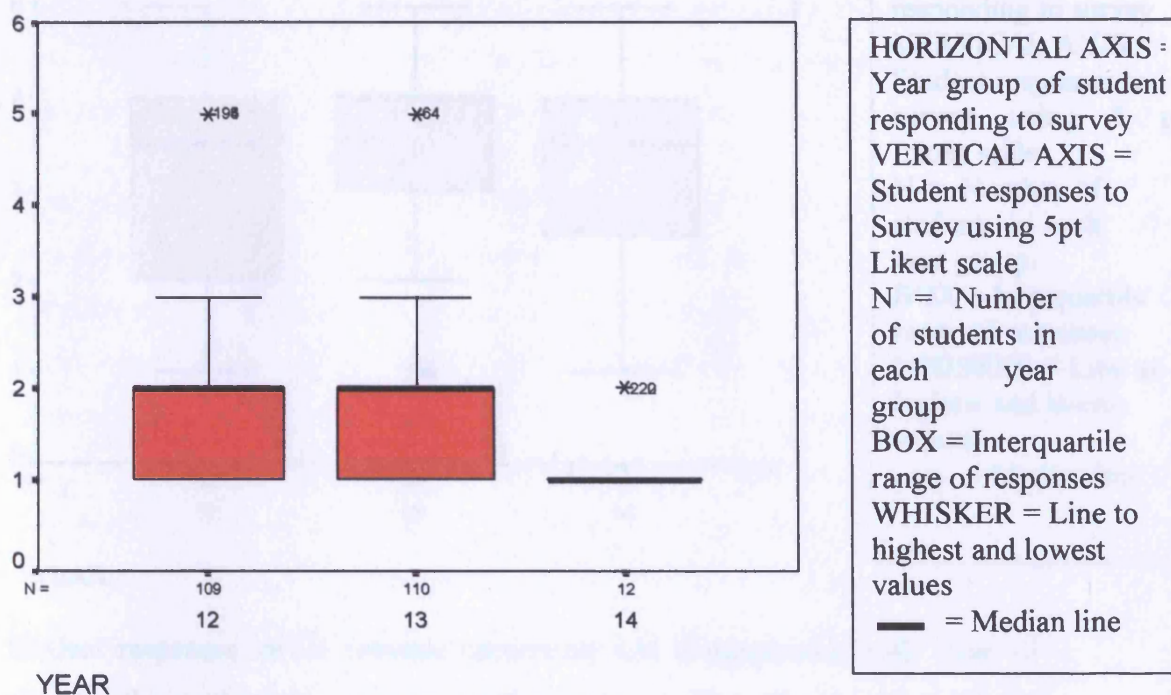
Survey responses also demonstrate a belief that 'heroic' figures within the school's internal culture should conform to the academic shared beliefs and values



noted in the previous section. An illustration of this point comes when students indicate the extent to which they respect students work hard at their A-levels:

3. I respect students who put a lot of work into their A-levels

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



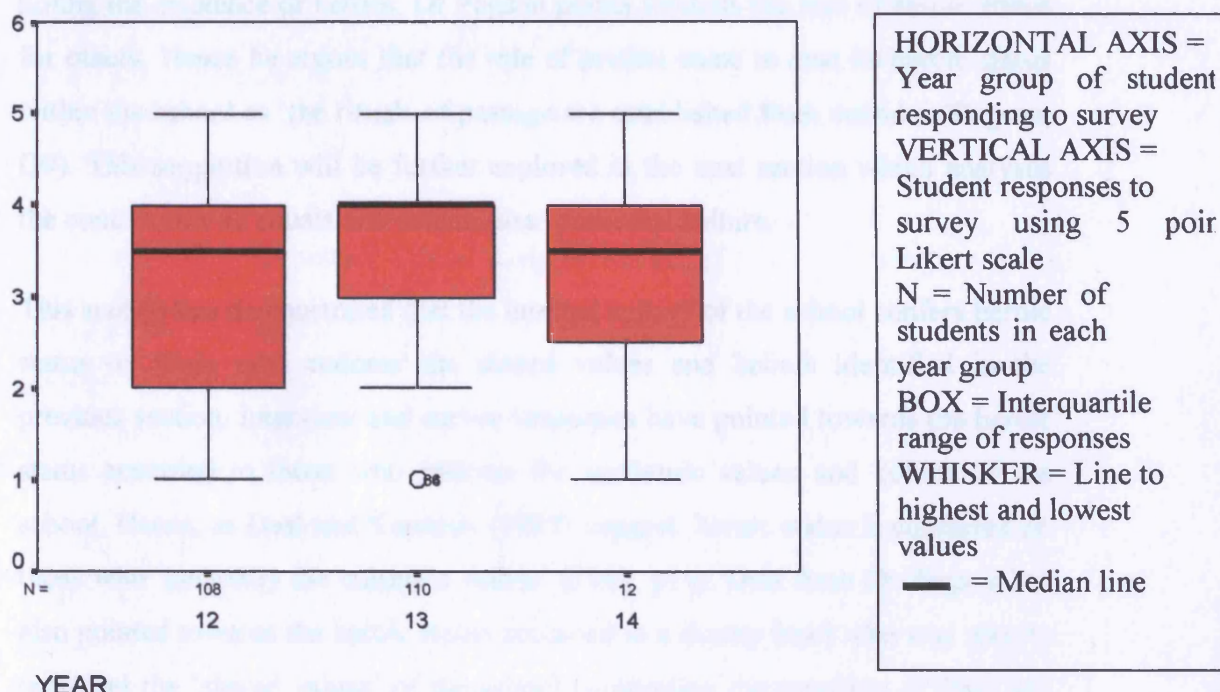
The bunching of Year 14 responses around 'strongly agree' can be explained by the smaller sample and the academic nature of the students sampled. However, the median value of '2' for both Years 12 and 13 indicates a culture which respects commitment to academic work. In both cases, answer boxes are clustered between '1' and '2', indicating that students are divided between agreement and strong agreement with the statement. Hence responses suggest that one of the strongest ways to acquire heroic status within the internal culture of the school is to work hard and be seen to endorse the academic shared beliefs and values of the school.

The majority of students reject the idea that those who work hard become 'anti-heroes', facing the mockery of other students :



### 13. Students who achieve high results tend to be made fun of by other students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Student responses varied between uncertainty and disagreement, with Year 13 showing the strongest reaction against the statement. Year 12 are once again the most equivocal, with a median value of 3.5 but an answer box which ranges from '2' to '4', reflecting a negative experience on the part of at least some students. The median response does indicate that the majority of student do not agree with the statement, but once again Year 12 display some uncertainty about how to respond to the academic culture of the school. It would appear that this year group shows the greatest willingness to question the heroic status accorded to those who endorse the school's shared belief and values.

Once again, the interview with Dr Pogson, the school's former headteacher, provides historical data that illustrates the way in which heroic status is conferred upon some members of the organisation. He points toward a former deputy headteacher as an example of someone who acquired heroic status within the organisation:

Arguably Gareth Redd (the former Deputy Head) was in this group. One parent said: 'Gareth Redd is more feared by Year 7 and more admired by the Sixth Form than anyone else in the school' (Pogson, Q8)

Dr Pogson suggests that internal cultures offer heroic status to those who enter into the 'shared beliefs and values' discussed earlier in this chapter. Hence he suggests that Gareth Redd, the school's former deputy head, gained his heroic status 'because he worked in the area of the school's values'. However, as well as noting the existence of heroes, Dr Pogson points towards the loss of heroic status for others. Hence he argues that the role of prefect came to lose its heroic status within the school as 'the rituals of passage are established from outside' (Pogson, Q9). This suggestion will be further explored in the next section which analyses the contribution of rituals and ceremonies to internal culture.

This section has demonstrated that the internal culture of the school confers heroic status on those who endorse the shared values and beliefs identified in the previous section. Interview and survey responses have pointed towards the heroic status accorded to those who endorse the academic values and beliefs of the school. Hence, as Deal and Kennedy (1988) suggest, heroic status is conferred on those who 'personify the culture's values' (1988, p14). Data from Dr Pogson has also pointed towards the heroic status accorded to a deputy head who was seen to represent the 'shared values' of the school (supporting the assertion of Deal and Kennedy (1988) that 'heroes provide a lasting influence'). However, interview responses have also suggested that equally heroic status is accorded to those who demonstrate sporting achievement. Hence 'both sporting and academic success is valued' (13.1, Q4). Once again, there is some evidence of Year 12 students questioning some of these values, and this will be further explored in chapter five's section on subcultures. References in the comments of Dr Pogson to 'rituals of passage being established from outside' point once more to the limitations of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model. A broader typology is required that considers the impact of the culture outside the school upon culture within the school. Chapter five will develop this point further through an exploration of the impact of 'external culture' upon the 'overall culture' of the institution. Having discussed the impact of heroes and heroines upon the internal culture of the school, the next stage of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model calls for an analysis of the role played by ceremonies and rituals, and the way in which they are able to express the culture within a school.

#### 4.3.5 RITUAL AND CEREMONY

Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology highlights the significance of rituals and ceremonies that sustain and nurture the cultural values of the organisation. They describe 'rites and rituals' as:

the systematic and programmed routines of day to day life... in their mundane manifestations-which we call rituals- they show employees the kind of behaviour that is expected of them (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p14)

Such rituals are viewed as a way to operationalise the values that underlie the organisation:

Without expressive events any culture will die. In the absence of ritual or ceremony, important values have no impact (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p63)

Hence rituals can be seen as amongst the strongest form of communication within an organisation, since through them:

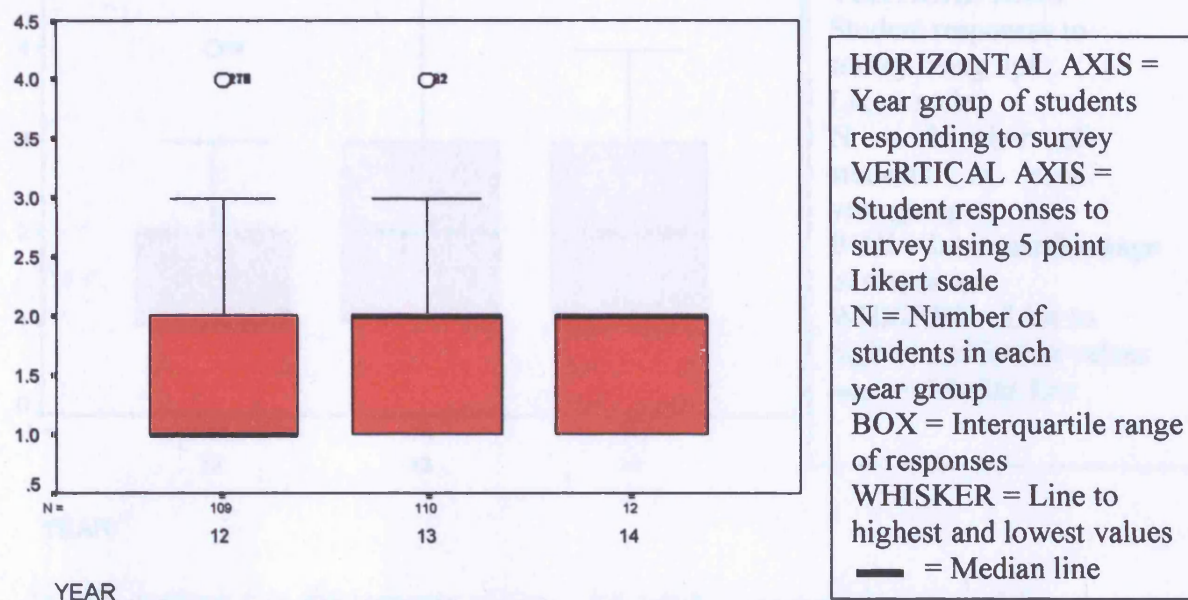
They communicate exactly how they want their people to behave (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p59)

The academic beliefs and values noted earlier in this chapter lead students to particularly focus upon academic ceremonies and rituals within the life of the school. In particular, students question the ritual of supervised private study. All students endorse the need to be allowed the freedom to study when and where they wish, and responses suggest that they are not currently offered this freedom:



2. The school should allow Sixth Form students the freedom to decide when and where to work

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

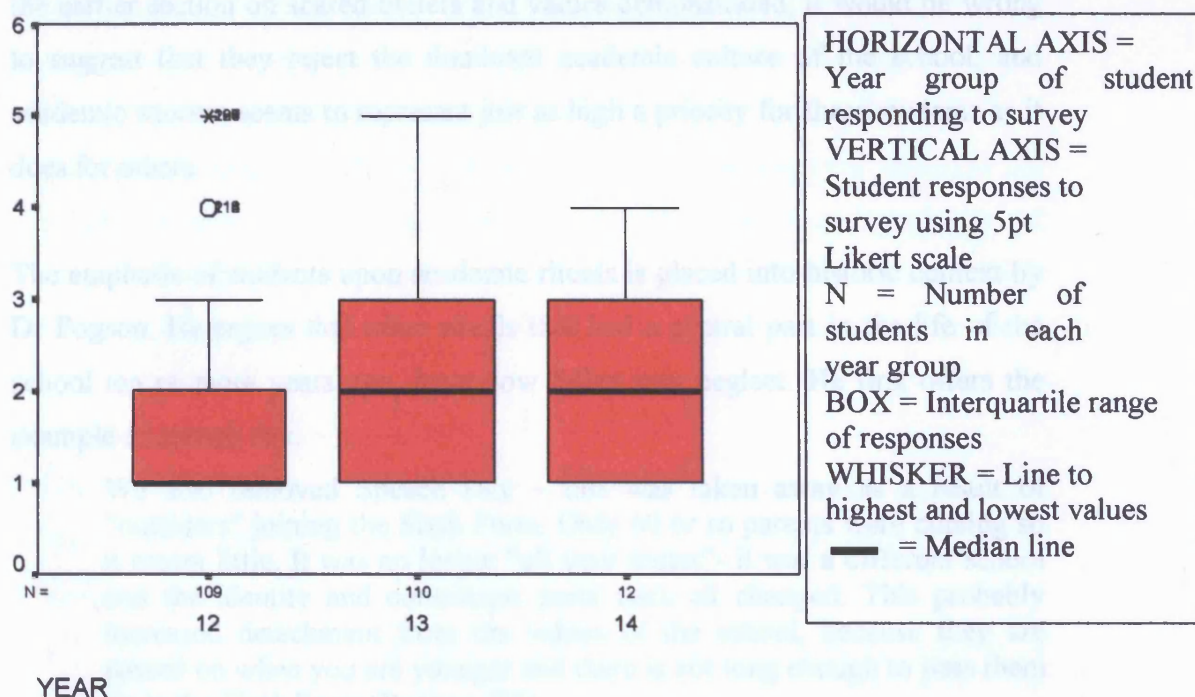


All three year groups show a similar range of responses, suggesting a view amongst students that the academic culture of the school has also led to a loss of individuality and freedom. The consistency of response implies a feeling amongst students that too much pressure is being placed upon them to work in a manner and at a time prescribed by the school. However, the median response of Year 12 is '1', contrasting with the median response of '2' produced by the remaining two year groups. This stronger response of Year 12 students echoes their response to the statement 'I normally plan to work during free periods'. Their response indicates the formation of a distinct culture within the year group. Whilst not rejecting the academic values of the school, they are certainly more willing to question the need to conform to them at all times.

Students express a similar strength of feeling when asked directly about supervised private study:

### 7. Supervised private study is inappropriate for Sixth Form students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



As with question two, the response of Year 12 is notably stronger than that of the other two year groups. Once again students in this year group reject the notion that they should be 'forced' to work by 'strongly agreeing' with the statement that students should not be supervised in their private study. The response of Years 13 and 14 also maintains the pattern established by the earlier question. Whilst not so emphatic as students in Year 12, members of these two year groups still 'agree' with the statement. Hence all students feel that to some extent the cultural values of the school are being imposed upon them, and that students should be allowed greater freedom. Year 12 students are particularly protective of their freedom, a point that is reflected in the small size of their answer box, indicating that nearly all responses were grouped between 'agree' and 'strongly agree'.

Student responses to the academic ritual of supervised private study remind us that whilst the internal culture of the school is unquestionably an academic one, many students are unhappy about the loss of freedom created by this academic focus, feeling that they should be given greater freedom about how and when to study. Year 12 show a particular willingness to question these academic values

and the pressure that they create, and to this extent the year group demonstrates an internal culture which differs from that which prevails within the school, a point that will be discussed further in chapter five's section subcultures. However, as the earlier section on shared beliefs and values demonstrated, it would be wrong to suggest that they reject the dominant academic culture of the school, and academic success seems to represent just as high a priority for these students as it does for others.

The emphasis of students upon academic rituals is placed into historic context by Dr Pogson. He argues that other rituals that had a central part in the life of the school ten or more years ago, have now fallen into neglect. He first offers the example of speech day:

We also removed Speech Day – this was taken away as a result of “outsiders” joining the Sixth Form. Only 60 or so parents were coming so it meant little. It was no longer “all your mates”- it was a different school and the identity and constituent parts were all changed. This probably increased detachment from the values of the school, because they are passed on when you are younger and there is not long enough to pass them on in the Sixth Form (Pogson, Q3)

Hence the changing constitution of the Sixth Form, with students joining at sixteen from a variety of local schools, has served to undermine established rituals within the school that have lost their meaning to new members of the school. A second example relates to prefects:

Responsibility was given to prefects to lead assemblies - given through age and not through merit. It was a ritual of passage to adulthood. (Pogson, Q9)

However, he argues that changing social patterns have undermined the value of these ‘rituals of passage’:

Now the rituals of passage are established from outside. You can no longer cut across directives. The view of the autonomous school has gone (Pogson, Q9)

Ironically, the loss of these ‘rituals of passage’ within the school has left students with only the academic rituals that they complain about earlier in this section.

Overall, this section suggests that certain types of rituals have had a diminishing effect upon members of the Sixth Form. The number of students joining the Sixth Form from other institutions has meant that ceremonies such as Speech Day have lost much of their meaning and so have been dispensed with. Similarly ‘rituals of passage’ such as becoming a prefect have lost their impact as the social culture

outside the school exerts a growing influence. However, the rituals that remain ‘show employees the kind of behaviour that is expected of them’ in the manner identified by Deal and Kennedy (1988). Hence rituals such as supervised private study support academic values, such as the need to gain high examination results. In some cases these rituals are resented by students, who feel that they should be offered greater academic and personal freedom. However, the fact that the school sustains mainly academic rituals, points once again to the academic nature of the shared beliefs and values within the school. Having explored the significance of rituals, the next section will explore stories and anecdotes, another way in which an institution can communicate the shared values that underlie its internal culture.

#### 4.3.6 STORIES AND ANECDOTES

An internal culture is partly sustained by stories and anecdotes that transmit the ‘shared beliefs and values’ that the culture sees as being important. Deal and Kennedy comment that:

Storytellers preserve institutions and their values by imparting legends of the company to new employees. They also carry stories about the visionary heroes or the latent outlaw... Storytellers will also reveal much about what it takes to get ahead in the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p87)

Evidence of the way in which such stories ‘preserve institutions and their values’ emerged when students were asked to quote an anecdote which summed up the school’s values. As might be expected, a number of the ‘anecdotes’ quoted related to the academic values that hold such a central place within the school. Hence the emphasis upon academic success emerges in 12.3’s discussion of the school’s willingness to place students in detention:

If students do not do well in tests, they are put in detention after school or at lunchtime. Pressure is put on students to improve. This can be right- if a student is struggling, it can leave them feeling isolated. Teachers can offer support and help (12.3, Q5)

Similarly, stories emphasise disapproval of those who reject the academic values that are central to the school’s culture. Hence 13.3 argues that missing lessons to go to the pub is disapproved by most students:

Some students go to the pub. This is generally disapproved of. The ethos of the school is to work hard and to earn your free time. It is wrong to simply opt out. Sometimes students run away from this ethos – by going to the pub! (13.3, Q5)

The school’s culture of tolerance is highlighted by 13.4’s description of the school’s ‘unwillingness to give in with students’. However, the pressure to



conform to certain norms and an overtone of academic elitism is also hinted at by 12.1's account of a more able student 'taking the mickey':

I remember seeing a clever lad taking the mickey. However, the lad it was directed towards just ignored him. This shows that if you do not like someone, then you can opt out of their company. This sums up the values of the school- if someone is upsetting you then you can find another peer group (12.1, Q5)

Not all anecdotes relate to academic values. 12.4 also points to some of the broader values noted in section 4.3.1 by discussing a recent team-building activity:

Leadership Challenge Day - emphasis is on team working, an unusual activity. There is a positive focus upon team spirit. (12.4, Q5)

Whilst the stories of culture differ, it is striking that the narratives offered are almost totally positive. The 'absence of horror stories' which 13.1 refers to, does appear to point to a broad satisfaction with culture within the Sixth Form. However, responses also highlight the pressure to conform to the academic values of the school, highlighting the potential for subcultures to emerge in response to these pressures.

Student responses are placed in a broader historical context by Dr Pogson's discussion of the anecdotes which summed up the school's values. He argues that during the period of his headship the most noticeable phenomena was the disappearance of anecdotes relating to the school. When he first took over anecdotes were associated with rituals

Year 11 used to cut their ties in half and would egg and flower the town when study leave began. I stopped this (Pogson, Q10)

Once again he argues that such rituals and anecdotes have been stifled by a set of cultural values that have been imposed from outside the school:

However, all leaving rituals have now faded: taken over by external values. Many anecdotes are not now about school: rather they relate to things that are happening outside, rather than internal events, the outside world has impinged in (Pogson, Q10)

Schools have become 'one of the most controlled parts of society' and so he argues that students attach value to anecdotes and stories relating to events outside school. Dr Pogson's argument points us again to the need to develop a model of cultural analysis that goes beyond the limits of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology to explore the impact of external social culture upon the 'overall culture'



of the school. Chapters five and six will address this issue by advancing a broader model that considers all of the factors that shape and influence school culture.

Hence the data explored has suggested that stories and anecdotes are used by students to transmit the 'shared beliefs and values' that they see as particularly important. Through this process they 'preserve institutions and their values' in the manner described by Deal and Kennedy (1988) earlier in this section. As noted earlier in section 4.3.1, these values centre upon the academic internal culture of the school. However, stories also reflect other core values such as 'team spirit'. Whilst largely positive, some stories such as that of 'a clever lad taking the mickey' reflect the pressure exerted to conform to the academic values of the school. Dr Pogson argues that this process of enshrining cultural values in stories is threatened by the increasing influence exerted by the social culture that exists outside the school. His argument in turn points to the need to develop a model that explores the influence of factors such as 'external culture' upon the 'overall culture' of an institution. Chapters five and six will explore a broader typology that draws together the cultural influences not considered by Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model. Deal and Kennedy (1988) argue that storytellers hold a key role in the 'cultural network' of those who are able to influence the internal culture of an organisation. The next section considers the identity of the other members of the informal network of cultural players.

#### 4.3.7 THE CULTURAL NETWORK

Deal and Kennedy (1988) argue that cultures can be understood by examining the identity of those who exert a particular influence upon it. They suggest that:

The cultural network is the 'carrier' of the corporate values and heroic mythology (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p15)

The importance attached to the role of storyteller within this network is discussed in the previous section. However, Deal and Kennedy (1988) also identify other significant roles within this 'cultural network'. Hence they identify the importance of priests who act as 'the guardians of the cultures values'. They go on to suggest further roles such as 'whisperers who are often powers behind the throne' and gossips who

Help the hero-making process flourish by embellishing the heroes' past feats and spiffing up the news of their latest accomplishments (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p91)

There may also be those who act as spies, normally a 'well oiled buddy in the network' who reports back to a senior manager that he or she feels an affinity with.

Interviews provided some evidence of how this 'cultural network' manifested itself within the school. As might be expected, students offered a range of answers when asked to discuss the identity of 'the people who help to shape the values and culture of the school'. In Deal and Kennedy's (1988) terms, students were attempting to identify the individuals who acted as 'priests' within the organisation. Some students highlighted the role of teachers, who: 'play an important role in defining what is right and wrong' (13.4). Students who held this opinion singled out the Head of Sixth Form and heads of department as having a particular influence. Hence 12.2 comments that:

Mr Wex is a good teacher who lets us talk, Mr Langton is friendly and a good teacher but also "sporty" (12.2, Q7)

Students appear divided over the cultural impact of teachers. 12.2 argues that 'Students exert influence, but teachers lay the path'. 12.3 goes even further by suggesting that the influence of students is dwarfed by the impact of teachers:

Heads of department and teachers of subjects. I am less aware of students having an impact (12.3, Q7)

However, the majority of students do not feel that teachers are able to consistently adopt the role of 'priest'. 13.2 argues that teachers are actually less unified and cohesive in their impact than students:

Pupils are expected to work as a team. However, the teachers are in little groups, based upon department, so they are not necessarily one unit (13.2, Q6)

This comment reminds us that just as students have subcultures, so sub-groups exist within the teaching body whose influence will be varied and diverse. Hence interviewees such as 12.1 argue that students have a more significant role, singling out sports players or academics:

Sports players have considerable influence. They are held up as role models. They lead the way. Same applies to academic 'high fliers'. Anyone who has the respect of others fits into this role (12.1, Q6)

This view is strongly supported by 13.4:

Students expect their collective views to be respected. Influence is more related to the collective student body- too many intelligent individuals to be merely led by one student (13.4, Q6)

Another group of interviewees suggest that teachers and students have a combined impact upon culture. 13.2 suggests that ultimately culture is formed through the inter-play of staff and pupils:

Certain pupils are appreciated. For example, Student X does a lot of extra-curricular work and I feel that people like that combine with the teachers to make the school what it is (13.2, Q6)

12.4 expresses this view in rather simpler terms, by stating that ‘there are a lot of people and all are different’. The cultures of teachers and students are often seen as two separate entities. However, this comment presents culture as a shared commodity, with teachers and students sharing ownership and taking it in turns to establish and defend the culture that they have jointly created. Overall, it is interesting to note the wide range of suggestions made by students and the range of stakeholders whom they perceive as being able to shape culture. The final comment, that culture is a shared commodity, draws together this range of suggestions into the clear philosophy that all cultural stakeholders exert an influence. Hence using Deal and Kennedy’s (1988) typology, interviewees suggest that at different times students and teachers share the roles of ‘priests’, ‘whisperers’ and gossips’.

Hence students identified a varied ‘cultural network’. Whilst accepting the influence of teachers, particularly those in a senior role, interviewees also point to the significant role of students. As in the sections on heroes, ceremonies and stories, the students identified as exerting influence are those who uphold the ‘shared beliefs and values’ identified in section 4.3.1. Hence academic ‘high fliers’ and students who are ‘sporty’ are identified as being part of the cultural network. Overall, however, students reject the simplistic view that influence is confined to one specific group of ‘cultural players’. Instead they argue that culture is a shared commodity, formed by the interplay of a range of ‘cultural players’, made up of students, teachers and other groups within the school community. Hence students and teachers share the roles within the cultural network of ‘priests’, ‘whisperers’ and gossips’, with no convincing evidence that teachers exert a dominant role as the ‘priests’ of the organisation.

By questioning the role of teachers within the ‘cultural network’ students also by implication question the conventional view that leaders play the central role in shaping and forming culture, an issue that will be addressed in the next chapter of

this study. Student responses also point to the need for a broader model that makes it possible to compare the impact of this broad 'cultural network' with the perceived impact of leaders upon culture. Chapter six will propose a model that facilitates a much clearer analysis of the impact of different individuals upon the 'overall culture' of an institution.

#### 4.3.8 INTERNAL CULTURE: CONCLUSION

Deal and Kennedy (1988) suggest that

A strong culture is a system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p15)

This chapter has argued that many of these 'informal rules' can be identified within the internal culture of the West Midlands Sixth Form explored within this study. The argument that the beliefs and values of an internal culture 'shapes their responses in a strong and subtle way' is reflected in the data analyses within this chapter. A picture emerges of a prevailing culture which emphasises the academic as a core value. Hard work and a willingness to cooperate with authority are seen as important, and a strong emphasis emerges upon 'being productive'. Students display a remarkable academic confidence, expressing the view that they both know their target grades and that they expect to achieve them. The school has a strong sense of community, and although those who challenge the values of the community are treated with relative tolerance, there is no doubt that conformity is expected and that those who challenge the academic values may find themselves as outcasts. The past history of the school, with a focus upon the development of an academic and sporting elite, may well explain the strength of the internal culture that still exists within the Sixth Form. However, student responses do identify some significant concerns about the values of the school. There is a strong perception that the school does not care about students who are not seen as academic.

Other features of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology emerge from the study of internal culture within the chapter. Heroes are seen to 'personify the culture's values' and to provide 'role models' for others. However, data discussed in section 4.3.2 indicates that this heroic status is particularly associated with those who identify with and endorse the academic values identified in the previous paragraph (for example, particular students or an earlier deputy headteacher). In the same way, section 4.3.3 demonstrates that rituals within the institution mainly

relate academic values such as the completion of supervised private study. Broader rituals associated with 'rites of passage' were seen to be undermined by the introduction of students from other institutions at the age of sixteen. Section 4.3.4 shows that stories are also associated with academic values, although other dimensions of the culture were also reflected, such as the need for a strong team spirit. Section 4.3.5 showed that the 'cultural network' identified by Deal and Kennedy (1988) also appeared to be present, although the section makes it clear that teachers do not take on a dominant 'priestly' role within this network, and that instead culture is 'shared commodity' influenced by both teachers and students. This idea will be explored in greater detail within the concluding chapter of this study.

However, whilst the chapter has demonstrated the relevance of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model to a study of internal culture, it has also shown its limitations when seeking to explore the broader range of factors that shape the 'overall culture' of an institution. The section on beliefs and values demonstrated that Year 12 students manifested a greater willingness to question some of the ideas underlying the school's academic culture, such as the assumption that free periods should always be used for work. The response of Year 12 suggests that subcultures may well develop in response to the strength of the prevailing culture and its insistence upon conformity. However, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model provides no instrument that can be used to explore subcultures and the ways in which they shape and influence the culture of an institution. This process will instead be addressed through the next two chapters of this study, which will propose a broader model that considers each of the different pieces that form the overall jigsaw of school culture.

The sections on rituals also pointed towards the growing influence of the culture that exists externally, outside the organisation. Students are highly aware of the pressure placed upon them to achieve high results and evidence suggests that over recent years this pressure has been increased by changes in society. Rituals such as Speech Day have been abandoned by the school, partly because students look outside the school for ceremonies that define their 'rite of passage' into adulthood. Hence a model is also required that examines the impact of 'external culture' and its ability to shape the culture that is experienced within an institution. The section

discussing the 'cultural network' of the school challenged the assumption that teachers take on a 'priestly' role, shaping and maintaining the values of the organisation. This in turn questions the assumption that leaders play a pivotal role in shaping culture. However, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology provides no mechanism that allows the researcher to explore the cultural impact of different groups and to question assumptions about who exerts the greatest influence.

The section on shared values noted the continuing impact of beliefs associated with the past. Hence some students suggested that the school tended to value more highly students who displayed sporting ability, even though these values appeared to be more readily associated with the school in the late 1980s. Once again, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model provides no mechanism to explore the impact of changing cultural values and the way in which members of the institution may respond to these developments. Chapter two demonstrated that cultural change is a complex issue, and it may well be that in order to fully understand the culture that exists of the present it is necessary to first understand the culture of the past. These issues will be more fully explored in the final two chapters of this study.

For all of the reasons noted above, the chapter has demonstrated that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology, whilst it represents the model of cultural analysis that is most easily operationalised in a school setting, does not provide a basis for fully understanding the manifestation of culture in an educational setting. The typology provides the tools to arrive at a very clear understanding of internal culture in all of its various manifestations. However, because it stops at that point, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model only provides a partial explanation of 'overall culture'. Their model also assumes that culture emerges as a result of forces operating within the institution, and that it is maintained by a similar set of 'internal' forces. However, the next chapter of this study will explore data which suggests that the emergence and maintenance of culture is influenced by a more complex set of forces, several of which are based outside the institution. For all of these reasons, there is a need to develop a structure that explores the issues neglected by Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model, one which draws together the many different jigsaw pieces that shape and influence culture. The next chapter of this study will describe such a model and demonstrate how it can be operationalised within the 'real life' setting of a school Sixth Form.

## 5. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA PART TWO- FINDING THE MISSING PIECES OF THE CULTURAL JIGSAW

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter illustrated the ways in which Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model could be used to explore and describe the internal culture of an institution. In particular, the chapter demonstrated the profound impact that 'shared beliefs and values' had upon other aspects of culture. Hence rituals, the adoption of cultural heroes, use of stories and the formation of the cultural network were all influenced by a set of shared academic values that emphasised the need for high grades and hard work. Other shared values were also seen as important, such as sporting excellence and team spirit. However, whilst demonstrating the relevance of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model to internal culture, the previous chapter also demonstrated the limitation of their typology when seeking to explore other dimensions that make up the culture of an institution. Hence, variations in the response of Year 12 students were noted, suggesting that this year group was willing to question some of the academic values that underlie the prevailing internal culture of the school. However, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model provides no opportunity to explore subcultures and their impact upon an organisation. The chapter also noted the impact of what Becker and Greer (1974) describe as 'latent social identities, related to their membership in the same 'outside' groups'. The culture outside the institution was seen to impact upon rituals within the institution, with events such as speech day being seen as lacking in relevance. Similarly, rites of passage were now seen as being centred outside the school rather than being located within it through ceremonies such as becoming a prefect. However, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model does not provide any mechanisms to explore the impact of the society outside the school. The chapter also noted the impact of the past upon the present, suggesting that 'beliefs and values' from ten or more years ago still influenced behaviour within the organisation. Once again, Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology does not provide the opportunity to examine the causes of cultural change and how members of the culture may react to this change.

For all the reasons outlined above, there is a clear need to develop a broader model of cultural analysis that makes it possible to explore the broad range of influences that come together to shape the 'overall culture' of an institution.

Chapter four of this study briefly outlined a 'cultural jigsaw', offering a five stage model of analysis that provided a significantly broader examination of the factors that have shaped and moulded culture within an organisation. Through its exploration of internal culture using Deal and Kennedy's model, the chapter then put one piece of this jigsaw into place. This chapter will now describe the four remaining pieces of this model, whilst the concluding chapter of the study will demonstrate the ways in which these cultural jigsaw pieces can be slotted together in order to provide an over-arching impression of culture within an institution. The chapter begins with a crucially important piece missing from Deal and Kennedy's typology: the role of subcultures.

## 5.2 STAGE TWO OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF SUBCULTURES

Chapter two of this study identified the central role that subcultures play in any overall understanding of school culture. Stoll and Fink (1995) even go as far as suggesting that an organisation does not have one single culture, but rather 'an agglomeration of several subcultures'. Whilst Morgan (1997) accepts the notion of one culture, he argues that subcultures emerge when individuals question the 'unwritten codes' that underpin the organisation. This section will seek to explore the ways in which individuals and groups within a West Midlands Sixth Form have questioned these 'unwritten codes', as well as exploring whether the organisation has a distinct culture or if it merely represents the agglomeration of a series of subcultures. The study will also seek to apply the models of sub cultural analysis developed by the Chicago School to the 'real life' situation of a school Sixth Form. One explanation advanced by members of the Chicago School is that subcultures operate a form of 'reversal', turning on their head the mainstream values that they are reacting against. Hence Young offers the example of groups who reject traditional western economic values, creating instead 'groups that exist beyond the ethos of productivity' (Young 1971, p15). Secondly, other members of the Chicago School suggest that members of subcultures accept mainstream values but not the conventional methods of achieving them. Hence subcultures 'appeal to its members more effectively than any of the solutions already institutionalised' (Cohen, 1955 p49). Finally, Howard Jones (1965) argues that subcultures emerge through a rejection of mainstream social values, meaning that 'people do not know what is expected of them in the way of behaviour' (1965,



p27). By analysing the data collected for evidence of these different manifestations of subculture, this section will respond to Prosser's (1999) call for research studies to explore the 'dynamic relationship' between subcultures and overall culture.

Interviews provide evidence of the range of subcultures that students perceive within the school. Some student comments identify the significance of the school's internal, academic culture in the formation of subcultures. Hence a Year 13 student emphasises the primacy of the academic culture and the strong expectation that students will conform to it:

There is a culture of achievement, whether it be sporting or academic. There is also another culture of socialising and mixing. There is a culture of disapproving of those who do not fit in with your values. Most people do follow the norm and want to work- there are relatively few who opt out and they are looked down upon: they are just there for the ride (13.3, Q8)

The student acknowledges that some students 'opt out' (thus forming themselves into subcultures) and suggests that the reason for this formation of subcultures is that students do not wish to 'follow the norm'. Hence his analysis presents the formation of subcultures as a reaction against the 'norm', an opportunity to rebel against the values which they feel the school is imposing upon them. However, other Year 13 students only partially endorse this view of the formation of subcultures. 13.1 suggests the 'academics' represent just one sub-group within the school:

There are people who are sporty, academics, and two middle groups, halfway between those opposites. There are also those who come in completely from outside (13.1, Q8)

His analysis is broadly supported by 13.4:

There are probably four or five separate groups within the school: people who are sportsmen, academics, two middle groups halfway between those opposites, those who come in completely from outside are integrated, but only over time (13.4, Q8)

Hence both students suggest that a distinctive academic culture is balanced by a distinctive sporting culture, with other cultural groups forming 'halfway between those opposites'. Each student also identifies the importance of the origin of students. Those who have joined the school in the Sixth Form are seen as being likely to form a sub-group, with 13.4 commenting that any integration only takes place 'over time'. 13.2 goes further still, arguing that a still wider range of groups exists:

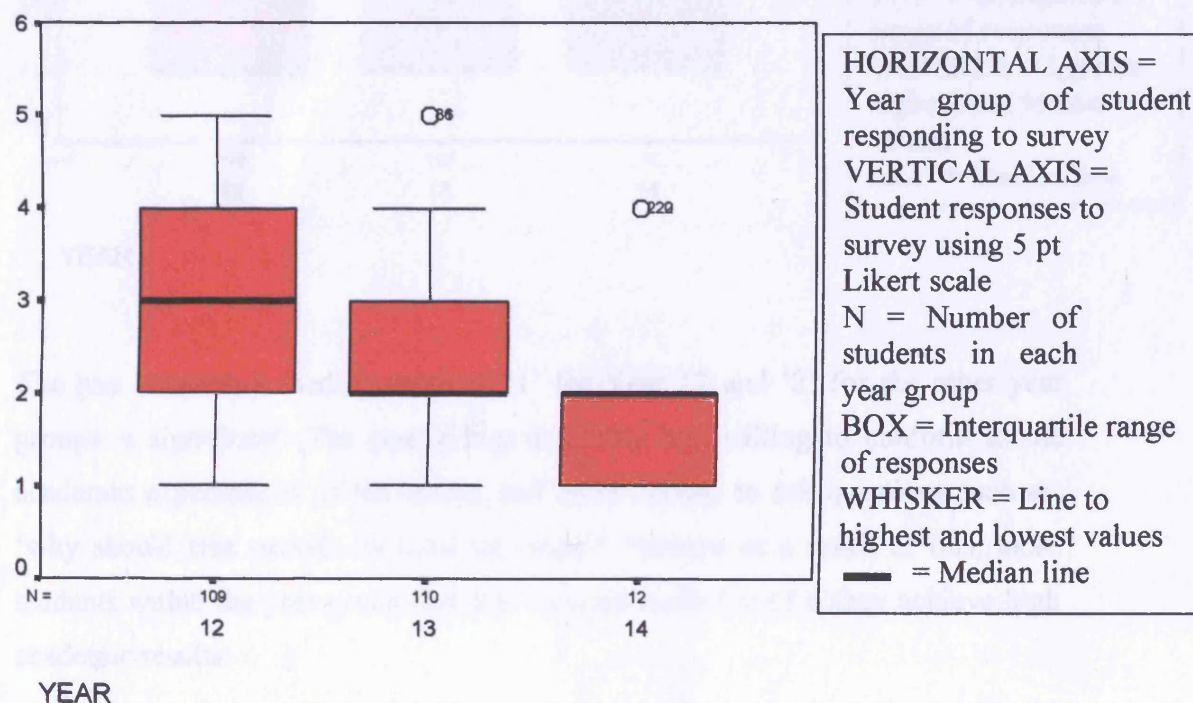
A few different cultures exist. I would summarise them as: Year 13, Year 12, and the main school body. I also feel that there are three other distinct

groups within the Sixth Form: newcomers, those who have been at Lawrence Sheriff throughout their school career and groups which integrate members of the first two groups (13.2, Q8)

It is interesting that 13.4 makes no reference to the significance of an academic culture. Instead he highlights once again the importance of school of origin in the formation and development of sub-groups. In an earlier comment he points out that: 'some students do not like people from new schools' (13.2, Q3). However, he also argues that year group is a second critical force upon the development of subcultures, suggesting that Year 12 and Year 13 have distinct cultures that also set them apart from one another and from the rest of the school. The analysis offered by 13.4 is significant, since it confirms data that emerged from survey evidence. Responses to a series of questions indicated that students in Year 12 have a markedly different response to the academic values of the school from that shown by students in Year 13. A clear example of this comes when students are asked to indicate their view of how free time at school should be spent:

#### 4. I normally plan to work during free periods at school

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

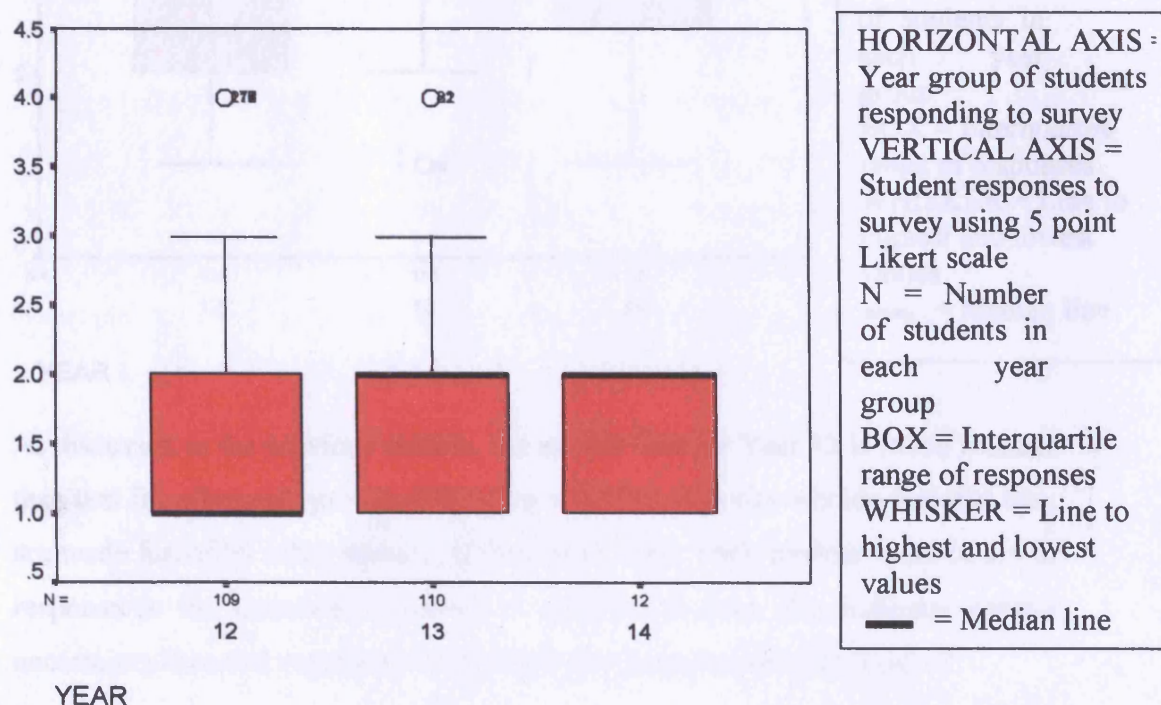


The median score of '3' for Year 12 provides an interesting contrast to the of '2' for the other two year groups. Responses indicate that a significant number of students within Year 12 have formed a subculture which questions the need to

conform to the academic values of the school. The same group also rejects other aspects of the school's academic culture such as the need for supervised private study, a point indicated once again by a median score for Year 12 which differs from that for other year groups:

2. The school should allow Sixth Form students the freedom to decide when and where to work

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

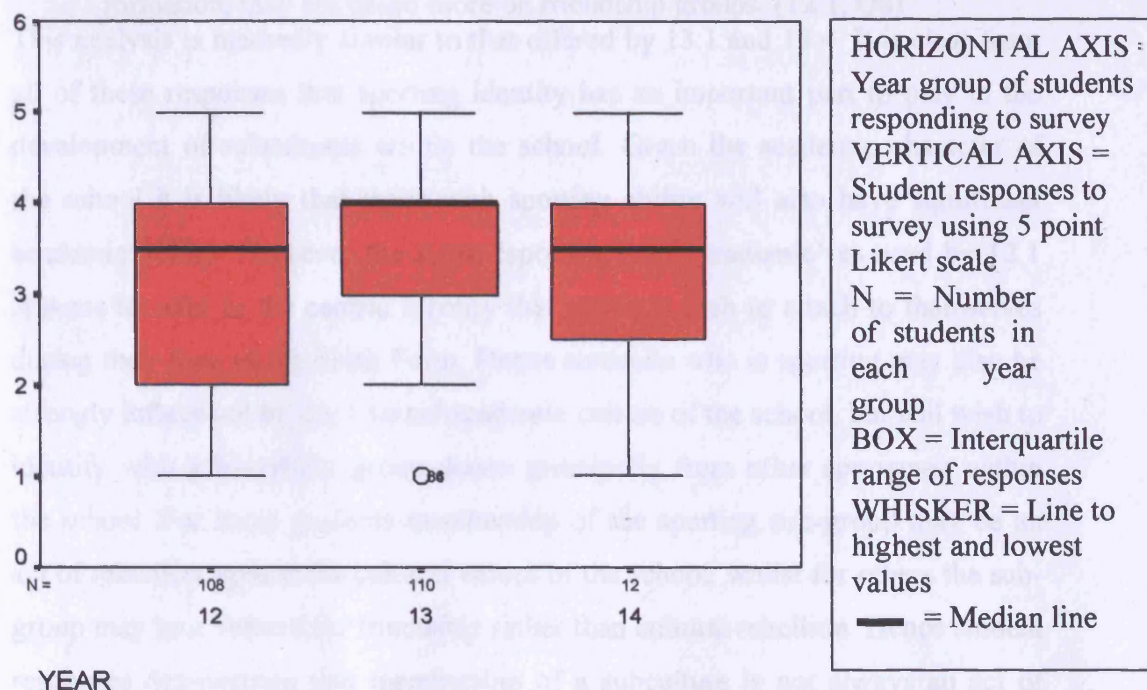


The gap between a median score of '1' for Year 12 and '2' for the other year groups is significant. The year group is clearly less willing to conform to the academic expectations of the school and more willing to ask questions such as: 'why should free periods be used for study?' Perhaps as a result of this, more students within the year group feel that they are made fun of if they achieve high academic results:



13. Students who achieve high results tend to be made fun of by other students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



As discussed in the previous section, the answer box for Year 12 is much broader than that for other year groups, indicating a distinct minority who do feel that they are made fun of by other students if they work hard. Their median score of 3.5 in response to the statement contained in question thirteen also indicates greater uncertainty than that expressed by the same number of students in Year 13.

Hence both interview and survey data suggest that year group plays a significant role in the development of subcultures. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, many students in Year 12 strongly endorse the academic culture of the school. However, the consistent variation in median scores for Year 12 does point to the development of a distinct subculture within the year group based upon questioning of the school's perceived values. This consistent variation suggests that distinct cultures can develop within a year group, as confirmed by the perception of Year 12 students that academic students are more likely to be made fun of by others.

Interview comments from Year 12 students offer a broadly similar view of how subcultures develop. Hence 12.1 comments that:

In my view the subcultures within the school can be summarised as: academics, those who are sporting, people who do both, but are not advanced at either. Ethnic groups not really an issue in sub-group formation, they are based more on friendship groups (12.1, Q8)

This analysis is markedly similar to that offered by 13.1 and 13.4. It is clear from all of these responses that sporting identity has an important part to play in the development of subcultures within the school. Given the academic character of the school it is likely that those with sporting ability will also have significant academic ability. However the terms 'sporting' and 'academic' as used by 12.1 appears to refer to the central identity that students wish to attach to themselves during their time in the Sixth Form. Hence someone who is sporting may also be strongly influenced by the internal academic culture of the school, but still wish to identify with a friendship group drawn principally from other sportsmen within the school. For some students membership of the sporting sub-group may be an act of rebellion against the cultural values of the school, whilst for others the sub-group may be a vehicle for friendship rather than cultural rebellion. Hence student responses demonstrate that membership of a subculture is not always an act of rebellion against the main culture. The comments of 12.2 illustrate this point further:

There are lots of different subcultures and this is a good thing. I would define them as: academics, those who are 'sporty', and those who are either good at both or not good at both (12.2 Q8)

Whilst 12.2 identifies the same set of sub-groups, he is also anxious to comment that 'this is a good thing', since students are offered a variety of friendship groups to which they can belong. However there is no suggestion that those who belong to these different groups are actively rebelling against the internal culture of the school. 12.3 states this point even more strongly:

The Sixth Form is made up of many different school backgrounds. Friendship groups exist, but new ones are being formed. There is not really a diverse set of subcultures. Even Year 12 and Year 13 mix well together... The school does a good job with its culture. One change I would like to make would be to review the way pupils treat one another - not singling out or picking on academically weak students. Greater consideration and loyalty is required. There are a number of Asians in the Sixth Form, but there is no sense of discrimination. You are treated as an equal. The Sixth Form is a huge leap. There is less spoon feeding, and this is both good and bad. The Sixth Form helps to prepare you for adulthood and university (12.3, Q8)

12.3 actually distinguishes between 'friendship groups' and 'subcultures', supporting the point once again that a number of the sub-groups that exist are not in the process of challenging the perceived internal culture of the school. Like 12.1 he emphasises that ethnic group is not a significant feature in the formation of sub-groups, being at pains to point out that 'there is no sense of discrimination'. However, more disturbing are his references to some students 'singling out or picking on academically weak students'. It may even be that these comments reflect the personal experience of 12.3. These comments provide an interesting counterpoint to survey comments discussed earlier which highlight the perception that students who work hard will be made fun of by others. It seems reasonable to conclude that both academically able and those are perceived as being less able experience some ridicule from others in the year group. This experience points again to the year group's greater willingness to question academic values within the school. However, it also suggests that a further reason for the formation of subcultures may be the desire to ridicule other groups (in this case students who are perceived as either academically able or less able). Using this analysis it can be suggested that subcultures emerge in order to attack other subcultures, just as subcultures may also develop in order to attack or rebel against the prevailing culture.

12.4 points to a wider range of subcultures within the school:

There are loads of different little cultures: hoods, different coloured hair, clever people who are just talking, sportsmen: all mix in. There are also subcultures based upon ethnic groups (12.4, Q8)

This analysis is distinct in that the impact of external trends in society is portrayed as having an impact upon subcultures within the school. Hence social trends such as 'hoods' and 'people with different coloured hair' are identified as forming themselves into distinct cultures within the school. This is combined with the now familiar distinction between subcultures involving 'clever people' and 'sportsmen'. However, an interesting further area of debate is the assertion of 12.4 that there are subcultures based upon 'ethnic groups'. This contention is directly contradicted by 12.1 who states that 'Ethnic groups not really an issue in sub-group formation, they are based more on friendship groups.'. However, this difference may reflect differing perceptions of the distinction between a 'friendship group' and a subculture. Since 12.3 comments that 'there are a number

of Asians in the Sixth Form' it would seem reasonable to accept 12.4's claim that ethnicity does play some role in the formation of groups within the Sixth Form.

Data provided by observation broadly supports the student view of the factors that lead to the formation of subcultures within the school. As discussed in the research methodology chapter, observation of Sixth Form students took place in the Sixth Form Centre during a lunch hour. The suggestion of 12.4 that ethnicity is an important factor appears to be confirmed by the note that

Students are largely grouped around tables (around 8-10 per group). Two table groupings are based upon ethnic origin. (Observation Notes, 1.30)

However, the sub groups that exist appear to be characterised by a range of features in addition to ethnic origin. Year group is clearly shown to have a significant impact upon groupings:

Table groupings appear to be based around the same year group. No examples are observed of Year 12 sitting with Year 13 (Observation notes, 1.30)

The formation of simple friendship groups for social interaction appears to be a key factor in the formation of groups around the room:

Some students working, but this would only apply to one or two tables out of ten (Observation Notes, 1.30)

However, the note above also demonstrates that as well as the desire to join friendship groups, another influence upon groupings appears to be the desire to work. Students who wish to spend a large amount of their lunch hour working largely group together. Hence friendship groupings, ethnicity, age and response to academic values are all shown to influence sub-cultural groupings, as indicated by the comments made by students. However, a further factor not discussed in the interview comments of students is gender, which is seen to exert a significant influence upon groupings:

Groups are largely single sex, though there is one student sitting by the window cuddling his girlfriend. A group of five girls sits on easy chairs at the front of the room, and they are joined by three boys (Observation notes, 1.30)

However, it is significant to note that attitude to work appears to be more important than other grouping factors such as gender:

two boys and one girl grouped around the computer screen of a laptop- they seem to be working on a problem (Observation Notes, 1.40pm)

Hence many of the sub-cultural features noted by students also appeared during observation. New factors also emerged, such as the importance of gender.

The observation process also suggests that some subcultures are more rigid than others. The notes point out that the groupings based upon ethnicity 'break down' during the period of the observation:

Three Asian students on one table are joined by a white student then two other white students. Other table with three Asian students now has five white students (Observation Notes, 1.50pm)

However, other sub-groups remain more rigid. It is clear that one sub-group is made up of students who do not readily fit into any other group. Some of these students remain isolated throughout the period of observation. Hence at 1.55pm the notes observe that

the student sitting on his own at 1.30 is still sitting on his own (Observation Notes, 1.55pm)

Indeed it would be a mistake to assume that these students always wish to be part of a larger group. When one student sitting on his own is joined by three others he comments to them that he was 'enjoying a bit of quiet'. This comment highlights a significant issue relating to subcultures. Students sometimes form subcultures simply because they wish to be part of a smaller group (even if, in this case, the group consists of one person). Although subcultures often form in response to a prevailing culture, this is not always the case. On occasions their formation can simply be related to a natural social grouping which involves a relatively small group of people.

Using the points made by each year group and the evidence offered by observation, the following summary can be produced:

**FIGURE 5.1: A COMPARISON OF YEAR 13 AND 12 ANALYSIS OF THE FORCES THAT LEAD TO THE FORMATION OF SUBCULTURES**

YEAR 13	YEAR 12	OBSERVATION
1. REBELLION: A response to the academic culture of the school (13.3)	1. REBELLION: A response to the academic culture of the school (12.3)	1. GENDER: Male and female groups tend to sit together
2. FRIENDSHIP: Distinct groups based around academic and sporting values and those 'in-	2. FRIENDSHIP: Distinct groups based around academic and sporting values and	2. FRIENDSHIP: Groupings within the centre are largely based around friendship



between' (13.1, 13.4)	those 'in-between' (2.1, 12.2, 12.3)	groups (1.30)
3. AGE: Influence of year group (13.2)	4. SOCIAL: Subcultures related to a range of social groups (12.4)	3. AGE: A number of groupings are based around year groups (1.30)
4. EXPERIENCE: subcultures formed around those who are new to the school in Year 12 (13.1,13.2, 13.4)	5. EXPERIENCE: Subcultures formed around those who are new to the school in Year 12 (13.1,13.2, 13.4)	4. ACADEMIC: students who, rather than rebelling against the school's academic values, actually wish to work (1.30, 1.40)
	6. ETHNIC: Subcultures related to membership of ethnic groups (12.4, but disputed by 12.1)	5. ETHNIC: Evidence of subcultures influenced by ethnicity (1.30, 1.50)
	7. RIDICULE: Subcultures that define themselves by opposition to other groups (12.3)	

Figure 5.1 presents a picture of the complex network of subcultures that have formed themselves within the Sixth Form. Whilst it is clear from this analysis that a diverse series of factors lead to the emergence and development of subcultures, certain factors emerge as being significant from each of the three columns. Response to the prevailing academic culture within the school is clearly a significant factor influencing the formation of subcultures. In the interview comments of students this is often presented as a form of rebellion, but observation also suggests that some subcultures wish to follow these values more strongly than others within the school. Hence the academic culture produces sub-groups who either rebel against it or who endorse it more strongly than the majority of students. 12.3 also suggests that the desire to ridicule either of these first two groups can be a factor in the formation of sub-groups. The second factor influencing the development of subcultures is the significance of friendship, and

the tendency of students to group themselves according to social factors. However, as 13.1 and 13.4 point out, even these groups are influenced by a response to the prevailing academic culture, with students socialising with those who share their attitude to work or sport. Related to the issue of friendship groups is the significance of ethnicity, with both interviews and observations suggesting that a subculture exists of students who group themselves according to ethnic identity. However, observation suggests that these groups are fluid, with other students joining and leaving the group on a regular basis. Gender is also seen as a factor within the formation of friendship groups, with some students choosing to remain within single sex groups and others wishing to form groups made up of males and females. Age does appear to play a role in the formation of subgroups, with students often forming groups relating to their own particular year group. Survey evidence provided an interesting example of how this can influence the development of subcultures, with Year 12 demonstrating a distinctive set of values that questioned several aspects of the prevailing academic culture of the school. A related point is the significance of past experience, with both Year 12 and Year 13 interviewees suggesting that students who were new to the school formed themselves into distinct groups. The society outside the school is also shown as exerting an influence through the suggestion of 12.4 that external groups such as 'hoods, different coloured hair' form distinct subcultures within the school. The formation of subcultures as a result of past experience and external social identities illustrates the accuracy of Becker and Greer's (1974) hypothesis that 'latent' cultures exist, derived from external social factors:

To the degree that group participants share latent social identities (related to their membership in the same 'outside' social groups) they will share these understandings, so that there will be a culture which can be called latent (Becker and Greer, 1974, p56)

The data collected for this section has offered a fresh perspective upon the theories of subcultural formation discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Stoll and Fink's (1995) contention that organisations have 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' rather than one single culture has not been supported by the interview comments of students. Both Year 12 and 13 students argue instead that the school does have one distinct culture, summed up by the comments of Year 13 student who states that 'there is a culture of achievement'. Whilst table 5.1 confirms that 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' does exist within the school, the view of

students is that they exist alongside a distinct 'overall' culture within the organisation. This point is further confirmed by the analysis of 'shared beliefs and values' in chapter four, which clearly demonstrates the centrality of academic values to the life of the school. For this reason the study does support Morgan's (1997) suggestion that subcultures emerge as a response to the 'unwritten codes' within an organisation. Chapter four noted the summary by 13.2 of the values approved of by the school:

Basically high grades and academic success. Students are also encouraged to be 'willing' and to go for academic opportunities. The school also expects students to be dedicated to what they do (13.2, Q1)

Hence when students create a culture of rebellion, in the manner summarised in table 5.1, they do so in response to the 'unwritten codes' of academic success that underpin the shared beliefs and values of the school. Although students may not endorse the 'unwritten codes' of the organisation, they understand very clearly what they are and what demands they place upon them.

The section has also provided varying levels of support for the theories of subcultural formation advanced by the Chicago School of sociologists. There is clear evidence in the data explored in this chapter supporting Jones' (1965) argument that subcultures sometimes emerge as a rejection of mainstream social values. Hence 13.3 talks about the 'few who opt out and they are looked down upon'. 12.3 also illustrates the point by describing less academic students who are made fun of by the more academic. Hence in the culture of the school a subculture of 'rejection' may well lead to mockery and isolation. It also appears to be confined to a relatively small group. Some evidence also exists of the subgroups identified by Cohen (1955), individuals who accept mainstream values, but not the conventional methods of achieving them. Hence observation notes comment upon students who prioritise academic work so strongly that their commitment to study is seen as excessive and departing from the model of the 'balanced all-rounder' identified in the beliefs and values of the school in chapter four. Such students are seen as representing a subculture because their support for academic values is perceived as excessive by other students, thus creating the subculture based around unconventional acceptance identified by Cohen (1955). Evidence of 'reversal', groups who turn upside down the 'mainstream' values that they are reacting against, is harder to find. It could be argued that the existence of 'ridicule', noted in the Year 12 section of Table 5.1, provides a limited example of

this. Here some students are seen as defining themselves simply by their mockery of other groups, both those who follow the accepted values of the school and those whose adherence is seen as excessive. Hence membership of this subgroup could be seen to be based around a willingness to 'reverse' the conventional values of the school that endorse high academic achievement.

Overall, the study has produced some evidence to support the theories of the Chicago School. However, it also suggests that these models provide only a partial explanation for the process of subcultural formation. The element missing in research to date has been a recognition of the role played by social factors in the development of subcultures. Hence table 5.1 notes that the background of students impacts upon subcultures, with students who have joined the Sixth Form from other schools tending to group themselves together. Ethnicity is also noted as having some impact upon the development of subgroups. Allegiance to social groups outside the school is also seen as significant, with 12.4 referring to the impact of groups such as 'hoods'. However, other social factors may be related to forces within the institution. Hence year group and age are seen as influencing the development of subcultures, as well as friendship groups within the school. All of this evidence combines to suggest that subcultures do not develop simply as a response to the main culture, in the manner suggested by the Chicago School. This section suggests that subcultures can also emerge as an expression of social identity, whether that identity relates to features inside or outside the school. It may be that by expressing that social identity group members wish to make some form of comment upon the main culture, but this is not essential for a subgroup to develop. Hence the data suggests that subcultures are not simply reactive in nature. Rather than making a negative comment about the values of the mainstream culture, subcultures may emerge in order to positively endorse a set of values held by their members. Belonging to a subgroup is portrayed by the Chicago School as suggesting a reaction against other people's values. However, this study suggests that subcultural membership may be more closely connected with stating what you believe, rather than defining simply the values that you reject. For this reason, members of a subgroup have as clear and positive a view of 'the way we do things around here' as that demonstrated by followers of the 'main' culture.

Just as culture has emerged from this study as a multi-level jigsaw that needs to be carefully pieced together, so subcultures have been shown to be formed by a complex range of inter-connected factors. Whilst the first stage of cultural analysis pointed towards the prevailing academic culture of the school, this second stage of analysis has made it clear that this strong prevailing culture cannot prevent the emergence of a range of subcultures, influenced by age, gender, ethnicity, experience, social relationships and attitudes to work and sport. Indeed, the prevailing academic culture actually emerges as the central factor in the formation of subcultures, made up both of students who endorse it so strongly that others regard them with suspicion ('clever people who are just talking'), those who react against these academic values and those who wish to ridicule members of the first two groups. Hence this section has demonstrated that there is both a 'mosaic' of subcultures, and a similar 'mosaic' made up of the differing influences that lead to the formation of subcultures. There is not one factor that leads to the formation of subcultures, but rather a multiplicity of influences, reflecting the complexity of the human interactions that lead to the development of subcultures.

Having explored the range of influences that shape the development of subcultures, the next section of this chapter will go on to explore a further part of the 'cultural jigsaw' neglected by Deal and Kennedy's model: the ability of leaders to shape and mould culture.

### 5.3 STAGE THREE OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE

Chapter two explored the wide variety of opinions surrounding the impact that leaders are able to exert upon culture. Fullan (2003) maintains that 'the moral imperative of the principal involves leading deep cultural change' (p41). The image of the headteacher or principal leading profound cultural change is supported by Hall and George (1999) who argue that 'no matter what the leader does (and does not do) the effects are detectable throughout the school' (p165). The chapter also noted that some writers believe that only poor leadership can prevent this process of transformation taking place:

True leaders will never allow the excuse that they are simply managing someone else's agenda to deflect them from achieving this vision (Evans, 2001, p47)

However, Hargreaves (1995) advances the contradictory view that 'no school or teacher culture can be shown to have a direct impact upon student learning'. Other writers have suggested that whilst leaders are able to influence culture, the process is likely to be a long and difficult one:

Creating an organisational culture is likely to be a difficult and slow business and if it contradicts existing group cultures, is unlikely to succeed (Abercrombie et al, 1994, p297)

These contrasting views will be explored in this section, and the data collected will be analysed in order to examine the ways in which leaders are able to influence culture. As well as considering these polarised views, the section will also consider a view of leadership and culture that falls somewhere between the views advanced by Hargreaves (1995) and Fullan (2003). This third model suggests that leaders can exert a limited influence upon culture, but that this influence has to be measured alongside the influence exerted by other groups. Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994) compare the influence of leaders and teachers:

Vision is created by the principal, but only to some extent ... Teachers are also creators and communicators of a vision... Vision as a part of school culture is socially constructed (Staessens and Vandenberghe, 1994, p193)

The section will explore this 'social construction' of culture. Staessens and Vandenberghe's (1994) research will be broadened through an analysis of the contribution that students make to the 'social construction' of culture.

When asked to nominate the person who has the biggest single influence upon the culture of a school, students question the notion of one person influencing culture.

12.4 sums up the response of many students:

There is no one person. Students respond to different teachers and to different people (12.4, Q7)

13.1 develops this point by suggesting that:

It is probably too simplistic to just pick out one person. There are a variety of influences all working together (13.1, Q7)

His comments point us once more to the notion suggested by Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994) of a shared culture, jointly owned by staff and students. However, whilst endorsing the concept of a shared culture, students explicitly reject the notion that the headteacher is the main influence upon the culture of a school. 13.4 comments that

I reject the idea that there is one person. Could say the Head, but there is so much more to it than that. There is a collaboration of different people and

voices. Each year is different - cannot fix values, because people and students change (13.4, Q7)

These comments bring a fresh perspective to the argument of Schein (1985) that the primary role of a leader is to 'create and manage culture' or to the argument of Hall and George (1999) that the impact of a leader upon culture is 'detectable throughout the school'. These comments appear to be based upon the viewpoint of teachers or other adult members of the school community. Interview responses suggest that whilst students do not discount the role of the headteacher, they actually perceive a richer and more complex 'collaboration of different people and voices' who shape and influence the culture of a school. Some of these voices will be teachers or school leaders, and some will be students (thus adding a further dimension to the 'socially constructed' culture identified by Staessens and Vandenberghe). The comments of 13.2 emphasise this point:

It is not appropriate to identify one person: influence has to be based upon a collective interplay between staff and pupils. I used to think it was the Head. However, when a new Head joined my last school there was a change of style and the Head became less remote (13.2, Q7)

Once again, the 'collective interplay' of different cultural voices is seen as particularly important. Hence students appear to be united in rejecting the notion that any one figure such as the headteacher provides the dominant influence upon culture, pointing instead to a more complex interplay of cultural voices.

Dr Pogson's interview provides a contrasting perspective upon the identity of those who are able to shape school culture. He is emphatic in arguing that the person with the greatest influence has to be the headteacher:

It has got to be the Head. Not necessarily on details, but rather on values and personal relationships (Pogson, Q11)

In making this comment he is echoing the earlier comments of Fullan (2003) and Hall and George (1999), suggesting that the leader is at the centre of cultural formation. However, as discussed earlier in the chapter, this view is not shared by the students who were surveyed and interviewed. One wonders if teachers and other adults within the school environment tend to ascribe the greatest influence over culture to the person who has the greatest influence upon them. It could be argued that students are the members of the school community who are most obviously on the receiving end of school culture, and that their view of who shapes and moulds culture is therefore arguably the most accurate. However, despite his earlier statement about the influence of leaders, Dr Pogson himself accepts that the influence of leaders upon culture is limited:

the Head cannot control outside pressures. It depends on how nimble footwork is, but you are in an externally controlled maze, and you cannot remould it (Pogson, Q11)

As with earlier responses, he argues that the influence of government and society is more profound than anything which an individual school or the leader of that school can exert. A leader can demonstrate 'nimble footwork' but ultimately they cannot escape the influence of society's 'externally constructed maze'. This comment serves as a reminder that national educational policy also has effects upon school culture. Educational policies such as the advent of the national curriculum have profoundly affected the organisation of schools and the culture that surrounds them. Whilst leaders can interpret national policy, they are not able to nullify its influence. Hence we are reminded once again that culture is partially shaped by events that take place outside the school environment. To use Dr Pogson's metaphor, 'the externally constructed maze' of society and its values exerts a powerful influence upon culture, even though leaders may think otherwise.

Overall, the data within this section offers only limited support for the argument of writers such as Fullan (2003) and Hall and George (1999) that leaders play a central role in the formation of culture within the organisation. Whilst Dr Pogson, a former headteacher argues that 'It has got to be the Head' who exercises the dominant influence upon culture, this view is not shared by students, who are themselves the recipients of the school's culture. However, students have also failed to endorse the argument of Hargreaves (1995) that leaders struggle to exert a direct influence upon culture. Instead students present a more sophisticated argument, which develops and broadens the model put forward by Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994). Interviewees suggest that whilst the headteacher does have a limited influence, culture is principally formed by 'a collaboration of different people and voices' drawn from a range of cultural stakeholders. Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994) suggest that teachers work alongside the principal to establish a 'socially constructed' vision. Rutherford (2003) in an article exploring the relationship between headteachers and their deputies, argues that whilst headteachers provide 'confident and positive leadership' it is still essential for them to 'work very closely with their deputies and other staff to accomplish that agenda' (2003, p72). Students take this model of partnership a stage further by suggesting that the most significant 'collaboration of different people' involves



students and staff working together to shape the culture of a school: 'influence has to be based upon a collective interplay between staff and pupils' (13.2)

Teachers and school leaders tend to identify the headteacher as being the person with the biggest influence upon culture precisely because he or she has the greatest influence upon their professional lives. Researchers may have fallen into the trap of accepting these assumptions without testing them upon a wider constituency. However, the assumptions of teachers are not necessarily supported by students. In their role as recipients of culture, students are aware of a much broader range of influences. They accept that headteachers can influence culture, but also hear other voices that are able to shape culture. In this respect the study makes a distinctive contribution to research in the area of school culture, because it demonstrates that leaders do not necessarily exert the dominant influence upon culture that previous studies have assumed. The concluding chapter of this study will demonstrate the way in which this finding challenges the current direction of national educational policy on the training and role of school leaders. Having explored the significance of leaders, the next stage of the cultural jigsaw explores the impact of society outside the school upon what takes place within the school. Once again, the study will highlight a significant influence upon 'overall' culture that is not addressed by Deal and Kennedy's model.

#### 5.4 STAGE FOUR OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: THE IMPACT OF SOCIETY UPON CULTURE

Chapter two highlighted the relative neglect of the influence of society upon the culture of an organisation. As Dimmock and Walker (2000) point out: 'societal culture as an influence in the study of educational management has been conspicuous by its absence' (2000, p138). Certainly Deal and Kennedy's model (1988) does not address the influence of factors outside the school. Through this analysis of the influence of 'external culture', the section seeks to explore the claim of Becker and Greer (1974) that 'latent' cultures derived from external social factors can exert considerable influence upon the culture within an institution. The section also explores the accuracy of Stoll's (1998) suggestion that 'Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture' (1998, p2). Hence the study seeks to explore ways in which changing social expectations of Sixth Form students may have influenced culture and behaviour within the school. By

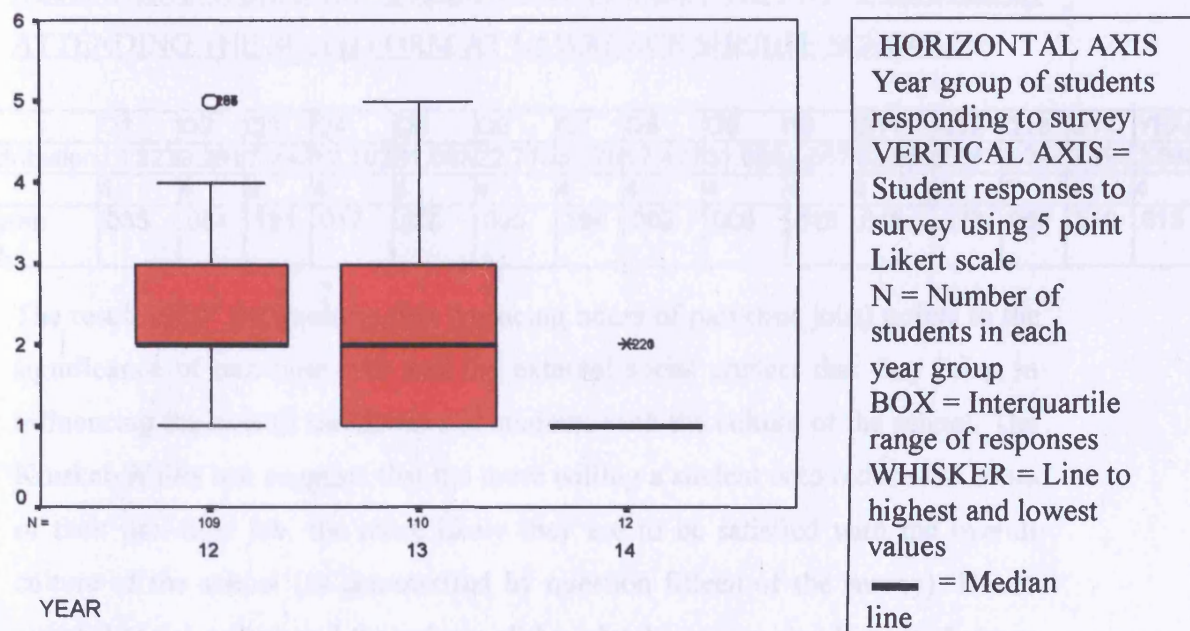
discussing the influence of the society outside the school, the section will also explore Bernstein's (1974) suggestion that the influence of the local community upon school culture is crucial. He argues that the way in which pupils respond to the culture of the school is likely to depend upon the experiences offered to them by the community that they live in:

One child, through his socialization, is already sensitive to the symbolic orders of the school, whereas the second child is much less sensitive to the universalistic orders of the school. (Bernstein, 1974, p64)

The data gathered for this study provides a series of perspectives upon the impact of society upon culture. Initial data is provided by student responses to survey questions. These responses are then placed in historical context (in the manner indicated in the methodology chapter) by the interview responses of Dr Pogson. Survey responses, indicating the importance of part-time jobs, illustrate the influence of external social factors upon culture:

5. I would be prepared to reduce the hours of my part-time job if it interfered with my A-Levels

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Answer boxes indicate a considerable range of responses when students were asked if they would be prepared to reduce the hours that they spend on their part-time jobs. As in earlier sections, Year 12 emerges as the group least willing to conform to the expectations imposed by the school's academic culture. Whilst the

median score of '2' indicates a willingness to reduced the hours of their part-time job, a significant number have also indicated that that they would be uncertain about doing this. In Year 13 this uncertain group is balanced by a group of students who strongly agree with the statement (in the academically able Year 14 group responses are clustered around '1'). However, in Year 12 this corresponding balance does not exist, emphasising the importance that students attach to their part-time employment. Taken as a whole, these responses point towards the tension that exists between the culture of school and the demands of an external culture. Students do not wish to damage A-Level chances, but they are also unwilling to lose the social and financial freedom which part-time jobs offer to them. Payne (2003), as part of a study into the effect of part-time jobs upon examination results, places this finding in a national context:

We have seen that, in the recent national sample on which the analysis is based, part-time paid work was very widespread. Furthermore, part-time jobs were even more common in Year 13 than in Year 12, and tended to involve longer hours in Year 13 (Payne, 2003, p609)

Non-parametric testing of student responses further underlines the significance of part-time work:

**FIGURE 5.2: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'**

	Q1	Q2:	Q3:	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	YEAR
Distribution	10.323	9.281	7.294	12.102	31.093	22.710	6.070	17.477	31.095	9.857	12.365	2.341	8.744	3.293	2.668
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.035	.054	.121	.017	.000	.000	.194	.002	.000	.043	.015	.673	.068	.510	.615

The result of '0' for question five (reducing hours of part-time jobs) points to the significance of part-time jobs and the external social contact that they bring in influencing the overall satisfaction of students with the culture of the school. The Kruskal-Wallis test suggests that the more willing a student is to reduce the hours of their part-time job, the more likely they are to be satisfied with the overall culture of the school (as summarised by question fifteen of the survey). Hence external social culture and the culture of the school are seen as pulling students in two potentially different directions. The challenge facing students is how to balance the impact of these two forces. Once again we are reminded of the growing impact of an external social culture upon the school. Chapter four

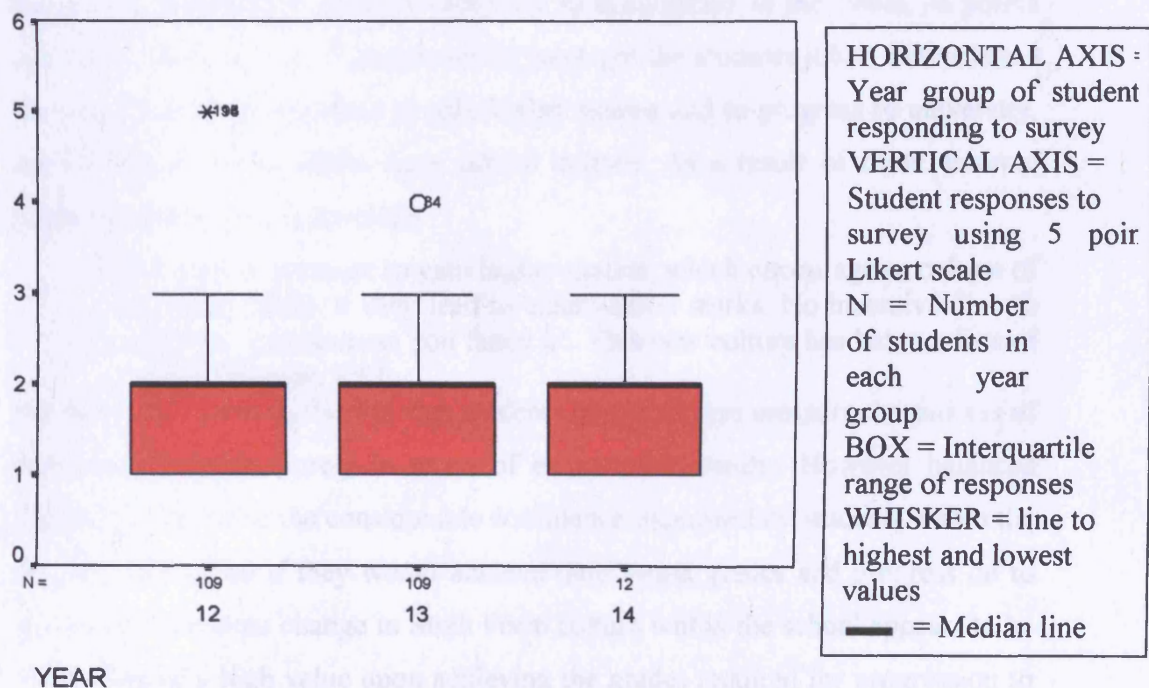


illustrated the powerful way in which the 'shared beliefs and values' of the school's internal culture were able to influence students. However, whilst the internal school culture emerges as stronger in the survey responses of students, it is clear that the struggle is becoming greater as social developments such as the increasing role of part-time jobs exert an ever greater influence. An implication of this development is that any attempt to manage or even change school culture must take account of the impact of these social pressures and influences. School cultures cannot exist independently of the society within which students find themselves.

The Kruskal-Wallis test also shows that the independent variable of question six has influenced the dependent variable of question fifteen. Interestingly the question relates to the students' expectations of academic success:

6. I expect to achieve the A-Level results that will enable me to go on to my chosen university course or employment route

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Whilst question five highlighted a divergence between social and school culture, this statement highlight a strong similarity between the two. The academic culture of the school produces answer boxes in all three year groups which indicate a high

level of confidence that they will go on to achieve to achieve the grades required for progression in higher education or employment. However, this expectation also links to an increased expectation in society that students will go on to achieve university places or highly regarded employment opportunities, influenced by an increasing governmental emphasis upon high results and an increasing proportion of students progressing on to higher education. Whilst it is not surprising that responses to this question link to student's overall satisfaction with the culture of the school, it is also possible to speculate whether these responses link to the relatively high level of pressure that students reported themselves feeling (as discussed in chapter four). Expectations of high results are almost certain to translate themselves into a heightened sense of pressure. This may be particularly the case with Year 12 who also show themselves as being more willing to question conventional academic practices such as studying during free periods. A determination to achieve high results, linked to a desire to spend more time on activities outside school may well lead to feelings of pressure and uncertainty.

As mentioned earlier in this section, the interview with Dr Pogson provides a historical perspective upon the changing social influences upon students. When discussing the situation when he took over as headteacher in the 1980s, he points out that in the past 'two D grades would have got the students jobs'. Students are now expected by government to gain higher grades and to progress to university, but this has a mixed effect upon school culture. As a result of these external pressures a new culture develops :

Now there is pressure to gain higher grades, which encourages a culture of only doing things if they lead to examination marks. No incentive now to read Plato 'just because you fancy it'. This new culture has led to a loss of maturity (Pogson, Q6)

His comments point to the fact that students do not always measure the success of their school careers purely in terms of examination results. However balanced against this has to be the considerable confidence expressed by students within the survey when asked if they would achieve their target grades and progress on to university. One clear change in Sixth Form culture within the school appears to be the placing of a high value upon achieving the grades required for progression to university. However, students also appear to resent attempts to coerce or pressure them into achieving the grades of which the school feels they are capable. As with the results emerging from non-parametric testing, Dr Pogson's comments

illustrate the way in which the school's academic culture has become influenced by developments in the society outside the school. Whilst responding to the social expectation of academic success and progression to university, students also feel more pressurised to succeed. Hence for this reason the survey data discussed earlier indicates that the majority of students respond positively to the statement 'the school places too much pressure on Sixth Form students'. He suggests that as well as affecting attitudes to academic results, changes in society have also impacted upon the school's view of its mission and the way in which it seeks to impact upon its students. Dr Pogson comments that:

When I started the school had a clear idea of what a good citizen was, what its goals were about: you were aiming for a job for life. They recognised a single set of values linked to the Christian model (Pogson, Q7)

Changes in society had since made it easier to deal with issues such as homophobia and gender issues but had perhaps eroded the school's confidence in its own distinct set of cultural values. Dr Pogson characterises these distinct values as

an homogenous community drawing upon the whole town. All were equal as academics. The school has a long-standing culture of being caring and friendly, boys have felt able to talk. There is a culture of being open, things are not done in the dark (Pogson, Q7)

A picture emerges of a past Sixth Form culture existing in an island of independence, slightly divorced from the values of the society around it. With students becoming more involved in society through part-time jobs undertaken alongside their school work, and the increasing government direction of school policy, so the culture of schools has become less independent and more reflective of changes in society as a whole. This analysis receives support from Rutherford (2003) who comments that:

The last 25 or so years has seen a plethora of radical and challenging legislation that has had a profound impact on the culture of schools (2003, p59)

This 'plethora of legislation' inevitably means that schools are less autonomous, being subject to DFES prescriptions on the curriculum, admissions, governance, reporting, management structures and a whole range of additional issues. For this reason, the school can no longer be a 'homogenous community' in the way indicated by Dr Pogson, and so are less able to sustain a distinct culture that exists independently of the society outside the school.

Overall, a view emerges of Sixth Form culture which acknowledges the influence of 'things happening outside'. Survey responses point to the influence of part-time jobs upon culture, and the tension that exists between social culture and culture within the school. High expectations of academic success amongst students may also reflect a similar conflict between the internal culture of the school and the values of contemporary society. In this sense Stoll's suggestion that 'Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture' (1998, p2) is vindicated by this research. As the expectation has grown that students will take on part-time jobs, so the society outside the school has come to exert a more profound influence upon its culture. Survey responses indicate that students find themselves increasingly torn between these two sets of values, with students who are willing to reduce the hours of their part-time jobs most likely to feel satisfied with the values of the school. This finding also highlights the accuracy of Becker and Greer's (1974) argument about the significance of 'latent social identities' (p56) in the formation of culture. As part-time jobs become more significant, so students find themselves torn between a social identity within the school and a social identity outside the school formed by their part-time job (or by the additional income provided by their part-time job). Section 5.2 of this chapter has already illustrated the way in which these 'latent social identities' can also exert a further influence by promoting the formation of subcultures, based around common social allegiances outside the school.

Dr Pogson offers a view of school leaders shaping culture which is contested by the Sixth Formers themselves, but even here their influence is seen as being limited by a changing society outside the school, in a way that goes far beyond the model of cultural formation developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988). Chapter four demonstrated that elements of internal culture such as ritual, anecdote and heroes and heroines were recognisable within the school. However, the chapter also showed that features such as ritual and the emergence of heroes appeared to be increasingly shaped by external forces in society. Hence the data presented in chapters four and five suggests that schools would be unwise to assume that their internal culture is so strong that it can exist independently of the society outside the school. As society increasingly legislates what should happen in schools, so the influence of that external social culture is seen more strongly in school Sixth Forms. In this sense Deal and Kennedy's famous definition of culture as 'the way

we do things around here' (1988) could be said to be incomplete because it neglects the external social dimension. The conclusion of this study is that 'the way they do things round here' is profoundly affected by 'the way they do things out there'.

### 5.5 STAGE FIVE OF CULTURAL ANALYSIS: EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Chapter two demonstrated the critical controversy surrounding cultural change. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) suggest that planned change is extremely difficult to achieve:

it is somewhat uncertain whether and how knowledge of the organisational culture and its dynamics can be used to improve outcomes in a planned, intentional fashion (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1994, p44)

Bate (1994) suggests that the reason for this is that 'people will always end up producing their own meanings' (p223). For this reason he concludes that 'Culture cannot be changed in the abstract' (p23). Weick provides a further reason for believing that cultural change is extremely difficult to achieve, arguing that culture is an organic force that cannot be easily manipulated:

A corporation doesn't have a culture. A corporation is a culture. That is why they are so horribly difficult to change (Weick, cited in Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998)

Chapter two noted that Bate (1994) did concede that leaders might be able to exert an influence upon culture by actions that 'initiate, influence and shape the direction of the emerging culture' (p245). However, Morgan (1997) outlines a much more ambitious manifesto for culture change. He advocates that organisations should be engaged in a continual process of 'reculturing', involving 'transforming mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images, metaphors, beliefs and shared meanings' (p143). Stoll and Fink (1999) are even more radical in suggesting that this 'reculturing' can extend beyond the school, engaging the community outside the school in radical change:

reculturing, however, needs to go beyond redefining teacher cultures; it must include pupil and community cultures as well (Stoll and Fink, 1999, p47)

This section seeks to contribute to this critical debate by exploring evidence relating to cultural change. In so doing it seeks to gauge whether it is possible to 'reculture' an organisation in the radical manner advocated by Morgan (1997), or whether Bate (1994) is correct in asserting that culture 'cannot be changed'. In the process the section will also consider the 'middle view' advocated by Lumby



(2001), that 'culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people'. Hence the section seeks to explore the ability of various cultural stakeholders to exert an influence upon the culture of their organisation.

The first perspective upon cultural change is provided by two differing drafts of the school's prospectus. The 1997 prospectus contains a specific chapter which discusses life in the Sixth Form. Great emphasis is placed upon improved facilities and their positive impact upon students:

The governors and local authority have invested in a new seminar and library facility in the Sheriff Centre, and the Governors have also provided refurbished social facilities for the Sixth Form. (Prospectus, 1997, p3)

Much is also made of the links with the girl's grammar school:

Parallel timetabling with Rugby High School for Girls has broadened the already extensive academic opportunities for students at both schools (Prospectus, 1997, p3)

Through collaboration and improved facilities for all students, the school can be seen to be improving what it offers to all of its students. However, the prospectus goes on to make it clear that the school sees itself as catering for two distinct groups of students:

There is a double educational aim: to give an opportunity to high flying academic students, but also to open the grammar school sixth form to diligent students with more modest aspirations (Prospectus, 1997, p4)

Firstly, the school aims to 'give an opportunity to high flying academic students', many of whom will have presumably studied at the school during Years 7-11. However, the prospectus also indicates a wish to 'open the grammar school Sixth Form to diligent students with more modest aspirations'. These comments appear to provide a major clue to the reasons why subcultures within the Sixth Form are often associated with student perceptions of academic ability and their pre-sixteen destinations. The comment establishes an implied hierarchy which is likely to create subcultures and, indeed, some resentment within the students who are perceived as having 'more modest aspirations'. Once again the school's academic culture appears to have influenced the way in which students are perceived (whether it is as 'high flying' or 'more modest').

The emphasis upon sport within the Sixth Form is also clear:

the school also continues to attach importance to high-level performance in team sport (Prospectus, 1997, p4)

This comment is supported by a picture of team sport in the school's sports hall. Under the separate section of 'extra-curricular activities' on a further picture of Sixth Formers playing volleyball is included, alongside the maxim that

an all-rounder in academic and extra-curricular activities gains immeasurably by putting his effort and time into the school community (Prospectus, 1997, p7)

Again, the influences upon the formation of subcultures based around sporting achievement are apparent. Once again the comment points towards a hierarchy within which the school is seen to value more highly students who combine academic and sporting achievement. Students who are unable to combine these qualities are likely to feel somewhat marginalized, whilst natural academics or sportsmen may well feel that their gifts are valued more highly by the school. Cultures are deeply rooted within an institution, and whilst these comments were made in 1997, it is likely that they reflected attitudes that had existed for some time and that their impact would continue for some time after they were first made. Dr Pogson comments that when he took over as headteacher in the 1980s he found 'a sporting elite mixed with an academic elite', and this situation is reflected in the comments being made in 1997.

The prospectus concludes by emphasising the need for every student to make a contribution to the community:

recent activities include work shadowing, engineering projects, charity fundraising and old people's entertainment, helping to run the library, visiting the hospital or local primary school, or editing the magazine (Prospectus, 1997, p4)

This focus upon the community emerges as a further plank of the culture which the school is seeking to promote. In this sense it is particularly ironic that Dr Pogson identifies social changes in this wider community as having a particularly negative impact upon the culture of the Sixth Form. The school's expectation was that it would be able to reach out to the community that it found itself within. It had not anticipated that some of the values of this external community would actually reach into the school and change aspects of the 'internal culture' of the school community.

The revised version of the prospectus, published in October 2001, offers several examples of the changing cultural values which the school is seeking to promote.

Understandable emphasis is placed upon the new Sixth Form Centre and the facilities it offers:

In September 2001 our new Sixth Form Centre opened, boasting state-of-the-art facilities for Sixth Form study and research....The opening of the centre, at the start of the new millennium, illustrates the governor continuing commitment to providing students with the best possible facilities (Prospectus, 2001, p2).

These fresh facilities seem to be associated with a fresh set of values. All references to students falling into two different groups ('high flying' and 'diligent') have been removed. The section dealing with the Sixth Form instead list the range of subjects available, continuing to place an emphasis upon the 'broadening of opportunities' (2001, p8) provided by the links with Rugby Girls High School. Similarly, the prospectus makes no reference to the need for students to be 'all-rounders' combining sporting and academic excellence. Instead the much more neutral comment is made that:

the school offers the opportunity for high level performance in team sports alongside the chance to pursue individual sporting interests (Prospectus, 2001, p8)

However, a similarly long list of community projects is retained within the prospectus

work shadowing, engineering projects, charity fundraising old people's entertainment, helping to run the library and visits to local hospitals (Prospectus, 2001, p8).

Hence it could be argued be argued that the school as an institution has attempted to re-shape Sixth Form culture since 1997. Whilst the emphasis upon community has been retained, the prospectus has attempted to move away from previous assumptions that students could be divided up according to academic achievement and that sporting values should enjoy equal emphasis alongside academic values. It is interesting to note that the two pictures included on the 'sixth form' page both show groups of students studying in lessons and in the Sixth Form Centre. The pictures of Sixth Formers playing sport that were present in the 1997 prospectus have been removed (though Sixth Formers are seen playing rugby under the heading of 'extra curricular activities').

Figure 5.3 summarises the changes made between the 1997 and 2001 versions of the prospectus:

**FIGURE 5.3: CHANGING CULTURAL MESSAGES BETWEEN THE 1997 AND 2001 VERSION OF THE PROSPECTUS**

1997	2001
1. References to 'high flying' and 'diligent' students (p4)	1. No references to different groups of students
2. Emphasis upon the need for students to be sporting and academic 'all-rounders' (p7)	2. More neutral 'opportunity for high level performance in team sports' (p8)
3. Pictures of Sixth Formers playing sport (p4, p7)	4. Pictures of Sixth Formers studying (p8, p4, p5)

These changes appear to be an attempt to signal the cultural changes which the school is seeking to promote. The Sixth Form is viewed as one entity and references to academic and sporting divisions, likely to promote the formation of subcultures, have been removed. The problem for the school is that cultures establish themselves over time and, as the literature review in chapter one demonstrates, they cannot be easily changed. The statements in the 1997 prospectus would appear to articulate long held attitudes within the school. Hence it is likely that the changes in approach signalled in the 2001 prospectus would need to be in place for some time before they had a long term impact the culture of the school.

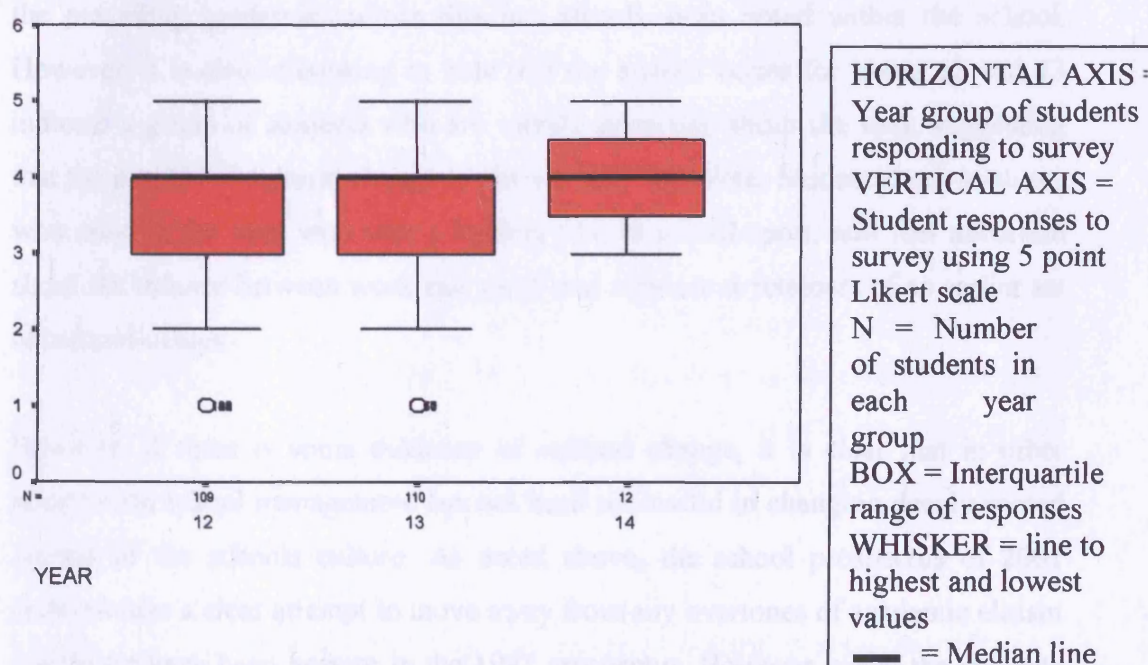
The document study provides a useful background against which to view the data discussed in chapters four and five derived from student interviews and surveys. A number of students comment upon the formation of subcultures based around differing attitudes towards academic study and sporting achievement. It may well be that these subcultures are rooted in a set of values which the school sought to foster during the mid 1990s, but which it has now sought to distance itself from. Similarly the survey responses of students which seek to identify the values of the school, appear to have been influenced by some of the comments within the 1997 prospectus. Hence when students of all age ranges agree with the statement that 'The school is mainly interested in students who will achieve high academic results' it is likely that this opinion has been influenced by the culture and values articulated in the 1997 distinction between students who are 'high flying' and 'diligent'. Whilst the 'official' view of the school may have moved on from this

statement, it may well be that many students and staff still accept the divisions in status implied by the statement. It is likely that the revised view of students articulated in the 2001 prospectus would need to be maintained and constantly articulated for many years before it was absorbed into the culture of the school and came to influence the values of students and staff. Hence the analysis of the contrasts between the two prospectuses underlines the fact that cultural change is a slow process- so slow that members of the culture may find the process of change almost imperceptible. The practical experience of slow, almost imperceptible change explored in this section appears to be very different from Morgan's (1997) theoretical model of 'reculturing' with its 'transforming' of 'mind sets'.

Survey data also finds evidence of the trends noted within the comparison of the two prospectuses. Hence the school's changed emphasis upon sport, noted in the exploration of the two prospectuses, does seem to have impacted upon students:

12. The school values sporting achievement more highly than academic achievement

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Students of all year groups reject the notion that sporting success is more important to the school than academic success. Whilst this view does not directly contradict



the statements in the 1997 prospectus, it represents a shift away from the emphasis upon 'high-level performance in team sport' conveyed within that document. The median value of '4' or 'disagree' for all three year groups suggests that students have absorbed the cultural message sent out by the management of the school. Non-parametric analysis confirms the change that has taken place:

**FIGURE 5.2: THE KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST APPLIED TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: 'I FEEL THAT I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN ATTENDING THE SIXTH FORM AT LAWRENCE SHERIFF SCHOOL'**

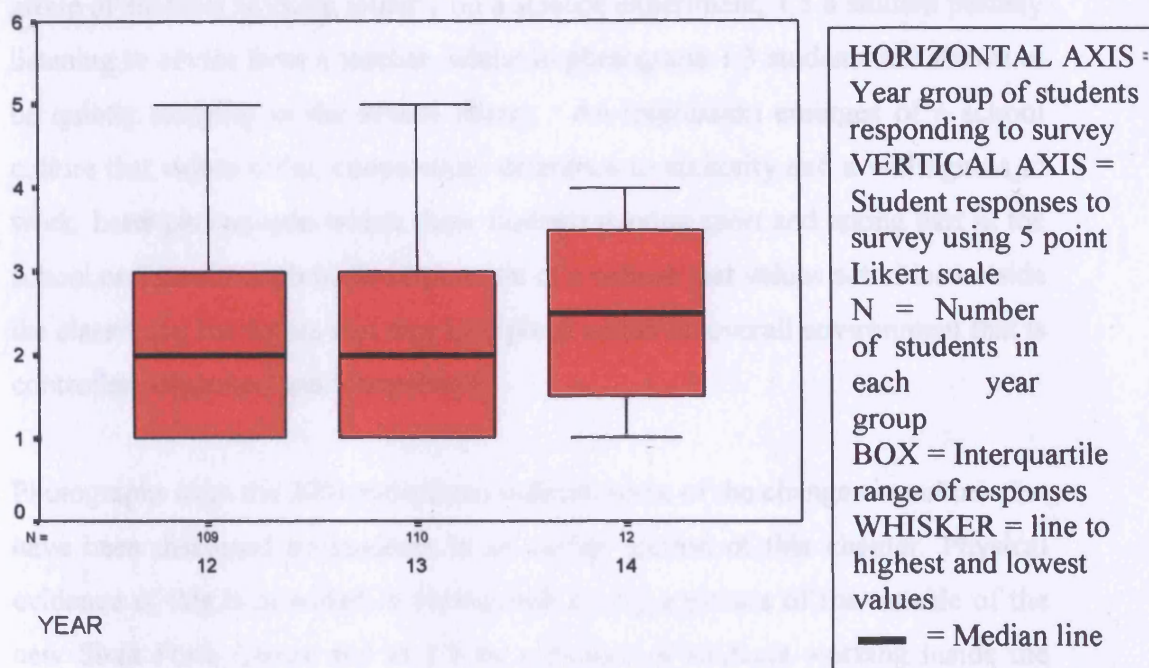
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	YEAR
Distribution	10.323	9.281	7.294	12.102	31.093	22.710	6.070	17.477	31.095	9.857	12.365	2.341	8.744	3.293	2.668
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.035	.054	.121	.017	.000	.000	.194	.002	.000	.043	.015	.673	.068	.510	.615

The value of .673 for question twelve means that response to sport has the lowest impact upon student's overall satisfaction with the school. Hence students not only reject the concept that sporting values are more important than academic, they also see the debate between work and sport as having little relevance to their view of the school. In this sense the attempts of the school to adjust the balance between academic study and sport would appear to have been successful. One reason for this may be that this rejection of the pre-eminence of sporting values is in keeping with the prevailing academic culture that has already been noted within the school. However, it is also interesting to note that the answer boxes for Years 12 and 13 indicate a group of students who are merely uncertain about the idea, suggesting that the process of cultural change is not yet fully complete. Students such as these, who may be the ones who take a leading role in school sport, still feel uncertain about the balance between work and sport, and may act as retainers of an earlier set of cultural values.

However, if there is some evidence of cultural change, it is clear that in other respects the school management has not been successful in changing deeply rooted aspects of the schools culture. As noted above, the school prospectus of 2001 demonstrates a clear attempt to move away from any overtones of academic elitism that might have been present in the 1997 prospectus. However, when the students are asked about this, they continue to detect this elitism within the school:

9. The school is mainly interested in students who will achieve high academic results

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree



Median values of '2' for Years 12 and 13 indicate that both year groups agree with the statement that the school is mainly interested in students who will gain high academic results. Despite the signals contained in the 2001 version of the prospectus, this aspect of the school culture is too deeply ingrained to be altered by statements in the school prospectus. Even if the approach of the school has genuinely changed, the evidence in this study suggests that more time would need to elapse before students (and other cultural stakeholders) were willing to accept that genuine change had taken place. Events in the past are a crucial component of culture and this 'cultural memory' remains in place for a significant period of time. For this reason it is extremely difficult to effect relatively quick changes in school culture. It seems much more likely that a longer period of ten to twenty years would need to elapse before this 'cultural memory' of the past seeks to influence culture in the present.

Photographs provide another source of evidence of cultural change, providing a clear set of visual images demonstrating the changing influences upon culture within the school. Photograph 1.2 showing a Sixth Form assembly from 1997



offers a traditional image of Sixth Form life. Students are sat in ordered rows, in the formal environment of the school's assembly hall, as they are addressed by the school's headteacher who is standing on a stage and making use of a lectern. Other pictures support this traditional picture of school life. Photograph 1.4 shows group of students working intently on a science experiment, 1.5 a student politely listening to advice from a teacher, whilst in photograph 1.3 students are shown to be quietly studying in the school library. An impression emerges of a school culture that values order, cooperation, deference to authority and a willingness to work. Later photographs which show students playing sport and taking part in the school orchestra complete the impression of a culture that values activities outside the classroom, but insists that they take place within an overall environment that is controlled, organised and hierarchical.

Photographs from the 2001 prospectus indicate some of the changes in culture that have been discussed by students in an earlier section of this chapter. Physical evidence of this is provided in photograph 2.1 by a picture of the outside of the new Sixth Form Centre and in 2.5 by a picture of students working inside the centre. The size of the centre is emphasised in 2.5, but it is also clear from this picture that within the centre students tend to cluster together into sub-groups. A further physical reminder of change comes in picture 2.9 where a teacher is shown using an electronic whiteboard. A final crucial element of change is shown in pictures 2.2, 2.3, 2.6 and 2.8 where students are shown working in mixed groups within a variety of subject areas. This combination of a new environment, alternative learning technologies and the arrival of co-educational teaching demonstrates the combination of social and educational changes, discussed in an earlier section of this chapter by Dr Pogson, which have impacted upon the culture of the Sixth Form. Some of the certainties which under-pinned the previous culture have been taken away by external and internal forces, and students are now having to find new answers to issues such as attitudes to work and sport, relationship to authority, the relationship between school and home and the way in which they relate to students from different cultures and backgrounds. In this context Schein's (1997) definition of culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 1997, p12)



appears particularly apt. However, the additional element that is emerging from this study of Sixth Form culture, is that different year groups and sub-groups appear to formulate a range of differing responses to these issues of 'external adaptation and internal integration'. The different responses of year 12 and 13 to the school's prevailing academic culture, noted in an earlier section, provides an illustration of the way in which different sub groups can respond differently to cultural data.

The school's attempt to retain some of the older certainties is illustrated by the photograph in the 2001 prospectus of the rugby team (2.7) and a range of students involved in an orchestra practice (2.10). This conflict between the 'old' culture and an emerging 'new' culture is discussed by students, for example in section 5.4 when exploring the impact of society upon the school. Old certainties have now been challenged by new social and educational developments, and so whilst the culture of some students appears to be almost identical to that which existed in 1997, others are beginning to question previous assumptions such as the value placed upon academic work and the high status attached to sport players. In this sense the exploration of photographic evidence reflects the story that has emerged from other data in this section. We are provided with a snapshot of a culture part way through a process of change, partly clinging to the values of 1997 and partly embracing a new environment for learning and a changed set of social values.

A further perspective upon cultural change is provided by student interviews, which reveal that most students feel that the culture of the school has changed. However, there is no consensus about the exact nature of the change. 12.4 suggests that

It has changed since I came here. The approach to work has got more serious as the year has gone on. (12.4, Q9)

Other students suggest that this changing approach to work is merely part of the higher expectations that are placed upon students as they move into the Sixth Form. However, 13.4 suggests that the cultural change associated with Sixth Form is largely positive:

There is a big step up at Sixth Form and the teachers suddenly change. It is a pleasant surprise. The tradition is to treat students as an adult. The school compares well with comments from students who have joined the Sixth Form from other schools. You are treated with respect in the hope that you will return it (13.4, Q9)

A historical perspective upon the issue of cultural change is provided by Dr Pogson. He discusses the changes that he made when a larger proportion of students from other 11-16 schools joined the Sixth Form. Existing rituals such as speech day were abolished because they meant little to new entrants to the school. Prefects were also abolished to undermine any sense of elitism within the Sixth Form. Despite all of these changes, Dr Pogson perceived that students experienced 'an increased detachment':

It was no longer 'all your mates'- it was a different school and the identity and constituent parts were all changed. This probably increased detachment from the values of the school (Pogson, Q3)

In the case of students new to the school, this detachment was partly caused by a lack of time:

[values] are passed on when younger, there is not long enough to pass them on in the Sixth Form (Pogson, Q3)

However, he argues that a more profound reason for this detachment was changes happening within society itself:

Part-time jobs represented the biggest change of all - they were just starting at the time I came to the school. They now have different 'chunks' of time. This was a longitudinal trend that had huge influences and increased during my headship (Pogson, Q3)

As school became just one 'chunk' in the life of a student, so its impact upon pupils was reduced, since it was:

no longer a complete culture - school was just part of one aspect of life (Pogson, Q3)

Hence Dr Pogson argues that society changed more quickly than he was able to change the culture of the school, reminding us once again that the influence of leaders upon school culture can be limited by a whole range of internal and external factors. Stoll (1998) supports Dr Pogson's analysis by highlighting the fact that:

Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture, whether they be related to learning, the pupil population, organisational management, rapid technological developments or the changing role of women (Stoll, 1998, p2).

Dr Pogson clearly felt that he was able to influence Sixth Form culture through the changes that he made. However, changes introduced by school leaders are only one part of a complex series of internal and external influences which have an influence upon students, and because of this it is hard to predict their impact and certainly rash to assume that they will always be successful. This point is re-

enforced when Dr Pogson discusses the school's collaboration with Rugby High School (a local girls grammar school) which led to the introduction of girls to a number of Sixth Form classes. Whilst all sides were happy with the collaboration he admits that:

The change was much less profound than it was at Rugby High School. We did not have deputations of girls complaining. They were treated as complete equals. In many ways the girls had less effect than we had hoped: they did not dramatically change the ethos of the boys (Pogson, Q4)

Cultures can be influenced, but they cannot be controlled, and even the way in which they can be influenced is often uncertain. For a complex set of reasons, the school's expectations of cultural change through the introduction of girls were confounded. In this sense culture can be seen as an almost organic entity that refuses to conform to the expectations and plans of those who seek to control it. Culture is created by the interplay of human feelings and responses, and such elements are far too complex to easily manipulated or controlled.

A further example of the difficult process of engineering social change comes from the data relating to the two Sixth Form Centres used during the period of the study. Dr Pogson considers the impact of Penrhos House, the large Victorian house which served as a Sixth Form Centre from 1980-2001. Although the building was run down and in a poor state of repair, he argues that it encouraged a culture of independence because students saw it as 'their territory'. He describes the prevailing culture as 'male' and 'anarchic', arguing that the relative lack of supervision was actually a very positive thing since it promoted a sense of independence:

It was a male environment, though the girls thought it was wonderful because they did not have one. I remember that on one occasion a pupil fell through one of the trap doors - it demonstrates the anarchic climate that could emerge at times. Someone also climbed onto the roof. It was their territory and they were given a huge amount of 'rope'. They were like knights winning their spurs. Ironically, we now give less rope, although we superficially treat them in a more adult manner (Pogson, Q5)

His argument that students now 'have less rope although now superficially treat them in a more adult manner' is echoed in survey comments about supervision of the new centre and a strong belief amongst students that they should be able to decide upon the patterns of their work within school. Once again, the impact upon culture of a new development is shown to be less than predictable. Although a new Sixth Form Centre was built in 2001, with purpose built study facilities, survey responses suggest that many students actually preferred the older building

because they associated it with a greater sense of independence and identity. This observation is supported by the interview comment of 13.3 that 'a greater work ethos has been enforced - but there is less fun'. Although observation notes record that 'the atmosphere is relaxed', students perceive the new centre to be a more regimented and controlled environment. Although the new Sixth Form Centre unquestionably provides a superior building and purpose built accommodation, students remain suspicious of what they perceive as an attempt to change the culture of the place where they work. Once again, the response to an attempt to alter culture, in this case through changing environment, is not what might have been expected. We are reminded for a second time that it is extremely difficult to change culture in accordance with a set plan or blueprint. Culture appears to be an organic force whose working cannot easily be either predicted or controlled.

Overall, this section has not produced evidence that 'reculturing' as envisioned by Morgan (1997) and Stoll and Fink (1999) can easily be achieved. Cultural change instead emerges as a complex process, often slow and almost imperceptible when it does occur. In this respect 'reculturing' may well be a theoretical construct that cannot easily be operationalised in the 'real life' setting of an educational environment, within which 'the way we do things around here' is not changed in a hurry. However, the section has produced evidence that 'the way we do things around here' can change, as highlighted by the contrasts between the textual and photographic content of the 1997 and 2001 prospectuses. Hence the study also fails to support Bates (1994) contention that 'Culture cannot be changed in the abstract'. The data explored in this section suggests that culture can change, but it also seriously questions whether this change can be effected in a planned or systematic manner. Changing perceptions of school leaders, teachers, students and society may all contribute to this process of change, but it is doubtful whether the actions of any one group will automatically lead to cultural change. Briggs (2003) confirms this point during her analysis of factors that have led to cultural change in Sixth Form Colleges. She points out that evidence from staff surveys indicate that any cultural change that has taken place has been the result of both internal and external factors operating together:

When sixth form college survey respondents were asked about factors which had produced a change in culture for staff, 84 per cent cited the funding system as their first or second choice, and 63 per cent cited the inspection system as their first or second choice. Quality systems were

seen s driving both management change and cultural change within the colleges (Briggs, 2003, p23)

In the light of all this evidence, Lumby's (2001) statement that 'culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people' would appear to be the most accurate assessment of the way in which different cultural stakeholders are able to exert an impact upon culture. However, the section also highlights the importance of history in understanding cultural change. Data from the two prospectuses and the interview with Dr Pogson illustrated the way in which survey responses may be a reaction to aspects of the school's culture that had actually changed. For this reason the way in which culture changes and develops in the present may well be explained by events in the past. Hence the section also supports Wheeler's (2001) suggestion that culture is part of a continuum: 'The problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past- and the solution may well go on to be a problem of the future' (Wheeler, 2001, p3).

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated the limitations of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model of cultural formation. By exploring four additional pieces of the cultural jigsaw, the chapter has demonstrated the complex series of pieces that join together to form the cultural jigsaw of an organisation. Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model explores only the internal culture of an organisation, whilst this chapter has shown that four additional pieces- subcultures, leaders and culture, external culture and cultural change-also have to be put in place before the cultural jigsaw is complete. The factors which influence the development of subcultures have been shown to be just as complex as those which lead to the formation of cultures and in the process varying levels of support have been provided for the theories of subcultural formation advanced by the Chicago School of sociologists. As suggested by Howard Jones (1965) some students have been shown to engage in 'rejection', that is forming distinct sub-groups that react against the academic values of the school. Some evidence also exists of the subgroups identified by Cohen (1955), individuals who accept mainstream values, but not the conventional methods of achieving them. This phenomenon is exemplified by groups who endorse the school's academic values so strongly that their behaviour is seen as excessive by the majority, leading them to also form a distinct sub-group. However, the study only produced limited evidence of 'reversal', (groups who turn upside down the 'mainstream' values that they are

reacting against), although it may be that 'ridicule', noted in the Year 12 section of Table 5.1, provides a limited example of this.

However, the section also demonstrated that subcultures are not simply formed by a reaction against the main culture. A whole range of additional factors come into force in order to shape the sub-cultural 'mosaic' within the Sixth Form. Section 5.2 of this chapter suggested that these factors could be grouped under the heading of 'social factors', a range of forces influenced by the society outside the school that seem to promote the formation of subcultures. Hence year group is seen as an influential factor, with students tending to group themselves according to whether they are in Years 12 or 13. Linked to this is the significance of experience in other social settings, with students who have joined the school at the age of sixteen forming distinct groups. Ethnicity is seen to be important in the formation of subcultures, as is gender. External social groupings are also identified as being important, with social identities established outside the school influencing group memberships within the school. Some students appear to be genuinely more comfortable in smaller groups that divorce themselves from the main body of students. For all of these groups, membership of a subculture is not a negative reaction against the prevailing culture, but rather a positive statement of the values and ideals that they wish to identify themselves with.

Hence subcultures, like cultures, emerge as a force that is organic and complex, based upon 'networks of informal relationships and unofficial norms which arise from the interaction of individuals and groups working within the formal structure' (Harling, 1989, p20). The chapter has partly endorsed Hargreaves' (1967) view that: 'the critical condition for the emergence of the subculture is the existence of a group of persons with the same problem of adjustment' (Hargreaves, 1967, p175), in that a reaction against the prevailing academic culture of the school is seen as a key factor in the formation of subcultures within the Sixth Form. However, the chapter has gone further in suggesting that subcultures are not simply reactive, and that a much more complex range of factors lead to their formation, drawing upon a range of social factors such as background, gender, ethnicity, socialisation and past experience. The chapter has also demonstrated that membership of a subculture can be a positive as well as a negative statement.

This chapter has argued strongly that any model of cultural formation also needs to consider the influence of leaders upon culture. The data analysed within the chapter has suggested that conventional expectations of the dominant influence of leaders upon culture cannot necessarily be taken for granted. Hence the chapter suggested that Hall and George's (1999) comment that 'no matter what the leader does (and does not do) the effects are detectable throughout the school' (p165) was not reflected in the actual experience of students within the school. Students highlight a range of additional figures (ranging from Head Boy to Head of Sixth Form) who are able to influence culture within the school. However, the chapter also failed to endorse the argument of Hargreaves (1995) that leaders struggle to exert a direct influence upon culture. Rather than these two extremes, a more sophisticated middle view emerges, that culture should be seen as a 'shared commodity', influenced and maintained by a range of cultural stakeholders. This view endorses the argument of Staessens and Vandenberghe (1994) that 'Vision as a part of school culture is socially constructed' (Staessens and Vandenberghe, 1994, p193). Hence interviewees argue that culture is principally formed by 'a collaboration of different people and voices' drawn from a range of cultural stakeholders. The study goes on to suggest that the influence of leaders upon culture may be exaggerated by the fact that many earlier studies have consulted teachers who have tended to highlight the role of the person with the greatest power over their working lives. Student responses in this study have tended to take a broader and more eclectic view of the different influences upon culture. For this reason the chapter concludes that leaders have some influence upon culture, but that this influence is not always as predictable or as dominant as earlier studies have suggested. The next chapter will place this finding in the broader context of current national educational policy.

The influence of society has been also been highlighted. Surveys, interviews and photographic evidence have all pointed towards the way in which social trends outside the school help to shape the culture within the school. Developments such as the increased existence of part-time jobs have led to schools being less self-contained and less able to maintain a strong internal culture regardless of what takes place outside the institution. This conclusion supports Becker and Greer's (1974) argument about the significance of 'latent social identities' in the

formation of culture. The section also concluded that these 'latent identities' formed through part-time jobs, might also be a significant influence upon the formation of subcultures. Hence Stoll's suggestion that 'Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture' (Stoll, 1998, p2) is vindicated by this research. The increasing significance of part-time jobs has created significant cultural change within the school. The previous chapter supported this conclusion by pointing to the ways in which aspects of internal culture such as ritual and anecdote can be seen as being more strongly influenced by the society outside the school than the culture within the school. Hence the study has suggested that the culture 'out there' beyond the school has an increasing impact on 'the way we do things around here'.

The final section of this chapter questioned the theoretical concept of 'reculturing', advanced by Morgan (1997) and Stoll and Fink (1999). The data explored suggested that cultural change is a slow and complex process, and that 'the way we do things around here' cannot be changed in a hurry. However, the section also questioned Bates' (1994) argument that 'Culture cannot be changed in the abstract', concluding that some cultural change had actually taken place. However, when this has occurred it appeared to be associated with the coming together of internal and external culture. Hence the school's attempt to lessen the impact of sporting values upon the Sixth Form has been partially successful because society, through 'a plethora of radical and challenging legislation' (Rutherford, 2003) has come to expect students to make the gaining of high A-level grades their main priority. New learning technologies have also led to rapid change, leaving students and staff to respond to the new environment that has been created. Other attempts to engineer cultural change, for example through the building of the new Sixth Form Centre had been less successful, because management had underestimated the complex and organic nature of culture. Hence some students actually preferred the earlier overcrowded centre because of the greater independence offered by the culture within it. The influence of past cultures remains strong, and cultural values associated with past features of the school (such as a certain academic elitism) are likely to remain strong for some time and stubbornly difficult to change. For these reasons the section argued that Lumby's (2001) statement that 'culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people' presents the clearest picture of how cultural



change takes place in the 'real' setting of a school Sixth Form. It also endorsed Wheeler's (2001) argument that cultural change is part of a continuum, meaning that 'The problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past- and the solution may well go on to be a problem of the future' (Wheeler, 2001, p3).

Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that the five stage model of cultural analysis described in this study, bringing together the different pieces of the cultural jigsaw, offers a much more complete description of the process of cultural formation than that advanced by Deal and Kennedy (1988). Only by bringing these five different pieces together can the interconnection of each element be fully understood. Past models, such as that developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988), have tended to focus upon one piece of the jigsaw (such as internal culture) and so have offered only a partial explanation of the forces at work. The data explored within this study has demonstrated that in order to understand what Finlayson (1971) describes as the 'phoenix' of school culture, it is necessary to employ a model that analyses and then brings together each of the five elements explored in chapters four and five. Only by doing this is it possible to demonstrate the 'skills of the ethnographer' in the manner suggested by Striven (1985)

Having shown the need to employ a five stage model of cultural analysis, the concluding chapter of this study will explore the implications of this new model for our understanding of Sixth Form culture. The chapter will draw together the fresh insights offered by this study, and a series of conclusions will then be offered regarding the future directions for research into culture. The chapter will also examine the link between the conclusions arising from this study and current educational policy, discussing ways in which current policy may be based upon commonly held assumptions about culture rather than the evidence about cultural development presented by this study.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has demonstrated the need for a new model of cultural analysis, one that effectively explores the multiplicity of forces that shape school culture. Chapter four demonstrated the limitations of the existing model developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988), showing that whilst it effectively operationalised internal culture, it failed to go on to explore other dimensions of 'overall' culture. Chapter five then went to show that 'overall' culture needed to be examined through a five stage 'jigsaw' of cultural formation, that brought together the different pieces that interconnect in the development of this 'overall' culture. Hence the internal culture of the Sixth Form, subcultures, the influence of society upon culture, the relationship between leaders and culture and the impact of cultural change were all shown to be working together to complete the cultural jigsaw. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the central conclusions that can be drawn from the interplay between these five elements of culture. Using the five stage model, the chapter will show that this study has produced a new five stage model of cultural formation that provides a more effective operationalisation of cultural development than the model developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988). This analysis of the five stage model will also demonstrate the ways in which this study has produced fresh insights into the phenomenon of Sixth Form culture. As part of this process, the chapter will also discuss the ways in which aspects of current national policy and practice are based upon an inaccurate view of culture, derived not from tested research but widely held assumptions.

This study has demonstrated the effectiveness of a research design that focuses upon the views of students. By using surveys and interviews to collect these views, a unique picture emerges of the internal culture of the school. Since students are the final recipients of school culture, the study argues that they are best placed to comment on the different manifestations of culture that occur within the school Sixth Form. The way in which researchers have concentrated upon the views of teachers is illustrated by Sparkes (1991) who suggests that teachers can be 'makers' or 'breakers' of culture (1991, p.9). By turning its focus on student views of culture, the study has sought to respond to the concerns of Thrupp (1999) that research to date has failed 'to consider the impact of students and their cultures, whether individually or collectively, on school organisation and

management' (Thrupp, 1999, p177-8). The argument of this study is that by focusing upon student perceptions, a more detailed and accurate picture of Sixth Form culture has emerged. Earlier studies, such as that of Deal and Kennedy (1988) have tended to focus upon the views of managers or teachers, and this has led to a narrow focus upon the particular concerns of these groups. Hence Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model concentrated on internal culture, to the exclusion of other aspects of the cultural 'jigsaw'. The broader research design of this study, making use of a constituency neglected by earlier research, has enabled a more comprehensive five stage model of cultural analysis to emerge, thus making a distinctive contribution to the study of school culture.

## 6.2 THE INTERNAL CULTURE OF THE SCHOOL

The importance of the 'informal rules' that shape the beliefs and values of a culture are highlighted by Deal and Kennedy (1988). Chapter four showed that students perceive academic values as being at the heart of these 'informal rules', suggesting that the beliefs of the school are in turn shaped by these academic values. Non-parametric testing of survey responses through the application of the Kruskal-Wallis test established a link between students' overall satisfaction with the school and their response to statements such as 'I would be prepared to reduce the hours of my part job if it interfered with my A-Levels'. Students clearly identify the achievement of academic targets as a central factor in their overall satisfaction with the school. Hence only those who conform to this academic culture feel fully satisfied with the school. When students were interviewed about the school's culture, they also pointed towards the centrality of academic achievement. One interviewee comments that the value most approved of by the school is 'high grades and academic success' (13.2, Q2) whilst another student comments that 'teachers set a lot of work and expect a lot to be done in school' (12.3, Q2). Student responses also emphasise that conformity to those academic values is expected by the school community. Hence a Year 13 student comments that the worst crime that a student can commit is 'not being productive' (13.1, Q2). Observation notes taken during the lunch hour record that 'some students are working, but this would only apply to one or two out of ten tables' (Observation Notes, 1.30). Within these groups attitude to work appears to be more important than other grouping factors such as gender: 'two boys and one

girl grouped around the computer screen of a laptop- seem to be working on a problem' (Observation Notes, 1.40)

The study's exploration of the school's prospectus in 1997 and 2001 also highlights the centrality of academic values. The data analysis chapter has already highlighted the significance of the comment made in 1997 that the school aims to 'give an opportunity to high flying academic students', an observation that suggests that the culture of the school at that time was centred upon academic values. Similarly, the somewhat dismissive admission that it had been necessary to 'open the grammar school Sixth Form to diligent students with more modest aspirations' points towards a prevailing culture whose main aim is to engage with students of a high academic quality. Both of these comments have been removed by 2001 and an attempt made to use more inclusive language. However, earlier sections of this chapter have pointed out that the academic culture which developed in earlier years cannot be easily removed, and that it is likely to exist within the school for some time to come.

There is very little evidence from any data source discussed in chapter four that groups of students are ready to fundamentally challenge the values associated with the school's academic culture. Year 12 show a willingness to question aspects of the culture through survey responses which express doubt over the value of private study and uncertainty over how to view students who are seen as hard working. However, when asked about fundamental aspects of this academic culture such as the priority attached to academic study and the likelihood of achieving high grades, Year 12 responses come back into line with those of other year groups. Interview responses refer to the pressure to conform to the values of the school, with one interviewee suggesting that the greatest disapproval is shown to 'people who do not conform, who want to be different' (12.4, Q3). However, interviewees make it clear that one of the strongest pressures to conform comes from other students. Hence a Year 12 student comments that that 'if you don't fit in you tend to be ignored' (21.1, Q3) whilst a Year 13 student suggests that those who do not conform are 'shunned'.

Chapter four's analysis of internal culture also confirmed the existence of other aspects of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) typology. Hence heroic status is confirmed

on those who ‘personify the culture’s values’. This may apply to students who display academic or sporting qualities that are valued by the culture of the school.

As 12.3 comments:

Sporting success is also valued: for example in rugby or cricket. Sometimes prefects are respected, sometimes not. Academic success probably carries more weight (12.3, Q4)

However, heroic status may also be conferred on teachers who become representatives of the values associated with the culture. Hence Dr Pogson comments that:

Arguably Gareth Redd (the former Deputy Head) was in this group. One parent said: “Gareth Redd is more feared by Year 7 and more admired by the Sixth Form than anyone else in the school” (Pogson, Q8)

The typology developed by Deal and Kennedy (1988,) also identifies the importance of rituals that provide ‘the systematic and programmed routines of day to day life’ (p14). Students also perceived rituals as being associated with academic values, although students questioned unhelpful academic rituals such as undertaking supervised private study. Storytellers were also identified who ‘preserve institutions and their values by imparting legends’ (1988, p87). Such storytellers were also associated with the academic nature of the school, such as this contribution from a Year 13 student emphasising the values disapproved of by the school:

Some students go to the pub. This is generally disapproved of. The ethos of the school is to work hard and to earn your free time. It is wrong to simply opt out. Sometimes students run away from this ethos – by going to the pub! (13.3, Q5)

The typology also points towards a cultural network that is ‘the ‘carrier’ of the corporate values and heroic mythology’ (Deal and Kennedy, 1988, p15). Chapter four does identify evidence of the ‘cultural network’, but students resist the concept of any one ‘priestly’ figure. Instead they suggest that culture is a ‘shared commodity’ that is shaped both by groups of students and by other cultural stakeholders:

Students expect their collective views to be respected. Influence is more related to the collective student body - too many intelligent individuals to be merely led by one student (13.4, Q6)

Hence the application of Deal and Kennedy’s (1988) typology has shown that schools take on a distinct internal culture, influenced by the nature of the organisation. For this reason it is perhaps no surprise that a grammar school should produce a Sixth Form culture that is characterised by an academic

emphasis. However, the study has also suggested that internal cultures exert a strong influence over members of the organisation, making genuine cultural rebellion relatively difficult. Moving in a direction that is contrary to the internal culture is an extremely difficult thing to do, and for this reason most members of the organisation behave in a way that demonstrates a broad adherence to it. Loyalty to the internal culture is implicitly expected, and sanctions appear to be developed against those who refuse to 'conform'. For this reason, as a later section of this chapter will demonstrate, the process of changing an established culture is particularly difficult. Morgan's evangelistic description of reculturing as: 'a challenge of transforming mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images, metaphors, beliefs and shared meanings that sustain existing ... realities' (Morgan, 1997, p143) appears to ignore the strength of internal cultures as established by this study. In this respect, the study concludes that academic comment upon culture needs to be more closely informed by research evidence which explores actual cases. The clarion call made by Nias in 1989 for 'detailed studies of particular school cultures' appears just as relevant in 2003. Similarly, Hargreaves' (1999) observation that 'I am not sure that we know very much about the characteristics of effective school cultures' (Hargreaves, 1999, p64) continues to point to a gap in our understanding of culture. Rather than theorising about the impact of cultural change, further research is required into internal cultures and the factors which lead to their resilience. If this does not happen there is a danger that Fullan's (1993) excitement about cultural change in the abstract 'the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms' (cited in Stoll, 1999, p46) will lead us away from the pragmatic need to understand the practical barriers to cultural change, and to address the hard reality that resilient internal cultures make change very hard to achieve.

As well as pointing towards the need for further research into internal cultures, the study has also proposed a fresh model for the analysis of school culture. Whilst chapter four makes it clear that Deal and Kennedy (1988) offer a typology that be readily applied to a school context, it also shows that their model is limited to an exploration of internal culture. Hence the model helps us to understand the strength of the academic values that underpin the culture of the school, but it offers little or nothing to help us understand features such as subcultures or the external social factors that also influence culture within the Sixth Form. For this

reason the model only provides one piece of the cultural jigsaw proposed by this study. Chapter five demonstrates that four additional jigsaw pieces are required, adding subcultures, leadership, external culture and culture change to the analysis of internal culture. Hence the study offers a new model that shares with Deal and Kennedy's (1988) earlier typology the ability to be easily operationalised within the context of a school. However its distinctiveness lies in its greater breadth and its consideration of influences that are both internal and external to the school.

### 6.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUBCULTURES

The first part of this broader model is an exploration of subcultures. This study suggests that subcultures emerge through a process which is just as complex as that which shapes the formation of culture. To some extent the formation of subcultures can be traced back to a reaction against the prevailing internal culture of the institution. This in turn can be linked to a subculture of 'rejection' identified by Howard Jones (1965), one of the Chicago School of Sociologists. Survey data pointed towards the emergence of a distinct subculture of 'rejection' within Year 12, based upon a questioning of the prevailing academic culture of the school. Hence Year 12 are the least likely of the three year groups to agree with the statement 'academic school work is my main priority', and also show the most negative response to the statement 'I respect students who put a lot of work into their A-Levels'. A further symptom of this questioning of the prevailing academic values of the school is found in their response to the statement 'I normally plan to work during free periods at school'. Year 12 students have a median score of 3 (uncertain) compared to a score of 2 (agree) for the remaining two year groups.

The formation of sub-groups based upon what Jones (1965) characterises as 'rejection' of the school's academic culture, is not limited to students in Year 12. Evidence from interviews suggests that students perceive distinct groups made up both of those who both rebel against the academic values of the school and those who endorse the values so strongly that their behaviour is seen as excessive by other students (defined by 12.4 as 'clever people who are just talking'). The desire to make fun of either of these two groups also seems to be a factor in the development of subcultures within the Sixth Form, as demonstrated by the comment of 12.3:

There is a culture of disapproving of those who do not fit in with your values (12.3, Q8)

However, the study suggests that a response to the schools' internal culture only provides one explanation of the sub-cultural forces at work. The other forces that shape the development of subcultures can be divided into two broad groupings. The first set of factors are those that are internal to the school. Interview and observation evidence revealed a series of factors specific to the individual circumstances of the school that impacted upon the formation of sub-groups. Firstly there is some evidence for the existence of another subcultural feature identified by the Chicago School. According to Cohen (1955) some individuals accept mainstream values but not the conventional means of achieving them. Observation evidence confirms this by suggesting that some students form a subculture because their support for the school's academic values is seen as extreme by other students (for example, as a result of a decision to work through the lunch hour). Hence unquestioning acceptance of the internal academic culture can actually lead to the development of subcultures if this acceptance is seen by other students as going beyond the bounds of 'reasonable behaviour'. Secondly, student interviews identified year group as a significant factor, with relatively little mixing taking place between Year 12 and Year 13. A third factor was experience, with students who joined the school at the age of sixteen (over 40% of the total Sixth Form population) tending to form distinct groups. Response to sport is identified by most students as an important factor, with groups of strong sportsmen associating with one another. Gender also had a certain impact, according to the way in which students responded to the girls from Rugby High School who came over to take part in Sixth Form lessons. Both observation and interviews also pointed to the significance of ethnicity as an influence upon sub-cultural grouping, although observation also suggested that membership of these groups could be fluid. Each of these factors was seen as leading to the development of distinct subcultures within the school. However, as the previous chapter made clear, this formation was not reactive in the way suggested by Hargreaves (1967). Citing the earlier research of Cohen (1955) he argues that: 'the critical condition for the emergence of the subculture is the existence of a group of persons with the same problem of adjustment' (Hargreaves, 1967, p175). Instead this study suggests that other factors within the institution can promote the development of subcultures, not only as a reaction against the main culture, but



rather as a response to features and conditions that naturally occur within the school. Hence the conclusion can be drawn that the normal patterns of social interaction that take place within an institution will tend to promote the development of subcultures.

A second set of factors exist that are made up of forces external to the school. Social forces outside the school can lead to the development of distinct subcultures within the school. A Year 12 student identifies the following groups within the school:

loads of different little cultures- hoods, those with different coloured hair... there are also subcultures based on ethnic groups (12.4, Q8)

These comments make it clear that social identities formed outside the school have a significant effect upon the development of subcultures within the school. In this respect the argument of Becker and Greer (1974) has been confirmed by this study:

To the degree that group participants share latent social identities (related to their membership in the same 'outside' social groups) they will share these understandings, so that there will be a culture which can be called latent (Becker and Greer, 1974, p56)

Subcultures, just as cultures, appear to be influenced in their formation by external social factors which are 'latent' because they originate outside the school. Once again the warning of Dimmock and Walker (2000) that 'societal culture as an influence in the study of educational management has been conspicuous by its absence' (Dimmock and Walker, 2000, p138) appears to be particularly apt. To understand subcultures fully there is a need to look outside the school as well as inside it. If subcultures are seen as reactive in nature, then it is very possible that the forces they are reacting against may have little to do with features within the school. Hence groupings and loyalties generated by a range of social identities are likely to lead to the formation of subcultures within schools, regardless of the response of group members to the prevailing internal culture within the school. This point is crucial because organisations can easily be portrayed as hermetically sealed, with cultural formation entirely influenced by factors and situations within the organisation. This study confirms the influence of external social forces, both on cultures and subcultures.

The study suggests that subcultures, just like the prevailing culture of an organisation, should be seen as a 'shared commodity'. The same coming together

of a range of stakeholders and social forces which leads to the formation of the culture of an organisation, also shapes the formation of subcultures which will tend to run counter to the 'main' culture. Hence the study does suggest that a subculture has emerged which partially questions the prevailing academic values within the school's Sixth Form. The number of students responding in this way within Year 12 suggests that the subculture has not been formed by any one student or even group of students, but rather through a collective response to the prevailing culture. Whilst their rebellion is limited, it still provides an interesting example of an emerging alternative culture which appears to exist within an entire year group. In this sense, lessons learned about cultures can also be applied to subcultures. Both have collective ownership and both are influenced by a wide range of different stake-holders rather than one dominant person.

Overall, this study has not supported the work of researchers who suggest that the range of subcultures within an organisation: 'is of such a degree as to rule out the possibility that any one individual can know the culture of the school' (Sarason, 1982, p185). An extreme example of this argument is advanced by Stoll and Fink (1995) when they describe of school culture as 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p87), suggesting that the central culture of the organisation is formed from an amalgam of the subcultures within it. Instead this study has highlighted the existence of a robust internal culture, with its own distinct set of values and acceptable parameters, that is clearly not formed through the combining of subcultures. Hence rather than subcultures combining to form a main culture, the study suggests that subcultures and internal cultures exist separately, alongside one another. Whilst the main culture may need to emerge first before subcultures can react against it, the internal and external factors noted above operate independently from the internal culture.

For the reasons stated above, the study has also contested the view that subcultures emerge as a direct response to the prevailing internal culture within the institution. Whilst internal culture is shown to have an influence, two additional sets of factors, one internal and one external to the school, have also been shown to play a part in the development of subcultures. Hence the study contests Cohen's (1955) and Hargreaves' (1965) view of the formation of subcultures, in that it suggests that the emergence of subcultures is not simply due

to the existence of individuals with the 'same problem of adjustment'. Instead it suggests that internal forces related to the particular situation of the school (such as age, gender and experience) may lead to the emergence of subcultures, not in response to a common problem of 'adjustment', but rather as a result of a common set of social needs. These groups are not reacting against a culture, rather they are making a positive decision to associate with a distinct set of values and social opportunities associated with that sub-group. Similarly, external social forces, related to 'latent' social identities outside school, can lead to the emergence of distinct subcultures within school. The existence of these groups is not due to a common 'problem of adjustment', but rather to a common social bond, related to allegiances and identities formed outside the school environment. Hence in the case of both internal and external factors, forms of social interaction rather than 'problems of adjustment' emerge as the crucial element in the development of subcultures.

Whilst this study does not suggest that Cohen (1955) and Hargreaves' (1965) view is inaccurate, it seeks to refine their theory of the way in which subcultures are formed. Problems of adjustment are certainly one important factor, as witnessed by the range of responses to the school's prevailing academic culture. However, other internal and external factors combine to produce social forces that also lead to the emergence of subcultures. When subcultures are formed in this way it is not due to a negative reaction against the prevailing culture, but instead reflects a positive response to a particular set of social opportunities that the individual wishes to embrace. Hence this study has shown that subcultures can also be a positive statement of the values and identities of the individuals who make up the subculture. For all of the reasons discussed above, subcultures are not formed by any one factor that leads inevitably to their development. Instead the 'mosaic' of subcultures is complemented by a mosaic of influences that lead to the formation of subcultures.

These findings have clear relevance for the development of current national educational policy. It seems clear that rather than seeking to eradicate cultures which diverge from the norm, school leaders need to accept the inevitability of their existence and to concentrate their efforts upon understanding the dominant culture within their organisation. Course materials from the 1998 version of the

National Professional Qualification for Headship, suggest that headteachers should seek to shape the 'beliefs... values... opinions... attitudes... behaviour' of their school (Introduction, OHT 8.2). Similarly, the National Standards for Headteachers (Teacher Training Agency, 1997) state that headteachers should:

Lead and manage people to work as individuals and as a team towards a common goal... create and secure commitment to a clear vision for an effective institution (Teacher Training Agency, 1997, p4)

Whilst such aims are laudable they are also potentially dangerous, since they do not address the fact that subcultures will always emerge that run counter to the 'common goal' that the headteacher may be seeking to foster. Hence a generation of educational leaders are being trained to strive for a degree of cultural conformity that may in fact be impossible to achieve. The dangers of this approach are summarised by Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham (2003):

The culture of too many of our schools has become managerial, driven by short term plans, objectives and targets (Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham, 2003, p ix)

As part of the process described by Gelsthorpe and West-Burnham (2003), leaders are being asked to strive for an unrealistic level of cultural conformity. Attempting to prevent the formation of subcultures is a King Canute type activity, since it represents a doomed attempt to hold back the inevitable. This study suggests that leader should focus their energies upon understanding culture and subcultures within their institutions and the ways in which they can be influenced and shaped. A crucial part of this process is accepting that cultures and subcultures do not always derive from factors within the school, and that forces outside the school, beyond the control of any leader, can also exert a significant influence.

#### 6.4 THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERS UPON CULTURE

A central finding of this study is that leaders cannot be seen as the dominant influence upon culture. This conclusion has been particularly strong when students have been consulted. Chapter two noted Evans' comment that:

True leaders will never allow the excuse that they are simply managing someone else's agenda to deflect them from achieving their vision. I am talking about a shift in mindset at every level that requires cultural change on a huge scale (Evans, 2001, p47).

Her opinion is echoed by other writers such as Hall and George (1999) who argue that 'no matter what the leader does (and does not do) the effects are detectable throughout the school' (Hall and George, 1999, p165). Their comments illustrate

the common view of researchers that culture can be relatively easily manipulated or controlled by a school leader. In an educational era characterised by a focus upon centralised targets and control, it is tempting to assume that culture can become yet another area where targets can be set and desired conclusions reached over a period of time. In the paradigm suggested by Evans (2001), leaders who do not succeed in shaping and changing culture are merely seen as making an 'excuse' for their ineffectual performance. However, as demonstrated in chapter five, students do not share this analysis. The student who described the formation of culture as 'a collaboration of different people and voices.' (13.4) would appear to have perceptively summarised the conclusions reached by many of his peers. Another student declares that 'there is no one person' (13.1) who shapes the culture of the school: rather students respond to a wide variety of different influences.

It might be argued that this conclusion merely demonstrates that students are unable to perceive the influence of the headteacher upon their school lives and that because students do not see the headteacher on a day-to-day basis they minimise his or her role. However, it would not be unreasonable to point out that if students are not aware of the influence of the headteacher, it may well be that the leader's influence is actually much more limited than previously thought. When teachers have spoken of the influence of the headteacher, their views have been accepted by researchers such as Evans (2001) and Morgan (1997) leading to an acceptance of the importance of the headteacher's role, to the exclusion of other possible influences. It would surely be unfair to discount a contrary view simply because it is articulated by students. It instead seems entirely reasonable to argue that students are the most direct recipients of culture and hence the most reliable reporters about it. For this reason students in this study appear to endorse the view of Abercrombie et al (1994) that:

creating an organisational culture is likely to be a difficult and slow business and, if it contradicts existing group cultures, is unlikely to succeed however long organisational leaders persevere (Abercrombie et al, 1994, p297).

Significantly, Dr Pogson, the school's former headteacher, is the only person in the study to suggest that the headteacher is the dominant influence upon culture. His view is supported by organisations such as the Office for Standards in

Education, who comment in a recent report on 'Leadership and Management' (2003) that

Headteachers in the schools making good or better progress provided strong leadership and good management in establishing a culture of improvement (OFSTED, 2003, p23)

However, even Dr Pogson's view of the influence of leaders is highly qualified. He suggests that headteachers have to be seen as the dominant influence upon 'values and personal relationships', but that he or she is in 'an externally constructed maze and cannot re-mould it' (Pogson, Q11). Ironically, students argue that their culture is shaped by a much wider set of personal relationships. Hence 12.4 argues that 'Students respond to different teachers and to different people' (12.4, Q7) whilst 13.2 suggests that culture is formed through 'collective interplay between staff and pupils' (13.2, Q7).

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the headteacher has no influence over the culture of his or her school, but this study emphatically suggests that the influence exerted is limited. Rather than one dominant influence, the study presents a picture of culture as a shared commodity, shaped and influenced by a range of stakeholders. Rutherford (2002), in a study of catholic schools, describes a culture of:

Everyone working together, underpinned by the values and beliefs of the catholic faith, forms a strong and effective partnership (Rutherford, 2002, p456)

This description of groups working together, linked by a common set of 'values and beliefs' articulates the view of culture presented by students. In the words of a Year 12 student 'everyone has a part to play- staff, pupils, parents' (12.1) Hence, whilst culture can be influenced by these different stakeholders, it is extremely difficult for one cultural stakeholder, in this case the headteacher, to move culture in a certain desired direction. The analysis of culture advanced by Staessens and Vandenberghe's (1994) appears particularly relevant in this respect:

In other words, a vision is not created by leaders, but is developed collectively through action and reflection ... Vision as a part of school culture is socially constructed (Staessens and Vandenberghe, 1994, p193).

Developing this view, Fullan (2003) offers a realistic assessment of how leaders might be able to at least influence cultural change:

leading schools - as in any great organization - requires principals with the courage and capacity to build new cultures based on trusting relationships and a culture of disciplined enquiry and action... Admittedly, developing trust and discipline in an organization that doesn't have it is a huge

challenge. But again, this is the point: There are cases where it has been done (Fullan, 2003, p45)

In the view of Fullan (2003), this form of change can only be achieved by leaders who 'develop leaders' (2003, p75), and his model of dispersed leadership may well represent the most effective strategy to maximise the leader's ability to influence cultural change. However, whilst a collaborative leadership team who have developed a relationship of 'trust' would seem to possess the potential to influence cultural change, this section has demonstrated that there are limits upon even their ability to control and manipulate cultural change.

A possible explanation of the tendency to attribute greater cultural influence to school leaders than they actually exert is the convenient chain of command that this creates. If culture can be labelled as the headteacher's responsibility then it is much easier for government and other external agencies such local education authorities to ascribe blame if schools do not develop the sort of cultures that they wish them to. Hence if school's do not demonstrate the 'change in mindset' demanded by Evans (2001), it is both easy and convenient to insist that the responsibility for this must lie with the headteacher of the school. The description of culture as a complex, socially constructed phenomena influenced by a range of different stakeholders makes it much more difficult to set targets or to establish a line of responsibility for its maintenance. Particularly uncomfortable for national policy makers is the view of students (the ultimate recipients of the 'overall culture' of a school) that 'everyone has a part to play' in the formation of culture and that the headteacher is one amongst a series of cultural stakeholders, rather than being the singular shaping force. If this view is accepted, then other members of society, including central government, must take a share of responsibility for the culture that develops within schools. For this reason the 'collaboration of different people and voices.' identified by 13.4 as lying at the heart of cultural development, represents a profoundly challenging re-assessment of the ways in which leaders and other stakeholders are able to shape and influence culture.

## 6.5 CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The study has offered clear evidence of the impact of changing social values upon school culture. Despite the robust strength of the internal culture discussed earlier in this chapter, evidence has emerged to suggest that if external social values

change, then internal school culture will change in response. The study supports Stoll's conclusion that:

Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture, whether they be related to learning, the pupil population, organisational management, rapid technological developments or the changing role of women (Stoll, 1998, p2)

This study indicates the changing social expectations of students. It is now almost assumed that students have a part-time job, leading to them being significantly involved in a life outside school. Whilst survey evidence indicates the willingness of many students to reduce the hours of their part-time job if necessary, these jobs have still become part of the experience of most students. Hence the school is no longer a closed world, able to create and sustain its own culture. In the words of Dr Pogson, school is 'no longer a complete culture- school was just part of one aspect of life' (Pogson, Q3). Anecdotes are seen to relate to issues outside school, rather than inside. Rather than merely being 'an absence of horror stories', it could be argued that in Sixth Form terms there is an absence of stories, since the focus of student life is increasingly outside the school. Changing spiritual values also impact upon the school, with the earlier 'Christian values' of the 1980s replaced by a broader and more complex set of values, which lack the moral certainties of earlier generations. Student surveys show both a confidence that they will achieve the necessary grades and a sense of the increasing pressure that they feel society is placing them under to achieve high results. Dr Pogson suggests that students 'have less rope although we now superficially treat them in a more adult manner' (Pogson, Q5) This point is confirmed by a Year 13 student who comments that 'a greater work ethos has been enforced - but there is less fun' (13.3, Q9) In all these ways changing external social values impact upon the internal culture of the school.

The impact of external social change is also reflected in the photographic evidence collected for this study. 1997 images of order and control through traditional assemblies and students listening attentively to a teacher, are replaced in 2001 with pictures of students engaging with new technologies such as electronic whiteboards and working independently rather than being directed by a teacher. Students are responding to a new social order within which the former certainties provided by a closed and tightly ordered school community are ebbing away. Developments such as video-conferencing and e-learning dramatically



extend the boundaries of the school, and for all these reasons school can no longer be seen as a closed community with its own set of cultural values. As demonstrated above, even the robust internal culture of Lawrence Sheriff School is not completely immune to developments in the society outside the school.

The evidence presented in chapter five suggests that in order to understand the 'overall culture' of the school it is necessary to look outside as well as inside. The Kruskal-Wallis test pointed towards a clear relationship between the independent variable of question five (reducing hours of part-time jobs) and the dependent variable of question fifteen (student's overall satisfaction with the school). In other words, the more willing a student is to reduce the hours of their part-time job, the more likely they are to be satisfied with the culture of the school. Hence external social culture and the culture of the school are seen as pulling students in two potentially different directions, so that student response to the culture of the school is not entirely conditioned by factors relating to the internal culture of the school.

One reason that leaders are not able to shape and mould school culture into whatever form they wish is that schools are no longer a sealed unit, offering a self-generated culture hermetically sealed against the outside world. Rather it can be argued that outside social forces exert a greater influence than that which any leader can provide. Chapter five demonstrated the ways in which the 'latent social identities' (Becker and Greer, 1974, p56) that students bring with them from outside the school can go on to influence their attitudes and behaviour within the school. The reality of part-time jobs and their impact upon the work patterns and expectations of Sixth Form students has had a profound impact upon school culture over the past ten years and this process of change is likely to further develop in the future. As patterns of higher education funding continue to change it is likely that part-time working will embed itself ever more deeply into the lives of Sixth Form students. In this respect the challenge facing school leaders is not how to shape internal culture, but rather how to adapt to a changing external culture. This study suggests that changing external attitudes towards academic achievement and patterns of work have exerted a significant influence upon school culture. Cullingford speaks of a 'fight between cultures' (1991) within

schools, and this study suggests that if a school attempts to construct a culture which 'fights against' the external social culture, it faces a difficult struggle.

### 6.6 EVIDENCE OF CULTURAL CHANGE?

This study provides a further insight into the difficulties faced by leaders who wish to manipulate culture in a certain direction. The changes to the prospectus in 2001 clearly point towards an attempt to change culture, to remove overtones of academic elitism and to promote a more inclusive culture. However, there is no evidence that this change has actually taken place. In fact there is evidence from student interviews that they sense a strengthening of the academic culture of the school: 'the perception has been that a greater work ethos has been enforced- but there is less fun' (13.3). The study suggests that culture is an extremely difficult force to control and that changes may have an unexpected or surprising effect. Dr Pogson illustrates this when discussing the impact of introducing Sixth Form collaboration with a local girls school, noting that 'it had less effect than I had hoped - it did not dramatically change the ethos of boys'. In this respect Morgan's (1997) definition of 'reculturing' appears optimistic: 'a challenge of transforming mind-sets, visions, paradigms, images, metaphors, beliefs and shared meanings' (Morgan, 1997, p143). As stated in the previous section, this study produces little evidence that leaders, acting by themselves, can produce this sort of cultural change.

However, Morgan's (1997) prescription appears to have influenced education policy makers, particularly those involved in the training of headteachers. The National Standards for Headteachers (1997) assume that headteachers have the power both to create and maintain a culture. Hence under 'key areas of headship' headteachers are told that they should 'create an ethos and provide educational vision' (Teacher Training Agency, 1997, p6) whilst later on in the document they are instructed to 'create and maintain an environment which promotes and secures good teaching' (Teacher Training Agency, 1997, p7). Hence the assumption is made that headteachers are able to create and maintain cultures which promote various aspects of government educational policy. However, as earlier sections have shown, this study offers no evidence that any leader is able to change culture in accordance with a pre-ordained plan. Where change does take place it is likely to be due to external social factors or a consensus amongst the different

stakeholders who make up the 'shared ownership' of culture. This study suggests that the headteacher has an influence upon cultural change, but so does the head boy, other students, members of staff, parents and governors. In this respect the comment of Weick appears a particularly accurate summary of the way in which culture operates: 'A corporation doesn't have a culture. A corporation is a culture. That is why they are so horribly difficult to change' (Weick, cited in Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998). Hence this study suggests that many educational leaders are being asked to achieve something that is not actually possible. If they are able to effect cultural change it is most likely to be due to the happy accident of social forces and other cultural stakeholders all moving in the same direction. Thus the current training materials for headteachers appears to promote a simplistic view of culture which assumes that it can be changed and shaped at the whim of the headteacher. He or she certainly has influence, but not the overwhelming power suggested by the Teacher Training Agency materials. Lumby's carefully balanced statement offers a much more satisfactory summary of the ability of school leaders to change culture:

culture cannot be controlled but may be influenced by a range of people and will also be subject to forces external to the organisation. The principal has a particular influence, though his or her power in this area may be obliterated if sufficient people are working in contradiction, trying to influence culture in a particular direction (Lumby, 2001)

Despite the comments made above, the study has also pointed towards significant ways in which culture has changed. Dr Pogson, the school's former headteacher, describes the culture that he inherited in 1985 as 'an academic elite, mixed with a sporting elite'. Interestingly, the student survey points to a reduced significance attached to sporting success. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that the independent variable: 'The school values sporting achievement more highly than academic achievement' (question twelve) had the smallest influence upon the dependent variable; 'I feel I might the right choice in attending Lawrence Sheriff School' (question fifteen). This reduced significance was also reflected in interview comments. Whilst a Year 13 student comments that 'both sporting and academic success is valued' (13.1), relatively few students identify sporting achievement as being at the heart of the school's values. Another Year 13 student points to the academic focus at the heart of the school's values: 'the ethos of the school is to work hard and earn free time'(13.3). Documentary analysis of the school's prospectus also highlighted this shift in values. The 1997 prospectus

emphasises to the need for students to be 'all-rounders' combining sporting and academic excellence. However, by 2001 this comment has been removed and the much more neutral comment is made that: 'the school offers the opportunity for high level performance in team sports alongside the chance to pursue individual sporting interests' (p8). Analysis of photographic evidence also points to a similar trend. Whilst pictures used in the 2001 prospectus continue to include an image of the school rugby team, other developments within the school such as the new Sixth Form Centre, the presence of girls in a number of lessons and the use of new technologies such as interactive whiteboards are all featured more prominently. Hence data drawn from a variety of sources points towards the decreasing impact of sport upon the 'overall culture' of the school. This development may be explained by external social factors. Over recent years increasing emphasis has been placed by local and national government upon the need to achieve high results in order to achieve targets and progress on to university. Whilst this can be seen as re-enforcing the historic academic values of the school, it may also be seen as undermining its entrenched sporting values by suggesting that students should spend most of their time whilst at school on academic study. When this is supported by an attempt by the school's management to move away from the historic emphasis upon sporting achievement, it may be enough to produce some change in culture. For this reason the study also fails to support Bates contention that 'Culture cannot be changed in the abstract' (1994, p23). As Lumby (2001) points out above, it is possible for leaders to play a role in 'trying to influence culture in a particular direction' when they are one of a number of influences that are attempting to move culture in a particular direction. Hence the evidence above suggests that when a number of the pieces of the cultural jigsaw exert a similar pressure upon 'overall culture', it is at least possible that cultural change will take place. Evidence collected for this study suggests that three pieces of the cultural jigsaw (internal culture, leadership and external culture) have combined to move the school's culture away from an emphasis upon sporting achievement. Data reveals no evidence that subcultures have played a part in this process, hence it is reasonable to conclude that not every piece of the jigsaw needs to be in place before change can occur. However, the evidence of this study also suggests that if only one piece is in place (such as a policy decision made by a school leader) that will not be enough to engineer cultural change by itself.

A further influence upon cultural change which this study has uncovered, has been the influence of past cultures upon the memories of cultural stakeholders within an institution. Whilst those in charge of the institution may wish to shape culture differently or to lead the institution in a fresh direction, the reality is that the influence of the past is very difficult to escape. Hence several aspects of the school's culture in the 1980s or 1990s appear to continue to exert a strong influence upon the culture of the school in the twenty first century. This point can first be illustrated by exploring Dr Pogson's comment that when he first took over as headteacher in 1984 he found 'an academic elite, mixed with a sporting elite'. These comments are echoed in the 1997 prospectus which states that the school's central aim is to 'give an opportunity to high flying academic students'. The presence of less academic students in the Sixth Form is noted somewhat grudgingly, stating that the school has decided to 'open the grammar school Sixth Form to diligent students with more modest aspirations'. Despite evidence that subsequent versions of the prospectus have been altered to reflect a more inclusive culture, it is clear that whether the school likes it or not, the academic values of the 1980s and 1990s appear to have influenced the present culture of the school. Hence responses to both student surveys and student interviews point to the centrality of academic values within the school. Within the survey non-parametric analysis suggested that the key to satisfaction with the school as a whole lay in the ease with which students could accept its academic values. Three statements are identified by the non-parametric analysis as being the key determinants of student satisfaction:

- I would be prepared to reduce the hours of my part job if it interfered with my A-Levels
- I expect to achieve the A-Level results that will enable me to go on to my chosen university course
- The school is mainly interested in students who will achieve high academic results

A student who responds positively to these statements indicates acceptance of the deeply rooted academic culture within the school, whilst those who respond negatively have not accepted the academic culture and so are much more likely to feel dissatisfied with the school as a whole. Student interview responses also testify to the centrality of the academic culture that exists within the school. When asked what values the school approves of a Year 13 student answers 'high grades

and academic success' (13.2). Similarly when students are asked what values the school disapproves of many Year 12 students suggest that the school will not tolerate an unwillingness to work 'teachers set a lot of work and expect a lot to be done in school'. These values are perceived as being strongly supported by students, with another Year 12 student stating that the 'class gets angry with people messing about' (12.2).

Chapter five noted that the prospectus of 2001 attempted to soften this academic emphasis by deleting all reference to 'high flying' or diligent' students, focusing instead upon 'broadening of opportunities'. However, the data explored in the last paragraph indicates that there is a gap between aspiration and reality, and that the earlier academic values of the school continue to exert a strong influence upon culture within the school. Hence the evidence explored in chapter five highlights the importance of history in understanding cultural change. The way in which culture changes and develops in the present may well be explained by events in the past. For this reason chapter five pointed towards the accuracy of Wheeler's (2001) suggestion that culture is part of a continuum:

The problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past- and the solution may well go on to be a problem of the future (Wheeler, 2001, p3).

The final issue explored by this study relates to the impact of environment upon cultural change. The school's 2001 prospectus is anxious to emphasise the new Sixth Form centre which had been open for just over a month. Comments such as

In September 2001 our new Sixth Form Centre opened, boasting state-of-the-art facilities for Sixth Form study and research (Prospectus, 2001, p2)

indicate the impact which the school hoped that the new facilities would have upon overall culture within the Sixth Form. This point is further emphasised by a picture in the 2001 prospectus showing a teacher using an interactive whiteboard. The school clearly hopes that the new facilities will have a positive impact upon Sixth Form culture, presenting the school as forward looking and progressive. However, interviews with students reveal that opinion is divided over the desirability of the new facilities. One student comments: 'the perception has been that a greater work ethos has been enforced- but there is less fun' (13.3). Hence rather than transforming culture with new facilities, many students yearn for the greater freedom associated with the former buildings. Although the former Sixth Form Centre was old and in a poor state of repair, students valued the freedom

that it offered to escape from the control of the school. Once again it can be argued that culture cannot be changed at the whim of those in charge of an educational institution. As discussed earlier in this section, several aspects of the cultural jigsaw need to be in place before cultural change can take place. In this instance it would appear that only one piece of the jigsaw (the views of educational leaders) were in place to engineer change. Evidence discussed above shows that other pieces of the jigsaw, such as internal culture (and possibly subcultures) were more resistant to the planned change, and hence change proved difficult. Culture can continue to be influenced by a building which is no longer used, just as it can be influenced by comments in a prospectus with which the school management is no longer fully in agreement with. Student response to the new centre illustrates both the ability of past cultures to influence the present and the difficulty facing a leader who wishes to change culture without the support of all of the pieces that make up the cultural jigsaw.

Overall, this study suggests that it is hard to change culture and that the vision of writers such as Morgan (1997) and Stoll and Fink (1999) of institutions being 'recultured' may prove difficult to achieve in 'real life' situations. Student responses to the Sixth Form Centre demonstrate that planned attempts to influence culture in a certain direction are likely to have an unpredictable effect which may not coincide with the intentions of those originating the change. Just as a variety of stakeholders influence culture, so cultural change requires the 'happy accident' of most or all of the pieces of the cultural jigsaw joining together to exert a pressure for change. As part of this complex process, chapter five suggests that in order to understand the present culture of an institution, it is necessary first to look at the past. Historic values are likely to exert an influence upon culture, even when the institution hopes it has moved on and embraced a fresh set of values. Leaders who struggle to understand the complexities of the current culture of their institution may be failing to realise that 'the problem faced may well be the solution to a problem from the past' (Wheeler, 2001, p3). However, the study offers no evidence that school management on its own is capable of overcoming the 'problem of the past' that may be represented by a long established culture. Instead this study shows that leaders are only one of the 'range of people' who cannot change culture by themselves, but who are able to 'influence culture in a particular direction' (Lumby, 2001). However, in order for this 'influence' to be

exerted, the study suggests that leaders must not operate by themselves, but instead join together the sometimes scattered pieces of the jigsaw that influences 'overall culture'.

## 6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The principal limitation of this study lies in the role of the researcher as headteacher of the West Midlands school that is explored within this study. It can easily be argued that this role may have affected the objectivity of respondents or, indeed, the way in which the writer has analysed the data generated by the research. Chapter three explores Foster's (1999) critique of the way in which action researcher's explore their own practice:

in nearly all the reports insufficient evidence is presented to support key claims ... in most cases there are other plausible explanations for claimed differences in dependent variables which the teacher-researcher failed to eliminate (Foster, 1999, p388)

The chapter also highlights the warning of Fine and Sandstrom (1988) that 'it is desirable to lessen the power differential between children and adult researchers' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1998, p352). It could be argued that as the headteacher of the school, the researcher has an inappropriate power differential with the students who form the particular focus for his research.

However, chapter three summarises the range of measures that were put in place to address these concerns. Surveys were administered by other members of the organisation although interviews did involve, of necessity, direct contact with the teacher researcher. However, examination of survey and interview responses produced no evidence that students felt influenced to answer in a particular manner. Indeed, when discussing areas such as the influence of leaders upon culture, it could be argued that students stated the exact opposite of what they might perceive as the 'correct' or 'approved' answer. Results from surveys and interviews were also triangulated by data such as an analysis of the school prospectus in order to ensure that the researcher's position within the organisation did not lead to any form of 'self-deception'.

The second weakness of the research points also to an obvious area for future research. It could be argued that a West Midlands grammar school does not



provide a cohort of students whose responses can be easily generalised to other schools in very different contexts. In the view of Sturman (1994), a common philosophy often underpins case study: the belief that it is possible to predict from a single example because 'human systems develop a characteristic wholeness' (Sturman, 1994, cited in Bassey, 1999, p26). It could be argued that such generalisation is difficult in this case because the instance being explored possesses a number of distinct and individual characteristics. However, whilst the school does possess some distinctive elements, this study argues that 'fuzzy' generalisations (Bassey, 1999) can still be reasonably drawn from the data explored. As Bassey comments:

The fuzzy generalization arises from studies of singularities and typically claims that it is possible, or likely or unlikely that what was found in the singularity will be found in similar situations elsewhere (Bassey, 1999, p12)

Whilst acknowledging the possibility of 'fuzzy generalisation', the distinctiveness of the school that has been examined does point to the need for further studies that explore school culture in different contexts. The five part jigsaw of school culture developed by this study is not specific to the context of one school, and there is now a need to apply this model to other contexts in order to more fully understand its relevance to a range of different schools. Nias (1989) calls for

Detailed studies of particular school cultures and the creation of appropriate typologies (Nias, 1989, p143)

This study has completed the first stage of this process by exploring the 'particular school culture' of one institution and developing a typology that can be readily operationalised within the context of an educational institution. There is now a need for further research that applies this typology to other educational contexts and environments.

## 6.8 CONCLUSION

This study is distinctive in the way that it has questioned widely held assumptions about culture. By exploring the internal culture of a school, the study has questioned the assumption that school culture is made up of 'an agglomeration of several subcultures' (Stoll and Fink, 1995, p87), demonstrating instead that the Sixth Form culture under discussion had a dominant internal culture based up academic achievement. This internal culture emerges as robust and able to exert considerable social pressure in order to ensure conformity. Subcultures do not combine to make up this culture. In part they are formed in response to it, but they

are also shaped by two additional sets of factors, one internal (such as age, gender and experience) and one external (related to 'latent' social identities outside the school). The study suggests that subcultures form not only in response to what Cohen (1955) describes as 'a common problem of 'adjustment', but also as a result of a common set of social needs. Hence subcultures can be formed not only as a reaction against a set of values, but also as a positive statement of the values endorsed by members of the group.

The study also challenges the assumption that leaders have the ability to transform culture. As such it illustrates the danger of developing a policy agenda which is not necessarily based upon sound educational research. Hence in defining the key characteristics for headteachers, the management group Hay McBer, in a study completed for the National College for School Leadership, suggested that all headteachers should engage in 'transformational leadership' (Hay McBer, 2000). They go on to comment:

The head is the lead professional and needs to convey the belief that transformation is possible (Hay McBer, 2000)

Such a belief in transformation is also fundamental to the recently established National College for School Leadership. A recent summary of the work of the College concluded that:

Its mission is to ensure that our current and future school leaders develop the skill, the capabilities and the capacity to lead and transform the school education system into the best in the world (Coles and Southworth, 2002, p7).

One of the many assumptions contained within this sentence is that transformational power is invested within leaders and that the role of the College is to help them unlock this 'power within'. Such a suggestion is clearly extremely convenient for makers of educational policy, since it suggests that by concentrating resources on teaching leaders how to 'unlock' this transformational power, it will be possible to radically alter culture within the nation's schools. This study concludes that the relationship between leaders and transformation is much more problematic than both the National College and writers such as Evans (2001) and Morgan (1997) appear to assume. Whilst the study does not dispute that leaders are able to influence the 'overall culture' within their school, it concludes that a complex relationship exists between leaders and transformation. Through a primary focus upon data generated by students, the study concludes that the ability of leaders to 'transform' culture is limited. The central reason for

this is that culture is influenced by a complex series of forces which cannot quickly be transformed (certainly not within the five year term of a parliament). Interview responses indicate that other stakeholders exert a significant influence upon overall culture, and that these stakeholders range from key members of staff such as the Head of Sixth Form, to other students such as the Head Boy, or to others deemed to have particular academic or sporting status. Attempts to 'transform' culture which disregard the influence of these stakeholders are likely to have at best a limited impact. Writers such as Hall and George (1999) have tended to over emphasise the influence of the headteacher upon culture because they have largely canvassed the views of members of the teaching staff who are likely to perceive the headteacher as a major influence, since he is their overall line manager. However, students perceive a more complex and rich picture, and the respondents to this study portray culture as being a 'shared commodity', rather than an entity largely owned by the headteacher. When asked who shaped the culture of the school, a Year 13 student commented that 'I reject the idea that there is one person' (13.4, Q7). This view provides a thought provoking challenge to the assumptions of policy makers. Hence culture is guarded by a series of gate keepers, each jealously guarding their right to influence and steer the 'overall culture' of the school.

This study concludes that cultural gatekeepers are not confined to other members of the organisation. A major influence upon culture is also exerted by the society that exists outside the school. Survey responses and interviews with both students and the school's former headteacher have demonstrated the impact upon culture of social developments such as the expectation that students will undertake part time jobs. The study argues that over time the school has become less and less of a self-contained entity, instead becoming just one of the places where students spend their time. As a result of this it has become increasingly difficult for schools to project messages which run counter to the prevailing social culture which students find themselves within. Hence a leader is much more likely to be able to shape culture in a particular direction if this cultural change is supported by society outside the school. For this reason the increasing focus upon examination results and the declining emphasis upon sporting achievement within Lawrence Sheriff School can be seen as reflecting a greater social expectation that students

will achieve 'good' A-level grades and progress on to university. As Stoll comments:

Changes in society pose challenges to a school's culture, whether they be related to learning, the pupil population, organisational management, rapid technological developments or the changing role of women (Stoll, 1998, p2).

However, the assumption that leaders can 'transform' culture in total isolation from their society, which appears to be implicit in the material from the National College for School Leadership, is not supported by the data analysed. This study concludes that any organisation's overall culture is formed in part by the society that exists outside the organisation, and that this social influence upon Sixth Form culture appears to be growing as students become involved in a wider range of social interactions outside the boundaries of the school. Whilst not suggesting that it is impossible for leaders to transform culture, this study concludes that transformation has become increasingly difficult, as external society exerts an increasing influence upon the lives of students.

This study also points to a final factor which constrains the ability of leaders to transform culture, and that is the influence of the past upon the present. Earlier chapters have explored the ways in which the culture that existed within the school during the 1980s and 1990s still appears to influence the culture of 2002. Hence the school's attempt in its prospectus to soften the emphasis upon academic elitism is not reflected in the attitudes of students who still perceive the school as demanding 'high grades and academic success' (13.2). This study suggests that the cultural values of the 1980s and 1990s will continue to find echoes in the 'overall culture' of the school for some time to come. Cultures take a long period of time to establish themselves and for this reason it is unlikely that they can quickly be changed. Wheeler's picture of culture as 'part of a continuum - past, present and future' (Wheeler, 2001, p3) appears to be a particularly apt image for the conclusions reached by this study. Hence a leader's ability to transform culture in the present is profoundly influenced by what has happened in the past within the organisation. Any leader who disregards the influence of the past is likely to find that his or her attempts to influence the present have proved to be less than successful.

Hence, through a distinctive focus upon the responses of students, this study has concluded that culture is a complex force which cannot be readily 'transformed' by any one person. Leaders can influence culture, but they are just one of a group of cultural gatekeepers whom students recognise as possessing influence. The study highlights the growing influence of society upon Sixth Form culture, and suggests that the past continues to exert a profound influence upon the present. Furthermore, once a prevailing internal culture is established, it acts as a further inhibitor of cultural change. Subcultures may develop in response, but a widely accepted internal culture may actually inhibit the development of groups who wish to challenge these values. Rather than confronting 'a mosaic of organisational realities' (Morgan, 1997, p137), leaders who seek to change culture are more likely to find themselves faced by a distinct internal culture that is confidently able to defend its view of 'the way we do things around here'.

By drawing together each of the elements discussed above the study has developed a new typology for cultural analysis that can be more readily operationalised within an educational setting than earlier models. Chapter four demonstrated that Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model could be effectively used to explore the internal culture of an institution. However, this model is limited because it fails to consider a whole series of additional factors that influence the development of culture. The model developed by this study adds the additional 'jigsaw pieces' of subculture, leadership, external culture and cultural change. This broader model offers a more comprehensive model of the different forces that combine to shape and influence cultural formation and development. As well as being more comprehensive, the study has shown that this new model can be readily operationalised within an educational context. Having shown in chapter five that the model can be used to analyse the culture of the Sixth Form of a West Midlands grammar school, section 6.8 of this chapter highlighted the need to apply the model to a range of different school environments. Nias (1989) correctly argues for 'detailed studies of particular school cultures' (Nias, 1989, p143). The five stage model of cultural analysis developed by this study offers a typology that can be used to ensure that these 'detailed studies' of school cultures are able to explore each of the different forces that shape and influence culture. Chapter four's examination of Deal and Kennedy's (1988) model highlighted the danger of exploring culture in such a way that only one piece of the cultural jigsaw is

examined. If the detailed studies of culture that Nias (1989) calls for are to have value, then it is necessary to use the systematic method of analysis developed by this study, in order to explore each of the different forces that shape the development of culture.

The introductory chapter referred to Stoll's (1999) essay which suggested that culture can be either a 'black hole' or 'fertile garden'. This study concludes that the culture of a school's Sixth Form is neither. Instead it is a three-dimensional jigsaw, relying upon the complex inter-connectivity of a series of pieces for its formation. If only one dimension is looked at (such as internal culture or the way in which culture is influenced by leaders) there is a danger that it will continue to prove an elusive and puzzling concept. E.M. Forster advises his readers to 'only connect' and this study has demonstrated that in order to understand culture it is necessary to first connect together each of the five pieces that shape the development of Sixth Form culture. Only when each of the five pieces has been put together can we fully understand the true nature of 'the way we do things around here'.

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# APPENDIX A

## SIXTH FORM SURVEY

Thank you very much for agreeing to complete this questionnaire

Each question contains a statement about school life. Please ring one number to indicate your response to the statement, using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

1. Academic school work is my main priority whilst in the Sixth Form

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

2. The school should allow Sixth Form students the freedom to decide when and where to work

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

3. I respect students who put a lot of work into their A-levels

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

4. I normally plan to work during free periods at school

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

5. I would be prepared to reduce the hours of my part-time job if it interfered with my A-Levels

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

6. I expect to achieve the A-Level results that will enable me to go on to my chosen university course or employment route

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

7. Supervised private study is inappropriate for Sixth Form students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

8. The school places too much pressure on Sixth Form students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

9. The school is mainly interested in students who will achieve high academic results

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

10. I know my target grades and I think that I can achieve them

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

11. I normally do at least an hour's work during the evening and weekends

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

12. The school values sporting achievement more highly than academic achievement

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

13. Students who achieve high results tend to be made fun of by other students

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

14. I work harder in the Sixth Form than I did in Year 11

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

15. I feel that I made the right choice in attending the Sixth Form at Lawrence Sheriff

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY: YOUR HELP IS VERY  
MUCH APPRECIATED**

# APPENDIX B

## Cultural Questionnaire

1. In your opinion, what values does the school approve of?
2. In your opinion, what values does the school disapprove of?
3. How are people treated who do not fit in with the school's values
4. What sort of people are highly regarded by the school community? Can you give an example?

5. Can you think of an anecdote or story that sum up the school's values?

6. Who are the people who help to shape the culture and values of the school?

7. Who is the person with the biggest single influence upon the school's culture?

8. How many different cultures are there within the school?

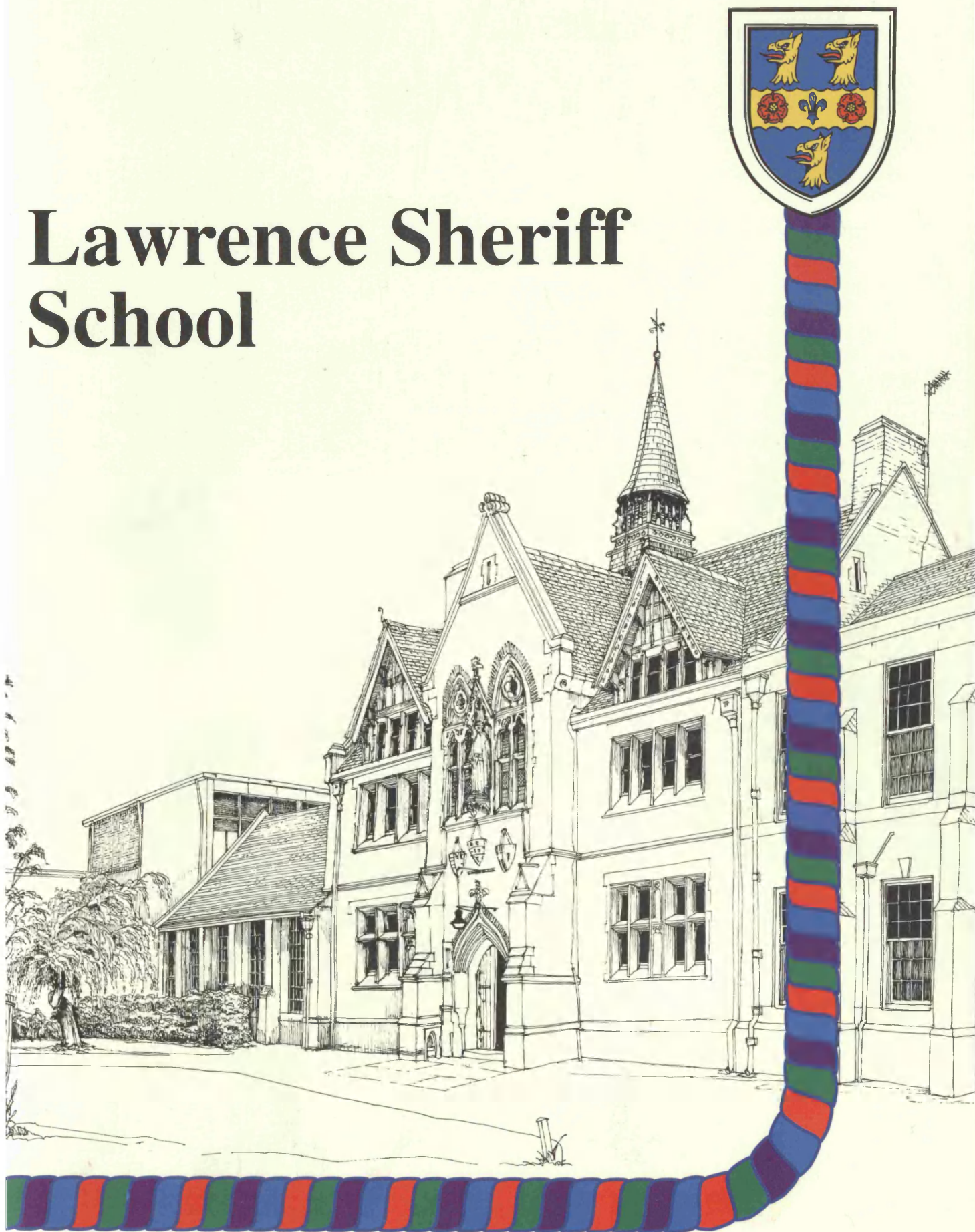
9. Has the culture of the school changed at all?

10. If you could change one aspect of the school's culture, what would it be?



# APPENDIX C

# Lawrence Sheriff School



# TRADITION, CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT



*Lawrence Sheriff was born in 1515 or 1516 in or near Rugby. He prospered in the reign of Elizabeth I and in his will of 1567 left money for a school 'to serve chiefly for the children of Rugby and ...other places hereunto adjoyneing'.*

*By the eighteenth century, the school had acquired a national reputation as a Public School, and moved to the present school site of Rugby School. As the proportion of pupils from outside Rugby increased, local concern evoked the nineteenth-century proposal of a Lower School for local boys, with Foundation Scholarships to the Great School. By 1906, a*

*compromise between the traditions of the Foundation, and a proposal to hand the school over to the County, led to a governing body chaired by the Headmaster of Rugby School and containing both Foundation and County Governors.*

*This partnership continued into voluntary aided status under the 1944 Act: Lawrence Sheriff School is now the selective boys' grammar school for Rugby and the surrounding area.*

## AIMS OF THE SCHOOL

The school's aims are to blend the long tradition of a grammar school's pursuit of academic excellence with the preparation of students to play a responsible and mature role in society. We look to aid the intellectual, moral, physical and emotional development of all our students, whatever the differences in individual gifts or circumstances. We always seek to encourage a desire for learning, as well as emphasising the moral obligation to show understanding and respect to others. At the heart of the school's philosophy is a belief that individual success in any field of activity, inside or outside school, is enhanced by a collective sense of shared responsibility and care.



## ADMISSIONS

We welcome any enquiry about admission and are always ready to meet with prospective parents or students. Boys are admitted on the result of the local authority's 11+ selection tests: the normal intake is 90 in three unstreamed classes. Entry to any year group which already has 90 or more pupils will depend on an appeal to a panel appointed by the Governors and the LEA. A sign of the school's considerable success over the past ten years has been its growth from 480 to over 700 pupils.

## CURRICULUM

The curriculum consists of far more than examinations results, and a grammar school, with many able students, has unsurpassed opportunities for innovation. Although we are proud of our record in public examination results, our central concern is that each pupil achieves his full potential, and we strongly feel that the curriculum is not only about examinations. Our intention is to make full use of the National Curriculum requirements for the students' benefit, to enrich it where possible, and to pursue the chance of many new challenges.

### The First Three Years



In Years 7, 8 and 9, three parallel classes take English; Mathematics; Science; Art, Design and Technology; French; German; Geography; History; Music; Religious, Personal and Social Education; and Physical Education. In Year 7 there will be a residential course for outdoor pursuits, and in Years 8 and 9 a range of artistic and industrial experiences outside the usual timetable.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY is included in the Technology curriculum and as a separate skill; and is also used across the curriculum in many of the other subjects. An IT record is kept by each boy to demonstrate the skills he has learned. Three networked computer rooms are available, as well as computers in a number of departments.

### The GCSE Years

In Year 10, the first of a two-year course, students study eight or nine GCSE subjects: Mathematics, English, Technology, and five or six from: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Double Award Co-ordinated Science, English Literature, French, German, Geography, History, Media Studies, Music, Physics. All are expected to study the three sciences either as Co-ordinated Sciences or as three separate GCSE's; at least one of French and German, at least one of History or Geography. This combination of entitlement and choice is under review each year.

- **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PERSONAL EDUCATION** (modules of spiritual, health, careers, political, economic and social education) are compulsory.
- **THE I.T. RECORD** is continued and extended throughout the two years by regular access to the computers
- **TECHNOLOGY GCSE** Technology for all has grown out of an exciting tradition of technology projects in Year 10 including complex work for Severn Trent Water or British Rail and culminating in special effects for the award-winning Community Drama in 1993. The new Technology Centre provides a range of opportunities for the study of Technology as a core GCSE subject.
- **A FORTNIGHT'S WORK EXPERIENCE** is central in the curriculum of every member of Year 11, placed in January to play a part in choices for careers and future courses.





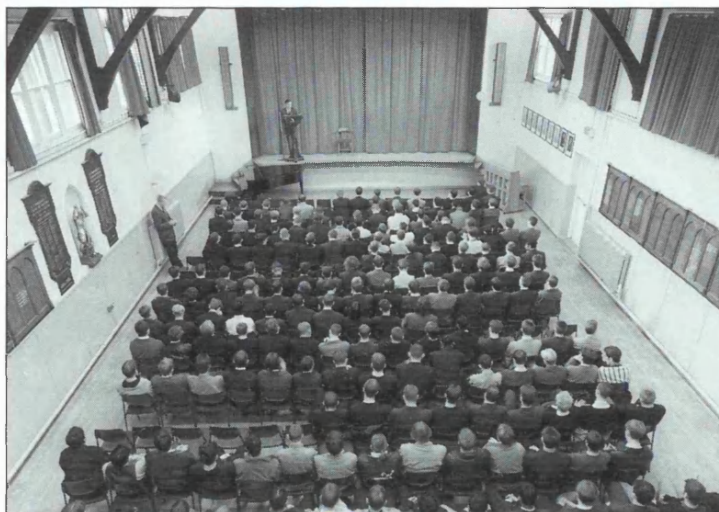


1.1

- **CAREERS GUIDANCE** in Years 10 and 11 involves close liaison between the school and the County Careers Service, with the school's newly equipped Careers Office as a base.
- **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** The Personal Education programme contains modules of spiritual, moral and ethical themes, and there are visiting speakers and panels.
- **ASSEMBLIES** for large sections of the school, for separate forms, and for year groups, take place each week, and themes of faith, commitment and choice are introduced to the students throughout the year.
- **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** Issues of gender, race, religion, age, disability and disadvantage are specifically addressed throughout the PSE programme in years 7 - 11 and in many subject areas.

- **SEX EDUCATION POLICY** encourages a progressive development, starting with modules of physical information in Key Stage 3 science and continuing with maturation videos and discussion in PSE, to Aids and relationships in year 11. Throughout the course, sex education is placed in the context of caring and mature development.

- **RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT** have been negotiated for seven years in years 10 and 11, and for six years in the lower sixth form. The school was part of a Warwickshire Study of Records of Achievement, and we seek to combine the advantages of personal target setting and one-to-one interviews with a continuing emphasis on high academic achievement.



1.2

## The Sixth Form

1.3



The school offers an impressive range of opportunities at Sixth Form level. Parallel timetabling with Rugby High School for Girls has broadened the already extensive academic opportunities for students at both schools. The Governors and local authority have invested in a new seminar and library facility in the Sheriff Centre, and the Governors have provided refurbished social facilities for the Sixth Form. New seminar rooms are also included in the new Griffin Centre.

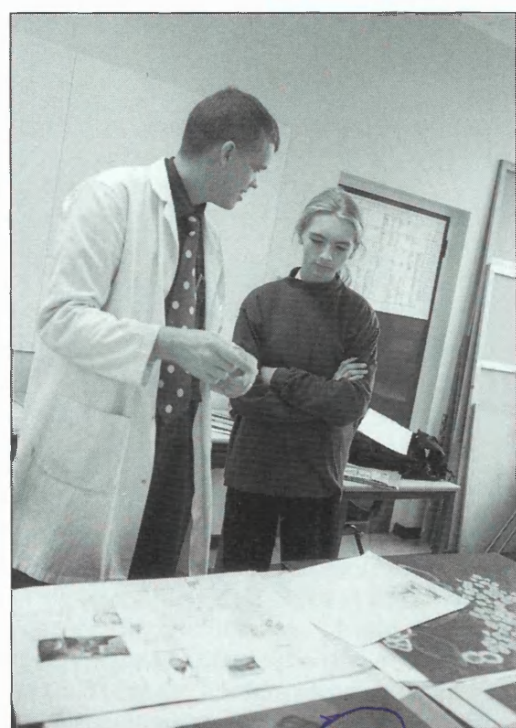
Applications to both sixth forms are welcomed from students in Year 11 at Lawrence Sheriff and from other schools. The minimum guideline for entry to Lawrence Sheriff School has been a qualification of 5 grade C's at

GCSE: but most entrants have much more than this. There are many opportunities to meet staff and decide which course, at A and/or AS level, is most appropriate. Well over 90% of sixth formers go on to



higher courses after leaving school. There is a double educational aim: to give an opportunity to high-flying academic students, but also to open the grammar school sixth form to diligent students with more modest aspirations.

Students work towards A Levels (usually three, sometimes four or two) or a combination of A and AS levels. Subjects available at Lawrence Sheriff School are English, History, Geography, Economics, French, German, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Media Studies, Music, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Electronics, Computer Studies, Art, Technology and PE. In recent years students from Lawrence Sheriff have been studying Sociology, Food and Nutrition, Religious Studies, and Psychology at Rugby High School, and this broadening of opportunities has gathered momentum. A bus runs at breaks and lunchtimes between the two schools.



As well as offering A-Levels, we also seek to enrich the studies of each student in a number of different ways:

- **CORE SKILLS** involving IT, Number Skills, Communication, Political and Economic Awareness, Moral and Aesthetic understanding, are offered jointly between the schools to provide breadth and support for A and AS level courses. Most students contribute to entries for the Food & Farming Challenge, a national skills accreditation, and teams usually reach, and often win, the Final.
- **WORK EXPERIENCE** The school has led the way in Warwickshire in setting up work experience placements for A level linguists in Germany and France.
- **GAMES** include a wide variety of sports options at the local sports in the Griffin Sports Centre and the other venues. But the school also continues to attach importance to high-level performance in team sport.

- **COMMUNITY LINKS AND RESPONSIBILITY** The School has had close links with GEC Alsthom, as it now is, for eight years, and has working contacts with several other companies including Rugby Group, Peugeot, T and N Technology and Sainsbury's. Recent activities include work shadowing, engineering projects, charity fundraising and old people's entertainment, helping to run the library, visiting the hospital or local primary schools, or editing the magazine or news sheets for the school. All sixth formers are encouraged to take responsibility, with all of them regularly taking supervisory duties.
- **CAREERS GUIDANCE** consists of continued individual contact with the Careers Service, including computerised questionnaires and extensive advice within the school on employment and university placements.



## **LINKS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME**

For the student the most regular link is homework. As a general guide, students below year 10 should expect to spend half an hour each evening on each of three subjects. As 16+ examinations approach, and beyond that in the years of flexible and independent study in the sixth form, successful students will devote considerably more time outside school to their studies. Eighteen hours each week for an organised lower sixth former would be a sound guide. Such self reliance and perseverance only develop through a diligent approach to all study at home and school, early in a student's career, and consistent effort in all subjects is thus a priority for all. Part-time employment can seriously affect study: one evening and one weekend day again provides a guideline.

For the parent, links with the school are centred on Parents' Evenings, Reports/Records of Achievement, Social or Information Evenings, major School Events, and Parents' Association Events.

- **PARENTS' EVENINGS** are planned on an appointments system once a year for the parents of each age group.
- **REPORTS** and comments are issued to each pupil twice a year.
- **RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT** include a page for parental comment, as do reports.
- **AN INFORMATION EVENING** is held for the New Intake and for each of Years 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.
- **SCHOOL EVENTS** such as plays, concerts and displays are advertised by boy post in the course of the year.
- **THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**, quoted in the Guinness Book of Records as the country's first, organises social and fundraising events through the year, focusing its efforts on the new minibus, computers, or equally crucial smaller items. A largescale recent effort has raised almost £5,000 for staging in the new Studio.
- **LETTERS TO PARENTS** are issued generally on Fridays.
- **PARENTS ARE WELCOME AT THE SCHOOL AT ANY TIME** A parent wishing for an interview with a particular member of staff would be wise to ring beforehand for a firm appointment to avoid waste of time. Any parent raising a matter of concern is invited to discuss all available procedures with the Headmaster.
- **AIDED STATUS** brings the advantage of limited funds to help needy families with costs on the fringes of education or in basics such as uniform. Approaches to the Headmaster will naturally be confidential.
- **CHARGING POLICY** The school may ask, from time to time, for voluntary contributions from parents for the transport and other costs incurred in activities which enhance the students' experience.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

In the first instance a student's welfare, at school, rests in the care of his form tutor, who will probably stay with the same class for several years, encouraging continuity and stability. The next level of support is a team of pastoral co-ordinators. The Sixth Form is under the overall care of the Deputy Headmaster. Students are encouraged to refer quickly to their tutor in any sort of difficulty. If a matter of academic concern is noted for any student, it is referred quickly to the tutor and to the Head of Department in the subject concerned. Any other problem, query or referral will go directly to the tutor. It will usually be sufficient for the tutor to deal with the matter solely with the student (Stage 1); but on occasions, the tutor may wish to speak to the parent (Stage 2), with the pastoral co-ordinator kept informed. The involvement of the co-ordinator with the student, and a family discussion with the co-ordinator and tutor, are Stages 3 and 4. Only if these steps do not solve any difficulty to everyone's satisfaction will a senior member of school management then be involved. A serious situation will accelerate this procedure, and at any stage, of course, a parent may wish to get in touch with a senior member of staff.

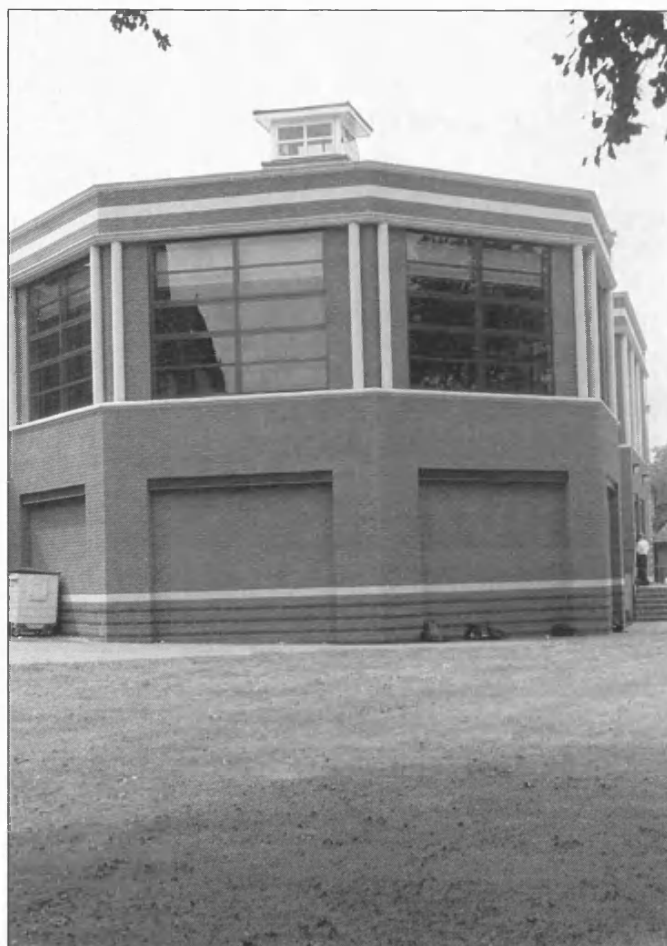
All students are expected to behave with the restraint, courtesy, commonsense and consideration which bring credit to themselves and to the school. Breaches of discipline may be dealt with by tasks of community service around the school under the direction of senior staff, or by detention after school at 24 hours notice. Parents will be involved early in any more worrying matter. Major disciplinary action, an extreme rarity, can end in exclusion, which then becomes a matter for the Governing Body.

The school works closely with the local authority's psychologists, educational social workers and reading experts in following the agreed stages of support for any student at this school with an identifiable learning difficulty for which help can be found.

## BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Like many other schools with a long tradition, Lawrence Sheriff has a collection of buildings from different periods, with laboratories, workshops, classrooms and activity areas added over the years to the fine nineteenth century mock Tudor hall. The latest programme since 1987 has included a series of refurbishments and modifications, and a number of new facilities which have doubled the area of the building on the site. The refurbishments include three new and three re-equipped laboratories; three rooms converted to computer networks; administrative and reception areas at the front of the school; a superb information centre, library and seminar area, originally the Headmaster's house and now named after the school's benefactor; and sixth form social areas in Penrhos House.

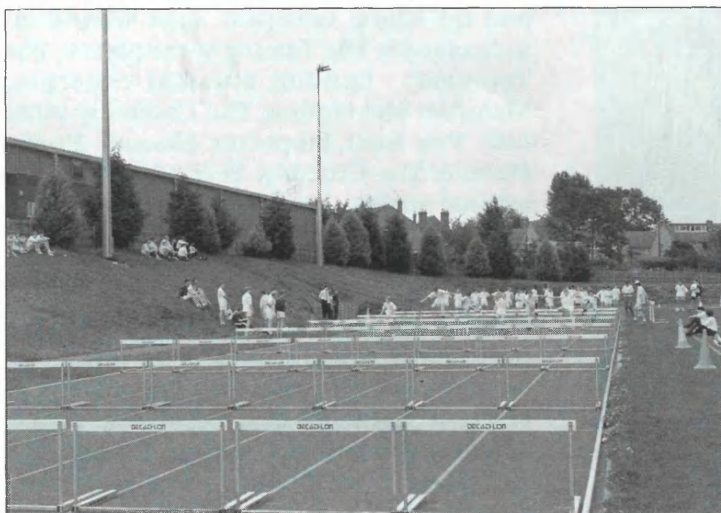
The new facilities consist of three large new blocks: the Design, Technology and Mathematics Centre in the Sheriff Quad by Whitehall Road, opened in 1993; the Griffin classroom block replacing the dining hall in September 1996; and the Griffin Centre, and Sports Hall and Studio on the site of the old tennis court and kitchens, facing onto Clifton Road and adjoining Penrhos House. This last development opened in the



Autumn of 1996, and is designed for community as well as school use.

In the last decade, therefore, over £3 million has been invested in the school buildings. This investment reflects not only the growth of numbers in the school, (over 200 bigger in this period), but also the commitment of governors to improve the facilities for the students as swiftly as possible, and to benefit the town as well as simply the school. The money has come partly from the DfEE and LEA (for the change in the age of transfer in 1996), partly from the Sports Council (a lottery grant of £383,500 for the Sports Hall as a local and regional table tennis centre), but mainly from the foundation funding of Lawrence Sheriff himself. Support funding has been made available by a number of the school's close friends. The support of the local education authority throughout these changes has been a feature of the decade.





## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Our various of activities are too numerous to mention - hence the list we offer below merely provides a "flavour" of what is happening within the school.

**GAMES** The school is arranged into 4 Houses, named in honour of benefactors and heads: Tait, Caldecott, Simpson, Wheeler. The House is a sporting rather than social or pastoral unit. Each student has one double lesson of games each week, either late morning or afternoon. The main winter sport is rugby, though in Year 9 and above there are

opportunities for smaller groups to play hockey and cross country running. In summer the sports are cricket, athletics and tennis. Now that we have a school Sports Hall there are opportunities on site for a wide range of sports for all age groups.

Inter-school matches, as well as house and individual competitions, are held in many sports. There have been 4 Internationals on the school roll in the last few years, in rugby, cricket and athletics.

It is important that a student sees his timetable as a complete educational package, of which physical development is an integral and compulsory part. All students should also recognise the need for loyalty to school and fellow students if selected for a team after school or on a Saturday. An all-rounder in academic and extracurricular activities gains immeasurably by putting his effort and time into the school community.



1.6



1.7

- **MUSIC** As well as its place in the curriculum throughout the school, music is an important extracurricular activity, from the excellence of the school orchestra, through the massed hordes in recent junior musicals, to the informal zest of barbershop, jazz and guitar ensembles. Concerts over the last few years included pieces composed by students, and performances from our strong players in the National Youth Orchestra; and live music is a feature of recent drama at the school. Peripatetic teachers from the County Music Service take lessons in strings, woodwind, brass and percussion, and hold ensemble workshops. A small contribution per pupil per lesson is arranged with students who receive tuition.

- **DRAMA** Recent performances have been drawn from a wide range of talents, including staff and recent ex-pupils, pupils from Rugby High School and Bilton High School, and boys from every year group. These have included: *She Stoops to Conquer*; *The Mikado*; *The Boy Friend*; *Smikey*; *Drake*; a charity performance of excerpts; *Dido and Aeneas*; *A Man for All Seasons*; *Cabaret*; *The Beggar's Opera*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *A Christmas Carol*; *Polo*



and the Khan; Godspell; Last Wild Wood in Sector 88; The Taming of the Shrew; The Tempest; London Musical excerpts; Victorian Melodrama; The Company 2020 Ltd; The Real Inspector Hound; Bugsy Malone; The Crucible; Year 10 and Year 8 original scripts ..... all in the last ten years. The school's YEWTH drama company has taken productions to London and Stratford.

- **OUTDOOR AND FIELD WORK** As well as field work for a number of academic subjects, students have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme: groups have worked through the last 8 years for Gold, Silver and Bronze awards.

- **SCHOOL SOCIETIES AND ACTIVITIES** The Weather Bureau is a special Lawrence Sheriff activity, dating from 1941 and forming part of the national recording of weather. Recent clubs have included computing, chess, drama, fishing, wargaming, astronomy and the strong newcomer electronics. There is a mutually beneficial recent tradition of close curricular links with Brooke Special School.
- **OLD LAURENTIAN SOCIETY** This flourishing society keeps OL's in touch with the school and each other by newsletters (mailing list of well over 1,000) and reunions in London as well as Rugby. It provides funding for students each year: a wealth of support to the school. There is a vigorous Sports and Social Club. Students in the sixth form can pay a life subscription by termly instalments.
- **RUGBY SCHOOL** The long association with Rugby School continues. The Junior Department of Rugby School will accept entrants at 11+, at the same time as the transfer from primary schools to Sheriff. There will be opportunities for Year 8 students to attempt Foundationer Scholarships at Rugby School bearing in mind that students will not be able to compete for these at 13+ if they have done so earlier. Interested parents are advised to approach The Housemaster of Town House, Rugby School, for further information.

## FINAL NOTE

The contribution of each student is significant to the ethos, energy and success of the entire school. For this reason we welcome, value and encourage every student's wholehearted commitment, and that of his family, to the full range of school activities.

The governors are very grateful to Neil Terry for his sponsorship of the printing of this Prospectus.



## **Lawrence Sheriff School**

*Telephone: (01788) 542074*

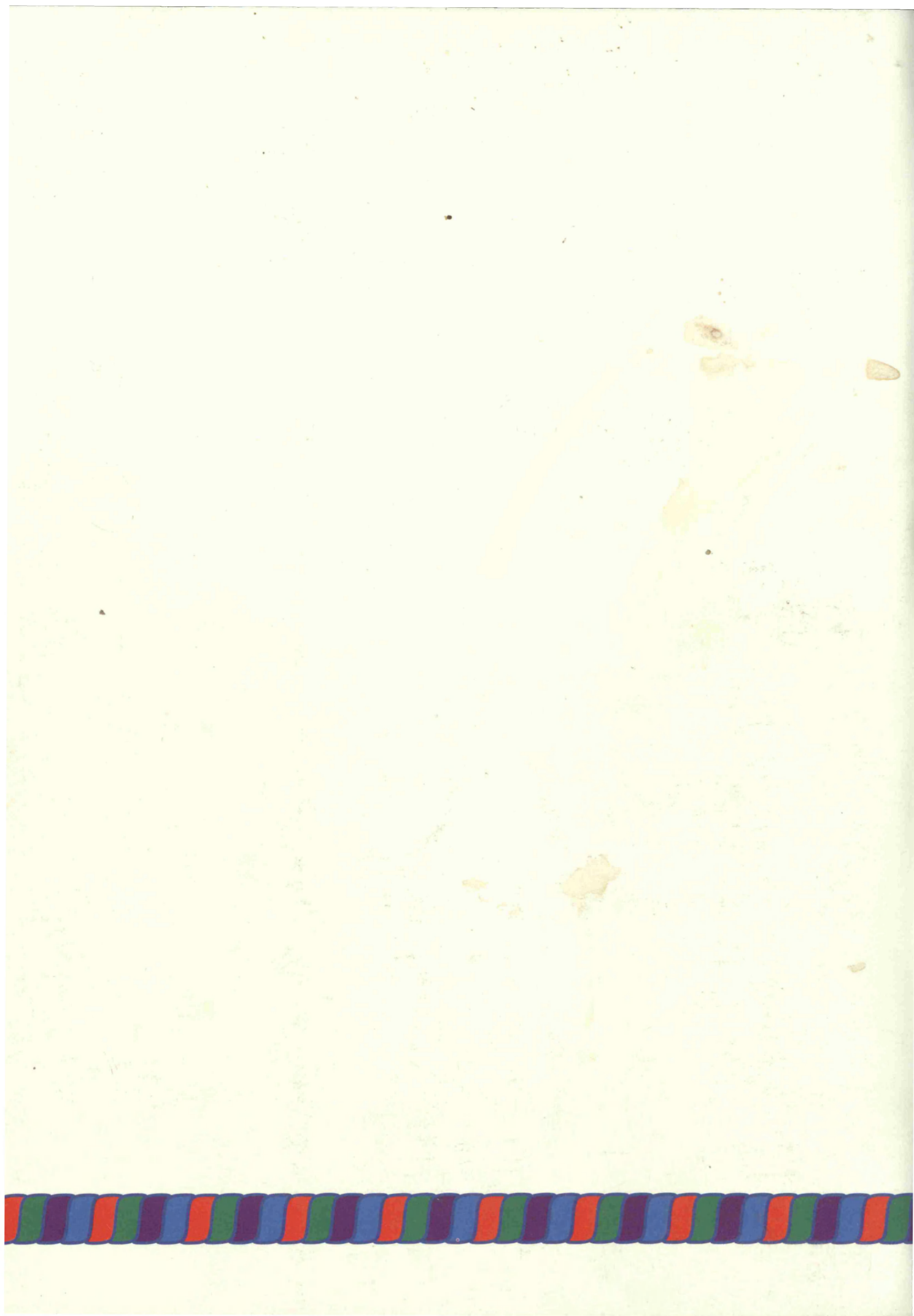
*Fax: (01788) 567962*

*Front cover drawing by Peter Holmes.*

*Flap drawing by a past student.*

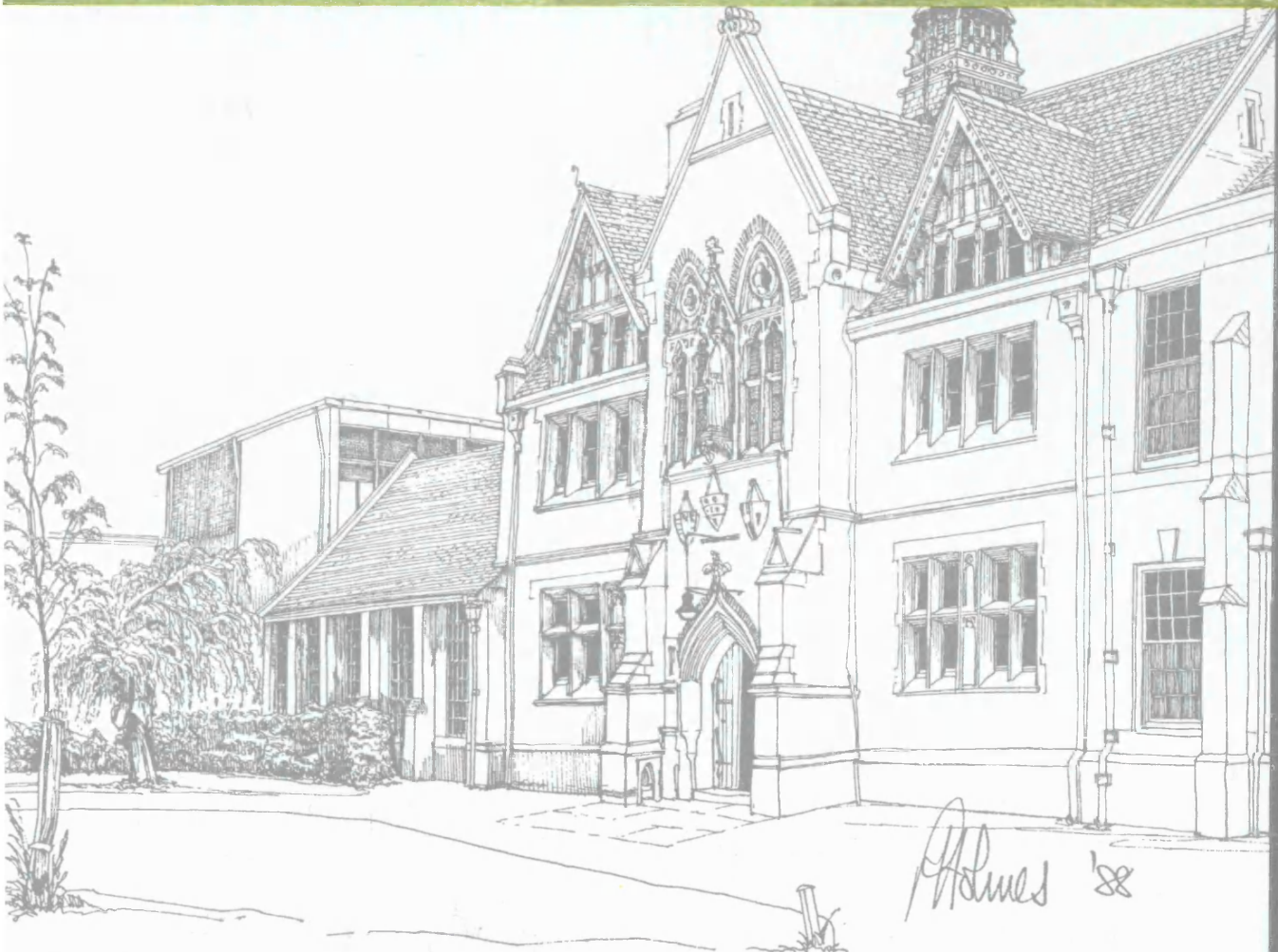








# *lawrence sheriff* *school*



PROSPECTUS



# aims of the school

Our aims are to blend a grammar school's pursuit of academic excellence with the preparation of students for life beyond school. We aim to work supportively with the students for their intellectual, moral, physical and emotional development and to develop a lifelong desire for learning. The school seeks to emphasise the moral obligation to show understanding, respect and sympathy to others, and to foster a collective sense of responsibility and care.

## Tradition, Change and Development

Lawrence Sheriff was born in 1515 or 1516 in or near Rugby. He became a full member of the Worshipful Company of Grocers, prospered in the reign of Elizabeth I, bought extensive property near London and in the area of Rugby, and in his will of 1567 left money for a school "to serve chiefly for the children of Rugby and Brownsover ... and next for such as be of other places hereunto adjoyneing".

By the eighteenth century, the school had acquired a national reputation as a public school, and moved to the present site of Rugby School. As the proportion of pupils from outside Rugby increased, and the people of the town seemed to benefit less from

Lawrence Sheriff's original bequest, local concern led to the nineteenth-century proposal of a Lower School for local boys, with Foundation Scholarships to the Great School. The Lower School opened in 1878 on the present site of Lawrence Sheriff School, with a curriculum designed to meet the needs of commercial education and preparation for Rugby School. By 1906, a compromise between the traditions of the Foundation, and a proposal to hand the school over to the County, led to a governing body chaired by the Headmaster of Rugby School and containing both Foundation and County Governors.

This partnership continued into voluntary aided status under the 1944 Act: Lawrence Sheriff School is now the selective boys' grammar school for Rugby and the surrounding area, with the buildings owned and maintained by the Governors, and the running costs funded by the Local Authority.



Q.O

# *buildings and facilities*

Like many other schools with a long tradition, Lawrence Sheriff has a collection of buildings from different periods, with laboratories, workshops, classrooms and activity areas added over the years to the fine nineteenth century mock Tudor Big School. Since 1990, a series of refurbishments, modifications, and new facilities more than doubling the area of the buildings have modernised the school extensively.

The six older science laboratories have been fully refitted and to these have been added two that are completely new. The school boasts four fully networked computer rooms and there are additional computing facilities in almost every subject area of the school.

More than half of the school's 22 full-sized classrooms were built since 1990 and almost every classroom contains video facilities and modern furniture. Interactive whiteboards, initially available only in computer rooms, are being gradually introduced into other areas of the school.

The Design and Technology Department, opened in 1993, contains much state-of-the-art equipment as well as many traditional facilities and a specialist electronics area.

The Sheriff Centre houses a much admired and very well resourced library and information centre, on two floors of what was originally the Headmaster's house. An extensive and modern stock of books, both fiction and non-fiction, CD-ROMs, videos and other research facilities are available to students and the library is widely regarded as one of the finest in any Warwickshire school.

Among the most recent developments are the Griffin Centre, Sports Hall and Studio, opened in 1996 and frequently used by local sports groups as well as

the school community. The Studio is fully equipped for drama, with excellent lighting and sound facilities, although full-scale drama productions tend mainly to be staged in Big School, where larger audiences can be accommodated.

In September 2001 our new Sixth Form Centre opened, boasting state-of-the-art facilities for sixth form study and research. The centre comprises on the ground floor a huge sixth form common room and study area, and upstairs six new classrooms, a virtual language laboratory, funded by a generous gift from the Old Laurentian Society, and the school's fourth computing room. The opening of the new centre, at the start of the new millennium, illustrates the Governors' continuing commitment to providing students with the best possible facilities. The Governors have invested over £4m in new buildings for the benefit of students over the past fifteen years.

2.1





# *admissions and curriculum*

## **Admissions**

Lawrence Sheriff School welcomes any enquiry from parents or students about admission. The Headmaster or a senior member of staff will meet and walk round the school with any interested parent who wishes to make an appointment by phoning the school office on 01788 542074.

Boys are admitted on the result of the local authority's 11+ selection tests, and parental choice: the normal intake is 90 in three unstreamed forms. The school has grown from 480 to 750 in 15 years, with the Sixth Form growing from 130 to 270.

Information about the procedure for 11+ entry is distributed through the area's Junior Schools and can be obtained directly from the Education Office on 01926 410410. The number of applicants for 90 places each year is in the region of 350.

Entry to any year group which already has 90 or more pupils will depend on an appeal to a panel appointed by the Governors and the LEA. Over the last few years, an average of 5 appeals have been heard for the intake year, usually with one or two successes.

Parallel timetabling with Rugby High School for Girls has broadened the already extensive academic opportunities for students at both schools. Over 150 students in the sixth form, both boys and girls, are studying A or AS levels at the 'other' school, and almost all lower sixth formers work collaboratively on the joint General Studies programme.

Applications to the Sixth Form are welcomed from students in Year 11 at Lawrence Sheriff and other schools. The minimum guideline for entry to Lawrence Sheriff School is normally a qualification of 5 'C' grades at GCSE: but most entrants have much more than this, and each case will be discussed individually with the applicant. There are many opportunities to meet staff and decide which course, at A and/or AS level, is most appropriate. Normally, 95% of sixth formers go on to higher education courses after leaving school.

There is a separate sixth form prospectus containing curriculum details and the date of the school's Sixth Form open evening. The

Head of Sixth Form is happy to discuss entry to the Sixth Form with pupils or parents at any time.

## **The Curriculum**

Each student is of equal value in the school. The curriculum is aimed not only at the acquisition of knowledge but also the development of skills and responsibility for academic self-fulfilment. Outstanding individual achievement is to be expected in a selective school, and is a cause for congratulation and rejoicing: but six grade C's at GCSE, or 2 low passes at A level, are also worthy of congratulation if they are representative of a student's hard work, self-discipline and mastery over difficulties. We are delighted with our record of strong examination results. An overall pass rate in excess of 90% at A Level has been consistently achieved for several years, with well over 40% of passes at grades A and B. At GCSE Level, almost every student achieves at least 5 passes at A\* - C, and the vast majority obtain this standard in eight or more subjects. In recent years, substantially more than 40% of GCSE passes have been at grades A\* or A. However, such pleasure is not intended to be complacent, nor does it suggest that the curriculum only leads to examinations. Overall, our intention is to make full use of the National Curriculum requirements for the students' benefit, to enrich it where possible, and to pursue the chance of many new challenges.





# *The school faculties*

The school is divided, for academic purposes, into four main faculties, as follows:

## **Language and Communications**

English, Drama, Media Studies, French and German are all taught in new, or nearly new, purpose-built facilities, and students in all these subjects have achieved excellent examination results for several years. All students study English and English Literature from Year 7 through to Year 11, sitting GCSEs in both subjects. Media Studies is an optional GCSE subject introduced at the start of Year 10. Large numbers go on to take A Level English Literature and/or Media Studies; these are two of the most popular and successful A level subjects in the school. Drama has been recently added to the options available in the sixth form, and the quality of students' enthusiasm and work at AS Level has encouraged us to introduce a full A Level course for the first time.

French and German are studied by all boys in Years 7 to 9, and they are spoken to, and encouraged to respond, in the target language at every opportunity. In Year 10 boys may opt to continue with just one modern language, or both. The GCSE results, particularly in French, have been dazzlingly good in recent years, and although less popular at A Level than some subjects, both French and German consistently achieve excellent results. It is

hoped that the opening of our brand-new modern language laboratory with its multi-media facilities will lead to even higher standards.

Latin is now available through the school's innovative use of video-conferencing facilities. At present a small group from Year 9 gain an early qualification in the subject, whilst another group from Year 13 study Latin as an aid to their university applications.



2.2

2.3



# *the school* *faculties*

## **Mathematics, ICT and Technology**

Mathematics is studied by more pupils in this school than any other subject. All students take Maths from Year 7 through to 11: students are setted from Year 8 onwards. The great majority of lessons are taught in a modern, purpose-built and well equipped building by very highly qualified and able staff. Standards are very high: almost every year, exceptionally good Key Stage 3 results are followed by everyone passing GCSE with a C grade or higher. Many of the ablest students take an additional GCSE in Statistics. Approximately half the students entering the sixth form choose Maths as one of their subjects and results at A Level in both Maths, and Further Maths are generally first-rate.

Four computer rooms, one of them brand new, the others all recently built or refurbished, are at the heart of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities that extend to more than 120 computers throughout the school. Although ICT is taught as a timetabled subject to years 7, 8 and 9, it features across the curriculum in the specifications for every subject, and all departments develop their students' knowledge and understanding of ICT, and their ICT skills, through its use in the classroom. Many students take a half GCSE in ICT in Year 11, and considerable numbers in the sixth form choose an AS level course in ICT, or A Level Computing. The school's computers are looked after by our outstanding Computer Technician and his assistant; in addition,

there are two ICT teaching assistants to help staff and students with everyday problems.

Design and Technology enjoys a high profile and excellent facilities at Lawrence Sheriff School, which is one of just twelve in the entire country taking part in the national pilot for the TEP (Technology Enhancement Programme) Millennium Project, redeveloping high level Technology for Key Stage 3. The programme is linked to Sheffield Hallam University and the National Centre for Social Research. The Department also offers very successful courses at Key Stage 4 in Electronics, Systems and Control, Resistant Materials and Graphics, using the most up-to-date resources available through ICT, such as Computer Aided Manufacture, Computer Aided Design, simulation software, Reverse Engineering and high level graphical communications. Post 16 courses in Product Design and Electronics are also popular and the department has numerous links with outside bodies, working with industry through the Engineering Education Scheme and participating in the Micro Mouse competition run by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. Junior technologists recently took part with considerable success in BBC TV's Techno Games, a series linked to Robot Wars.



2.9

2.4



# *The school faculties*

## **Science**

The Science Faculty enjoys excellent resources, with two new general laboratories and six specialist labs, all recently refurbished. All are equipped with class sets of apparatus to enable practical work to be undertaken, mainly in pairs. Extensive use is made of ICT, with computer suites for simulations and word processing, laptop computers for laboratory use, data logging using remote sensors and Internet access in all labs. Four lab technicians ensure that there is strong technical support for all science teaching. The teaching is delivered as 'science' in Years 7 and 8, but as separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics from there on. This stems from the use of subject specialist teachers attracted to the school because of the large numbers of students who take the separate sciences at A Level. Electronics is also available and very popular as an AS Level subject. At all levels, the academic results of the Science Faculty are excellent.

## **Humanities**

Two periods each of History and Geography are taught in Years 7, 8 and 9, after which students choose one subject or the other to continue to GCSE. Field trips form a staple, and popular, part of each department's work up to GCSE level, and beyond. An additional option at GCSE level is a newly introduced course in Government and Politics. At A Level, in addition to History and Geography, students can choose from Economics, Business Studies, both of which are highly popular, and another new course, Accountancy.

## **Other Subjects**

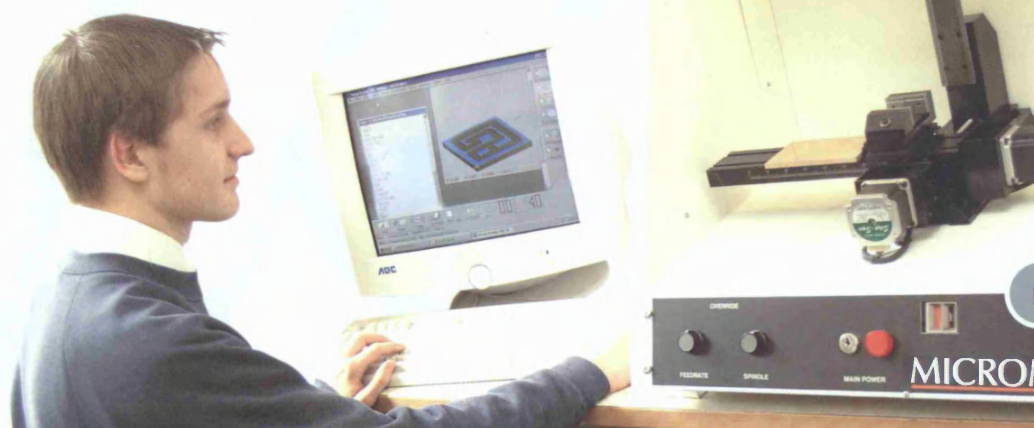
**Religious Education.** A wide range of biblical and spiritual themes is explored throughout years 7-11. Key to the aims of our RE teaching are understanding of, and respect for, the beliefs of all.

For this reason, although Christianity is at the centre of students' learning, other faiths are also studied in detail. In addition, students also complete units of work relating to citizenship, health and personal development.

**Art.** The Art and Design Department aims to recognise and develop every student's creative potential in a variety of tasks set in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11 students may opt to study the subject to GCSE examination level, and in Year 12 and 13 those who choose the subject are entered for AS and A Level Art and Design. Many continue on to Higher Education courses in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Transport and Product Design, Graphic Design and Fine Art.

**Music.** All students take Music during their first three years at the school. Thereafter, it is an optional subject at both GCSE and A Level. Peripatetic teaching is available in a wide range of instruments. The school's reputation for Music is very good and more can be read about it under the heading 'Extra-curricular subjects'.

**PE.** Our magnificent Sports Hall, opened in 1996 and funded by Lottery money, is the setting for a weekly lesson of Physical Education for every student from Year 7 to 11. From Year 10 onwards, boys may opt to pursue a full GCSE course in PE and A Level PE is an increasingly popular subject, with good success rates, in the sixth form.



# key stages three and four

## Key Stage Three

In Years 7, 8 and 9, three parallel classes take English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Design and Technology, French, German, Geography, History, Music, PSRE (Personal, Social and Religious Education) and PE (Physical Education). To meet part of the syllabus requirements for PE, in Year 7 there is a residential course for outdoor pursuits. Mathematics is setted by ability from Year 8 onwards.

ICT (Information and Communications Technology) is taught as a distinct subject as well as being used across the curriculum in many of the other subjects. Four networked computer rooms are available, as well as computers in a number of departments.

## Key Stage Four

In Year 10, the first of a two-year course, students study eight or nine GCSE subjects: Mathematics, English, Technology, and five or six from: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Double Award Co-ordinated Science, English Literature, French, German, Geography, History, ICT, Media Studies, Music, Physics, and PE. Within the options system, students can opt to take a two year AS Level in Politics. All are expected to study the three sciences either as Co-ordinated Sciences or as three separate GCSEs; at least one of French and German; at least one of History or Geography. This combination of entitlement and choice is under review each year.

All students, not just those who opt to take a GCSE in Physical Education, continue to attend a PE lesson each week. Religious Education is taken as a half GCSE by all students in Year 11.

A fortnight's work experience is central in the curriculum of every member of Year 11, placed in January to play a part in choices for careers and future courses.





# *The sixth form*

Students work towards AS and A Level qualifications. Normally, students study four subjects to AS Level in Year 12 and convert three of these to a full A Level in Year 13. Subjects available at Lawrence Sheriff School are English Literature, History, Geography, Economics, Business Studies, Accountancy, Media Studies, French, German, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computing, ICT, Technology, Art, Music, Theatre Studies, Electronics and PE. Additional subjects such as Psychology, Sociology and RE are available at Rugby High School, and this broadening of opportunities has enriched students at both schools. A bus runs at breaks and lunchtimes between the two schools.

Students also take an AS qualification in General Studies during Year 12, with the option to turn this into a full A Level during Year 13.

**Work Experience.** The school has led the way in Warwickshire in setting up work experience placements for A Level linguists in Germany and France. Students in Year 12 also undertake work experience during the final week of the summer term.

**Games** include a wide variety of sports options. The school offers the opportunity for high-level performance in team sport alongside the chance to pursue individual sporting interests.

**Community Links and Responsibility.** The School has had close links with a number of local firms. Recent activities include work shadowing, engineering projects, charity fundraising, old

people's entertainment, helping to run the library and visits to local hospitals and primary schools.

**Prefects.** Sixth Form students are encouraged to serve the school community by acting as prefects. Each year, among the factors taken into account in selecting the head of school and his team of prefects is the performance of students on our Leadership Challenge Day, an event offering all in Year 12 the opportunity to demonstrate and develop leadership and problem-solving skills.

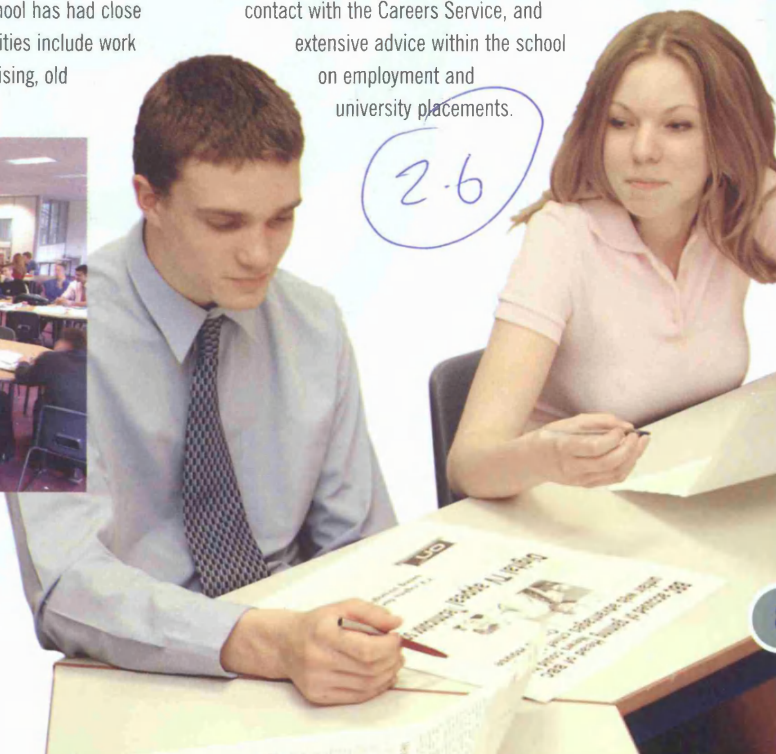
**Young Enterprise** is a national educational charity which enables young people between the ages of 15 and 19 to set up and run their own company for one academic year. The scheme has operated successfully in Rugby for many years, with Lawrence Sheriff School playing a key role.

Each year, around thirty members of year 12 combine with students from the other local secondary schools, and meet each week on local business premises under the guidance of an adviser from the local business community. The students gain a great deal of practical business experience, make new friends and hopefully have a great deal of fun.

**Careers guidance** consists of continued individual contact with the Careers Service, and extensive advice within the school on employment and university placements.



2.5



# *extracurricular activities*

## **Games**

Each student has one double lesson of games each week. Supervision and training during these games sessions involve a large number of staff: not all have formal coaching qualifications, but overall supervision rests with a member of staff with such qualifications and/or extensive sporting experience. Most games lessons take place at the Hart Field, the school's playing field about three quarters of a mile from the school on the Lower Hillmorton Road, but from time to time use is also made of facilities at Rugby Tartan Track, Rugby School Astro and on the School Field behind Big School.

The school is arranged into four Houses - Tait, Caldecott, Simpson and Wheeler - named in honour of benefactors and former Headmasters. The four Houses are sporting rather than social or pastoral units, and they compete annually against one another for the Parents' Trophy. This is awarded to the House that secures the most points during the school year in ten different sports played at six different levels, one at each age group from Year 7 to Year 11 and a senior competition.

The main winter sport is rugby, though in Year 9 and above there are opportunities for smaller groups to play hockey. In summer the sports are cricket, athletics and tennis. There is an extensive list of rugby and cricket fixtures against other schools at all levels (MCC also visits the school for an annual match against the First XI) and

there are numerous opportunities to compete against other schools in a wide range of other sports. Several sports tours have been arranged in recent years, or are currently being planned, including trips to Holland and Barbados to play cricket; to Canada, and to Argentina, Uruguay and Chile to play rugby; and to Barcelona to play hockey. A large party of rugby players from Years 9 and 10 take part annually in a tour to Ireland in late October and a short cricket tour to Essex is usually arranged towards the end of the summer term for Year 8. In recent years, increasing numbers of Lawrence Sheriff boys have been selected to play in County and other representative teams and we are particularly proud of the achievements of those who have gone on to play rugby and cricket at first-class and international level, such as the Gloucester and England full-back, Mark Mapletoft, and Michael Powell, captain of Warwickshire County Cricket Club, who has also represented England on the 'A' tour of 2000-1 and may yet be destined for higher honours.

It is important that a student sees his timetable as a complete educational package, of which physical development is an integral and compulsory part. All students should also recognise the need for loyalty to school and fellow students if selected for a team after school or on a Saturday. Outside commitments should not be allowed to supersede this loyalty.



2.7



2.8



# extracurricular activities

## Music

As well as having its place in the curriculum throughout the school, music is an important extracurricular activity. Opportunities range from the excellence of the school orchestra, through the energy of the jazz band, to the informal zest of barbershop and guitar ensembles. Concerts over the last few years have included pieces composed by students, and concerto performances from students of varying ages. Peripatetic teachers from the County Music Service take lessons in strings, woodwind, brass and percussion, and hold ensemble workshops. A small contribution per pupil per lesson is arranged with students who receive tuition.

## Drama

Performances in the past five years have included: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *The Chimes*; *Bugsy Malone*; *The Crucible*; *Murder in the Cathedral*; *Blood Wedding* and a range of less formal workshop pieces. A thriving Drama and Theatre Studies course is now established for students in the sixth form.

## Outdoor Activities

As well as field work for a number of academic subjects, students have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme: groups work through the year for Gold, Silver and Bronze awards.

## School Societies and Activities

The Weather Bureau is a special Lawrence Sheriff activity, dating from 1941 and forming part of the national recording of weather.

Recent clubs have included computing, chess, drama, wargaming and electronics. There is a strong recent tradition of close curricular links with Brooke Special School.



# *pastoral, academic and disciplinary care*

In the first instance a student's welfare, at school, rests in the care of his form tutor, who will probably stay with the same class during Years 7-9, encouraging continuity and stability. The next level of support is offered by the appropriate Head of Year, who is then supported by either the Head of Lower School or Head of Upper School. The sixth form are overseen by the Head of Sixth Form, who is supported by a team of assistants. Matters of concern are naturally and promptly referred to parents.

The academic performance of the great majority of students is very good. Most boys work hard and achieve very high standards of attainment. To deal with the few instances where boys' efforts are unsatisfactory, the school has a five-stage procedure. At the first stage, there is an entirely internal process whereby boys are kept in detention at break or lunch-time and form tutors are notified. Parents are informed of any instance in which boys proceed to stage two or beyond. At stage 3, repeat offenders will be kept in detention after school. In the rare instances where a boy reaches stage four or five, his parents are asked to come in and discuss his work with the Deputy Head and the Headmaster respectively.

The school has a simple discipline policy: all students are expected to behave with the restraint, courtesy, common sense and consideration which will bring credit to themselves and to the school. The Headmaster takes the view that the reputation of the school and therefore of all students is involved wherever students are on school business or are identifiable as members of the school. Breaches of discipline may be dealt with by tasks of community service around the school under the direction of senior staff, or by detention after school at 24 hours' notice. Parents will be involved early in any more worrying matter. Major disciplinary action, an extreme rarity, can end in exclusion, which then becomes a matter for the Governing Body.

The school works closely with Warwickshire County Council's

educational social workers in cases where the Headmaster and parents have agreed that this is the appropriate procedure.

## **Special Needs**

The school works closely with the local authority's psychologists, educational social workers and learning and behaviour support service in following the agreed stages of support for any student at this school with an identifiable learning difficulty for which help can be found.

## **Assemblies**

Assemblies for large sections of the school, for separate forms and for year groups take place each week, and themes of faith, commitment and choice are introduced to the students throughout the year.





# *links between school and home*

For the student, the most regular link is homework. As a general guide, students below year 10 should expect to spend half an hour each evening on each of three subjects. As 16+ examinations approach, and beyond that in the years of flexible and independent study in the sixth form, successful students will devote considerably more time outside school to their studies. Fifteen hours each week for an organised lower sixth former would be a sound guide. Part-time employment can seriously affect study: we suggest that sixth form students limit themselves to a maximum of nine hours per week.

**The Weekly Word** is a weekly school newsletter, sent home each Friday. Many parents view *The Weekly Word* as a vital communication link between school and home, containing as it does a summary of events in the life of the school, sports results and a column written by the Headmaster. Any other letters to parents are also generally issued on Fridays.

**Effort and attainment grades** are sent home twice a year, summarising the progress made by a student during the previous term.

**Reports** are issued to each pupil once a year.

**Parents' evenings** are planned on an appointments system once a year for the parents of each age group.

**Parental meetings** are held to pass on information about such things as Year 9 options and the curriculum for Years 10 and 11.

**A higher education evening** is held for the parents of students in Year 12.

**Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time.** However, a parent wishing for an interview with a particular member of staff is asked to ring beforehand to make a firm appointment. Any parent raising a matter of concern is invited to discuss the matter with the Headmaster or an appropriate senior colleague.

**Aided status** brings the advantage of limited funds to help needy families with costs on the fringes of education or in basics such as uniform. Approaches to the Headmaster will naturally be confidential.

**Charging Policy.** The school may ask, from time to time, for voluntary contributions from parents for the transport and other costs incurred in activities which enhance the students' experience. However, provision is made for those who may find this difficult.



# Further information

The very high standards of the school and its staff have been nationally recognized in recent years. Our Ofsted inspections in both 1994 and 1999 praised the school highly and in his annual report for the year 1999-2000, the Chief Inspector nominated Lawrence Sheriff as one of the most improved schools in the country, remarkable praise in view of the highly complimentary assessment made by Ofsted in 1994. Further confirmation of the school's excellent standards came in 2001, when all 29 of the teaching staff who sought to pass the Performance Threshold for Teachers did so successfully.

**Careers guidance** involves close liaison between the school and the County Careers Service. The high standard of careers advice within the school was recently recognised through a quality kite-mark from Warwickshire Education Business Partnership.

**Equal opportunities.** Issues of gender, race, religion, age, disability and disadvantage are specifically addressed throughout the PSRE programme in years 7 - 11 and in many subject areas. In Year 12 this all comes together in the General Studies programme with Rugby High School and in many 'A' level programmes of study.

The school's **Sex Education Policy** encourages progressive development, starting with modules of physical information in Key Stage 3 Science and continuing with maturation videos and discussion in PSE, through to AIDS and relationships in year 11. Throughout the course, sex education is placed in the context of caring and mature development.

**Records of Achievement.** The school has received a quality kite-mark for Records of Achievement, and we seek to combine the advantages of personal target setting and one-to-one interviews with a continuing emphasis on high academic achievement.

**Citizenship.** The school has a thriving student council, through which students have an opportunity to experience democracy in action and to play an active role in the running of the school. Other issues relating to citizenship are explored through PSRE lessons, and activities such as debating.

**The Parents' Association** proudly occupies a place in The Guinness Book of Records as the oldest organisation of its type in the United Kingdom and works unstintingly throughout the year to provide support for the school through various fund-raising activities and events such as quiz evenings, concerts, barn dances and an annual Christmas Fayre. A recent large-scale effort raised almost £3,000 to re-equip Big School.

**The Old Laurentian Society** keeps former pupils in touch with the school and each other by newsletters (mailing list of well over 1,000) and reunions. It provides prizes and travel funds for students and a wealth of support to the school.

**Rugby School.** The long association with Rugby School continues. The Rugby School Foundation provides an annual income in excess of £200,000; without this money, the Governors could not have undertaken the building programme that has so greatly improved the school since the early 1990s. Occasionally, boys transfer from Lawrence Sheriff to Rugby School at the end of Year 8, when pupils are able to attempt Foundationer Scholarships, which offer a substantial reduction in fees to those who are successful in the scholarship examination. For older students, a number of collaborative projects have been developed with Rugby School, including a joint management conference for members of the sixth form.







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# APPENDIX D

**SPSS calculation of Kruskal-Wallis test, with Q15 taken as dependent variable**

**Ranks**

	Q15	N	Mean Rank
Q1	strongly agree	87	101.24
	agree	90	127.87
	uncertain	38	117.11
	disagree	5	106.80
	strongly disagree	11	136.00
	Total	231	
Q2	strongly agree	87	125.00
	agree	90	112.87
	uncertain	38	118.76
	disagree	5	59.00
	strongly disagree	11	86.82
	Total	231	
Q3	strongly agree	87	104.60
	agree	90	123.23
	uncertain	38	116.84
	disagree	5	111.90
	strongly disagree	11	145.91
	Total	231	
Q4	strongly agree	87	99.52
	agree	90	126.37
	uncertain	38	126.64
	disagree	5	85.70
	strongly disagree	11	138.45
	Total	231	
Q5	strongly agree	87	88.99
	agree	90	124.46
	uncertain	38	138.41
	disagree	5	152.50
	strongly disagree	11	166.36
	Total	231	
Q6	strongly agree	87	92.93
	agree	89	124.31
	uncertain	38	137.08
	disagree	5	103.00
	strongly disagree	11	153.86
	Total	230	

	Q15	N	Mean Rank
Q7	strongly agree	87	126.24
	agree	90	114.79
	uncertain	38	105.67
	disagree	5	85.80
	strongly disagree	11	94.27
	Total	231	
Q8	strongly agree	87	128.63
	agree	90	121.73
	uncertain	38	83.75
	disagree	5	121.20
	strongly disagree	11	78.27
	Total	231	
Q9	strongly agree	87	142.60
	agree	90	109.66
	uncertain	38	87.22
	disagree	5	105.90
	strongly disagree	11	61.50
	Total	231	
Q10	strongly agree	87	102.07
	agree	90	118.96
	uncertain	38	133.51
	disagree	5	121.00
	strongly disagree	11	139.18
	Total	231	
Q11	strongly agree	87	99.41
	agree	90	127.09
	uncertain	38	115.14
	disagree	5	130.00
	strongly disagree	11	153.05
	Total	231	

	Q15	N	Mean Rank
Q12	strongly agree	87	122.38
	agree	90	114.37
	uncertain	38	104.03
	disagree	5	119.10
	strongly disagree	11	118.82
	Total	231	
Q13	strongly agree	86	124.87
	agree	90	112.07
	uncertain	38	105.50
	disagree	5	163.30
	strongly disagree	11	83.18
	Total	230	
Q14	strongly agree	87	108.52
	agree	90	122.32
	uncertain	38	113.18
	disagree	5	143.80
	strongly disagree	11	120.50
	Total	231	
YEAR	strongly agree	87	121.58
	agree	90	114.36
	uncertain	38	115.51
	disagree	5	98.80
	strongly disagree	11	94.82
	Total	231	

**Test Statistics(a,b)**

	Q1	Q2:	Q3:	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	YEAR
Distribution	10.323	9.281	7.294	12.102	31.093	22.710	6.070	17.477	31.095	9.857	12.365	2.341	8.744	3.293	2.668
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.035	.054	.121	.017	.000	.000	.194	.002	.000	.043	.015	.673	.068	.510	.615

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping variable Q15

# APPENDIX E



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Year
1	2	2	4	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	5	4	3	2	14
2	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	14
2	2	2	4	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	4	1	4	2	14
2	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	4	4	3	3	1	14
1	2	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	1	1	3	4	3	1	14
1	2	1	1	1	1	3	4	3	1	1	4	5	4	1	14
1	2	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	4	3	1	1	14
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	5	4	1	1	14
1	1	1	2	1	2	1	4	4	1	2	4	3	2	1	14
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2	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	13

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Year
2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	3	3	2	13
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2	1	1	3	1	1	1	4	4	1	1	4	3	1	2	13
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